

Annexure three

A- FAMILY

A 1 Definition of family

Focus group number one concentrated on questions dealing with family. Members were asked to define a family. The following are definitions that were given. The definitions from participants in the focus group exhibited diversity in their understanding of what a family is. A great number of participants still hold the traditional African view of family as being inclusive of a number of individuals bound together by blood relationships and under the leadership of Inkosana (heir) or head of the family, usually a male.

There was also within this group those who defined a nuclear family in terms of a father mother and children. They added that this unit is one brick that makes the bigger entity-society. A lot of discussion centred on this definition since it points to an emerging trend. The exponents of the view argued that modern families especially in town situation are now constituted in this manner.

A.2 The influence of families on the lives of her members

Having provided definitions of a family, the discussion then moved on to the influence that families have on individual members. Participant's responses were unanimous in identifying the following influences that families have. Families create a sense of identity and belonging for the individual thereby engendering unity and security. They inculcate values and norms and

behavioural standards expected by each family and society; they are responsible for traditioning their members i.e. passing on the religion, customs and cultural heritage of the families through teaching.

Notwithstanding the varied definitions of family given by participants, One point that has surfaced so clearly is of the centrality of family as the basic social framework within which people first learn the symbols they use to interpret the reality around them, where person is humanised through participation. It is within the family environment that each person learns to make sense of the reality around him or her. As the discussion progressed participants emphasised the importance of keeping families strong. It was stated very crudely that decay of families spell disaster for society and the nation.

A.3 The functions of a family

In discussing the third question, a whole range of functions was attributed to the family. A family is responsible for bringing children up, feeding, loving, and educating them. A family has to create an environment conducive to the health and wholeness of their members. A home or family is also a place where training of good citizens takes place. From birth, respect of other members of society and of human life is taught. People learn to take care for each other within the protective and nurturing atmosphere of the home; and where they learn the importance of belonging. From birth the child was surrounded by domestic piety. His earliest recollections would be of all that went on around him/her in the home.

A.4 Do you regard belonging to a family as being important?

The fourth question sought to find out whether people still regard belonging as important. It was striking to discover what other participants called “a modern tendency” that regards families as unimportant. As further questions for clarification were asked, it became evident that those exhibit this “modern tendency” have either not had good experiences within their families. The negative influence of their early years has affected their views of the importance of belonging to a family.

It was also a fascinating discovery to find out that at the time when the individualism of the west is creeping so fast into the African world, there are still Zulu people who regard belonging to a family as very important and still treasure it very highly. Most participants saw the family as providing a support system necessary for the well being and survival of many in this fast changing environment in which many people find themselves. Belonging to an especially strong family provides the individual with a strong basis upon which to build future relationships.

A.5 How does one become a member?

This question was designed to elicit information as to how one becomes a member of the family. Participants identified three ways in which one becomes a member, i.e. by marriage, birth and by adoption.

Birth in Zulu society defines one’s identity and status and situates one within a network of family relationships. Members of the family are in most cases

referred to as Children of so and so – the head of the family. It also means one is entitled to all privileges and emoluments available within the family.

In the Zulu community marriage plays a significant social role. It is a rite of passage from one stage to the other. The ritual process begins from the moment the man sends to the father of the bride to negotiate the “lobolo”. Its culmination is the day of marriage, which is the joining of the wife to the husband’s family. A lot of other rituals connected with the official introduction of her to family ancestors follow. Marriage in the Zulu culture as a public and communal event effects a change in the status and relationships of the couple both to each other and to the community as a whole. The participation of both families intensifies the ritual significance and formalises the marriage.

A.6 ‘Umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu’ What does it mean in terms of one’s position in the family/community?

Participants regarded this Zulu saying: ‘Umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu’ in relation to the individual’s position in the family or community as very important. Many pointed out that it emphasises that the wholeness of the individual can only be guaranteed within the network of family and community relationships. Outside this network framework, the community runs the risk of being infested with imbalanced people. Reference was made to so called “street children” and how this is becoming a fountain of crime in most towns and cities. This was attributed to the fact that street children grow up without the support network of family that ensures their development into whole persons.

Regarding the importance of the family unit in their culture, the participant felt that what they had said above emphasises how important a family is viewed in their culture.

B -ROLES

The second focus group dealt with issues relating to roles within families. The discussion was limited to two specific roles relevant for this study, i.e. the role of the father and that of children.

B.1 The father's role in a family

The father is seen as the head and leader and as both head and leader, he exerts greater influence in the socialisation and education of his children. Another point relating to the father's role, as leader was that he leads in conjunction with his wife. This introduces a new dimension in the role that has traditionally been assigned to the man. The role and influence exerted by women in families, is beginning to be recognised. He is the ultimate authority for the family; a symbol of unity and security and a provider of direction and guidance for the family. His role is described as that of being a priest in his household and a role model for all members of his family. The term "priest" has biblical connotations but the participants used it to describe the role he played at the family altar, offering sacrifices to the ancestors. "Family altar" will be explained later.

Some members disagreed with the above stated view, claiming that it is the source of all the suffering and abuse that women and children experience. That most families without the presence and indispensable input would not survive.

B.2 Duties of the father to his family

The father's duties are to provide shelter, material and spiritual needs for his family. He gives love and care to his family, educates his family, he provides discipline, he is a mediator, he co-operates with his wife in the teaching and nurturing of their children, he is a reconciler and protector his family.

B.3 Could this role be associated with being light?

Most participants answered yes and then stated their reasons. Here are some of the reasons, that by virtue of his position he is expected to be exemplary thereby allowing those he leads to emulate him; that as leader he provides direction for his family and his actions can never be misconstrued. The father is the embodiment of all that the family needs to know and do.

B.4 What are the implications of seeing God as light?

Participants felt that the implications of seeing the father as light are vast and would have far reaching effects. First it means that no member of his household will ever walk in darkness because of lack of knowledge. They will not participate in anything that is contrary to light. In their lives they

exemplify all that the light stands for. The father is never seen in isolation from his family, he can only be described in terms of his family

C- CHILDREN

C.1 The role children play within a family

Regarding the role that should be played by children, participants were in full agreement that they are to assist their parents; that they bring happiness to the home; that they are a binding force between parents.

The elder brother is the head of the home in waiting. So a lot of things including family secrets are entrusted to him. His role is not particularly evident until the death of the father –the family head. It is only then that he come to the fore and plays an active role.

C.2 What are the obligations of children?

As to their obligations or duties, it was pointed out that theirs is to obey, respect, listen and do what they are taught to do. As children they must be teachable and must report to their parents what they are doing, that wherever they are, they represent their family values and norms. Other participants pointed out that in a world which is becoming individual oriented, it must be emphasised that children are expected to love cherish and honour their parents. Children also are to help with all chores pertaining to their home. On the whole, it is their duty to reflect the good image of the family.

C.3 Expectation on children and other family members regarding values and norms

Concerning children and all family members regarding the values and norms, there was unanimity among participants that all are expected to know family values and norms. They are expected to keep them because these are a reflection of all that the family stands for. These it was felt are not negotiable so compliance is the only way for all members of the family; finally, it was stressed that they need to mirror these to the community.

C.4 Are they allowed freedom to differ with family values and norms?

As far as the question of freedom to differ with family norms and values, opinions differed very widely. There were those who cherished the traditional view that no one is allowed to differ. The matter of differing with family values and norms they viewed in a very serious light. Family values such as neighbourliness led to solidarity and mutual helpfulness, which were central to the value of humanity, i.e. 'ubuntu' or 'botho'. The concept of 'ubuntu' placed emphasis on the person as of the highest and intrinsic value. They stated that this as far as they were concerned was tantamount to rebellion. The exponents of this view held that what matters is not what the individual thinks or feels but what the family stipulates. For an individual who feels different, all she/he can do is comply.

There were others even though they are Christians, who claimed that there is nothing wrong with participating in your African traditional feasts. Differing on the grounds that you were a Christian did not have any substance in it.

Others stated that being a member of a family does not take away your freedom of choice. They stated that being a Christian is what makes the difference. If they feel their conscience is violated by what the family stands, then one is allowed to differ. This can only happen after engaging in discussion with the elders of the family. An example of such an instant is when is sacrificing in honour of the ancestors. Many Christians have raised objection as a matter of conscience and families have allowed them not to participate.

Yet among participants in this focus group, there were those who felt that we now live in a democratic situation one is free to differ. We have only been a democratic country for six year, and this is a fairly new view that has not stood the test of time.

MAINTENANCE OF SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE

D-DEALING WITH DEVIANTS

D.1 Dealing with disloyal members

We pointed out above that there is still a strong view that regards disloyalty in a very serious light. Families therefore, have various ways in which they deal with their disloyal members. First, members who step out of line are called to order and on admission of guilt, they are fined. If an offence is extremely heinous, initially they are called to a council of elders and given advice. In some cases, corporal punishment would be administered and if this and repeated advice fail, then they are ostracised by members of the family.

D.2 What is a Zulu word for a ‘disgusting action’?

The words that people use sometime to describe the act that has been committed tell you how serious that particular act is viewed by society. Any action that is disgusting would be described by such words as ‘ichilo, ihlazo, and amanyala’. The word ‘sin’ which is commonly used in the Bible or Christian literature is foreign and difficult for Zulu people to understand. May be describing ‘sin –isono’, as ‘amanyala’ would convey the seriousness of the act to traditional Zulu people.

D.3 What would be required of a person who wants to be restored? into fellowship?

The question sought to find out what would be required of a person who had been cut off from the family, if that person wants to be restored into the fellowship? In order for the estranged person to be reinstated, it would be required of that person, first, to accept responsibility for the action that led to the estrangement, then confess the terrible act committed and ask for forgiveness.

D.4 Why would confession of sin be required?

Confession demonstrates that the person accepts full responsibility for what has happened. In order for this to happen the family would need to be assembled together. Before forgiveness and restoration is granted, the estranged person after the confession would be taken to the family altar –

eAltarini lasekhaya, which is usually in a hut called kwagogo. There the ancestors would be notified that this person is sorry for having broken disgraced the family. Then the goat would be slaughtered. It is not the goat that is essential here but the blood that brings about reconciliation. Apart from the goat that is slaughtered at the family altar, a beast would be slaughtered. The slaughtered beast is for celebrating the restoration of this member into the family fellowship. The Biblical story that comes close to this is the story of the prodigal son. We are not given any details of what went on but the whole act of restoration is sealed with slaughtering of a fattened calf and celebration.

There were differences of opinion as to the process of reinstating a member into the family fellowship. Some of the participants claimed that due to their Christian orientation they believe that there is no need to slaughter any animal. The blood of Jesus is sufficient for cleansing sin and bringing about true forgiveness and restoration. Both exponents of these views held one view in common i.e. the significance of blood in this whole process. For Christians, Jesus is thus the Lamb of God that was slain for the sin of the world. His blood supersedes any other blood as attested in the letter to the Hebrews (9:22).

Other participants, who also have a Christian background, still cling tenaciously to their old customs belief that there can be no true reconciliation without slaughtering and inviting the ancestors to accept what is being done. They believe that ancestors are to be asked to re-admit him/her into the family. The slaughtering and the spilling of blood are an important aspect of the admission or cleansing ceremony. Some families believe that without slaughtering and blood, there can be no real forgiveness and restoration.

D.5 What is the value of confession?

Confession is a demonstration that the repenting party is truly sorry for his/her offence. There is obviously common ground between 1 John's understanding of sin and reconciliation and that demonstrated by participants as well as how sin is dealt with. The linking in 1 John of the idea of confession with cleansing with blood is an allusion to the sacrificial understanding of blood, which constitutes both the Old (Lev 16) and New Testament understanding of how sin was dealt with.

D.6 What would be required of the repenting party if the offence of a serious Nature?

If the offence was too great, the offending party would be required to approach the family elders, intimate his/her desire to be restored and the fact that she/he is aware of the seriousness of the offence and express his/her willingness to do reparation for the offence. It is in cases such as this that slaughtering is required. The beast for slaughtering has to be provided by the penitent member for offering to the ancestors as a way of saying sorry to them.

D.7 The significance of Blood

Regarding the significance of blood, it is believed that the blood is the means through which forgiveness and cleansing is asked from the ancestors.

Ancestors only understand the language of the living when that is enacted in blood. Views were diversified on this point. Apart from the view already

stated above, others believed that only through Christ's blood can sins be truly forgiven and reconciliation achieved. Christ's sacrifice on the cross supersedes any other that could be offered.

D.8. How would you define salvation in your traditional Zulu context?

Salvation among Zulus has to do with the well being of society. If there are threatening forces, the harnessing of them means the achievement of salvation.

E- AMADLOZI/ABAPHANSI/ABAXHUMANISI

E.1 Who are the ancestors to you?

To the question, who are the ancestors, participants gave the following answers. Ancestors are dead members (asebelele i.e. those who have fallen asleep) of the family who, when there are problems in the family are consulted. Consultation is done through slaughtering in order to appease them especially when it is believed that they are responsible for what is happening. Others defined ancestors as old male members of the family who passed away. This probably is the traditional definition among Zulu people.

E.2 What is their role?

Regarding the role of the ancestors, participants stated the following views; their role is to be intermediaries/mediators between the living and God. They

take messages to God because they are believed to be near Him. They protect the people from sickness and danger and bring luck to members of the family.

E.3 Ancestors as ‘onkulunkulu bethu’, what do you think?

Are the ancestors gods ‘onkulunkulu’? Participants unanimously disagreed with this view. To them, ancestors were just mediators and nothing more. Some pointed out that those who believe in the role played by ancestors do treat them as gods; they are much more feared by the living than God is. Moreover the living hardly talk about god but their ancestors.

E.4 Who are they to you?

Participants were then asked a very personal question, What are they to you? The responses to this question were diverse. Some because of their Christian standpoint believed that they are and remain grand parents or parents that have passed away, they are not mediators because Jesus is mediator. They are deceased grandparents whom they respect and love but who are awaiting judgement.

Others held the view that they are members of the family who once lived but who since their passing away have nothing to do with their lives (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). Still others felt that these are deceased members of the family who now and again are remembered, but by remembering they do not mean that they are worshipped.

E.5 Do they get involved with the living on special occasions or on a continuous basis?

Asked whether ancestors get involved with the living on special occasions or on a continuous basis. Two opposite views were expressed. Some of the participants accorded them a central role. They believe that ancestors are involved with the living all the time, that they are there all the time protecting and giving guidance to members of their families and that they communicate their wishes to the living through dreams and visions. Others held that death meant the cessation of their influence over anything.

E.6 Why do people ascribe a mediatory role to ancestors?

Asked why people ascribe a mediatory role to ancestors, participants felt that it is because of their closeness to God/UMvelinqangi that they are believed to perform this role. It was also stated that God being the Supreme Being has an aura of sacredness that attaches to him requiring that he only be approached through mediators. Only the ancestors are in a position to perform this mediatory role.

E.7 What role do they play in the forgiveness and reconciliation of sinners?

It is believed that ancestors play a significant role in the forgiveness and restoration of a member. Any act of disobedience by any member of the family, is disobedience to them because they never cease to be part of the family. When ties are severed with the rebellious member, he is also cut off

from the ancestors. Therefore when reparation is being made, ancestors need to accept the sacrifice made on behalf of the repenting party.

E.8 What kind of behaviour is expected of those who are to become ancestors?

Most participants think that behaviour is very important for those who are to be ancestors. They believe that if their behaviour was not good while they were still alive, they will make bad ancestors. Morality plays a very significant role in determining who becomes an ancestor. What is good morally is what befits a human being; it is what is good for man – what brings dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity, joy, to man and his community. For instance, those who were witches during their lifetime cannot be ancestors because on earth they worked against the wholeness of society. Not everybody becomes an ancestor, so morality standards are important for those who eventually join this hierarchy. However a very small number believed that any member could be an ancestor, that behaviour was not important at all.

E.9. What is the place or role that the following play in your culture and to you as an individual?

Diviners (Izangoma)?

Izangoma also communicate with the ancestral spirits. Some use bones which they read and then interpret what the message is. Others possess a gift of seeing what is in the person's mind. Some of their duties include the following:

to predict future events, to diagnose illness in his or her clients and prescribe methods to heal them, to warn clients/community about problems to come, to establish cause of misfortunes, to mediate between community members and their ancestors, to give counsel to the chief of the area, to intercede for the community to the ancestors. In matters affecting the tribe, they act as priests for the tribe. They officiate at official ceremonies and give direction as to how sacrifices are to be offered.

Traditional doctors (Izinyanga)?

These are people who have the gift of knowing herbs and who also use these herbs to cure a variety of diseases. Traditional doctors also protect people against spiritual forces. Some have the ability to manipulate natural forces like thunder.

F- GOD

F.1 Who is God to you?

The sixth focus group dealt with questions relating to God. Participants were asked who God is to each one of them. Opinions were somewhat homogenous on the fact that God is creator of heaven and earth, the Almighty, the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent, the Protector and the Provider. God is also the Father of all mankind.

The view that God is creator of everything has not changed. He is still called uMdali (creator), the one who broke off nations from uthlanga. The fact that He created nations suggests that he himself was not created. The Zulu name of God 'Umvelinqangi' brings this idea out very clearly that He appeared (wavela).

What this means is that humanity can only be defined in relation to uthlanga from which they originated or broke off. If God is Uthlanga then humanity can only be defined in terms of Him. Humanity has no identity of its own but that of God.

The understanding of God as creator even today bears testimony to the effect that the Zulu symbolic universe in spite of influences from other universes has succeeded in maintaining this important understanding, which has an enormous influence on Zulu symbolic universe as a whole.

F.2 God's qualities, which are associated with a conventional symbol represented by the Father's role, in your cultural context.

Some of the qualities in God, which can be associated with the symbol father, are those related to the father's role in the family. That he is head of all the families of nations and as the father is head of his household. God like a human father also reprimands, admonishes, protects, supports, leads, loves and cares for his people.

The view expressed by other authors who have done research in this area, of a God who was defined vaguely and who had to be approached through

mediators, is challenged here. The understanding expressed by participants in this research that God is protector and sustainer of humanity poses a challenge to the view of a god who was vaguely understood. Obviously God is no longer seen by some Zulu people as uninvolved. He is directly involved in their day to day living. This we believe should be seen as an area of convergence, which needs to be fully, and properly developed in order to facilitate a smooth transfer from the Zulu Symbolic universe to the Christian. Viewing God as Creator, Protector and Sustainer demands of humanity a reciprocal response expressed in terms of worship, love, respect, obedience and continuous praise.

Other attributes given by participants to God such as Father, Love and light underscore the shift in no uncertain terms. There is a strong correlation between God's attributes and the role of father in their worldview. This anthropomorphic view of God as Father is a symbolic expression of the manner in which people experienced God as loving, caring, protective and forgiving.

The 'Father' image in a society riddled by abuse of women, children and where rape seems to be the order of the day, causes almost as many problems as it solves. Because of the problems just enunciated, the very idea of equating God with human fathers is challenged today. The protagonist of the feminist viewpoint believe that the attributes accorded to God, in fact are well displayed in women than in man hence the attempt to describe God in female terms. This view may be true due to the failure of man to live up to the ideal expressed in the anthropomorphic attributes given to God.

There is a strong biblical view that sees God the Creator as head just as an earthly father is head of an earthly family. He is the Protector just as an earthly father is expected to be protector of his own household. He is the Sustainer or provider just as an earthly father is expected to provide for his family.

F.3 What is the significance for all humanity of viewing God as Father?

The symbol, namely, Father, which is used of God has profound implications for the manner in which our understanding of the father and head of the family has on our understanding of God. Using such a conventional symbol to represent God helps us to be able to relate to God. We can all identify ourselves with him. In him humanity is not divided into races, sexes, classes. All are equal and the same.

F.4 What does the word 'love' mean to you and why do you associate God with love?

Love means giving your heart and life for the one whom is loved. Being prepared to do that which appears impossible because you love. In a sense it describes the character of the one who loves than the one who is being loved Participants felt that there is a close connection between love and light and that God's works show him to be utter light in whom there is no shade or darkness at all.

F.5 What are the implications of viewing God as love?

Viewing God in this manner makes it incumbent upon each human being to do well and to love. Love is not static but dynamic. It can only be seen in action. This fact is emphasised in 1 John (4:10) where it is stated, 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be an expiation for our sins'. What this means is that those who are of the family of God ought to love others and not only be prepared to lay down his life them (1 John 3:16) but to open his heart and help the brother in need (v.17) That is the essence of love.

F.6 Why do people associate God with light?

People describe God as light because Light describes the character of the giver. He gives light because he is light. It is out of what we have that we are able to give to other. God does not have light but is light himself. Where there is light, there is no darkness. An example that is so apt to this, is of the rising of the sun. That the sun is about to rise is shown by the darkness that quickly vanishes, giving way to light. The two never meet, they are like archenemies.

F.7 What are the implications for viewing God as light?

To describe God as light has similar connotations as stated above. God is all goodness and there is nothing ugly or evil in him. There is no shadow of darkness in him. Those who are his children have no option but to be light.

They ought to walk in the light (1 John 2:6). Walking in the light means doing those things that reveal the light aspect of God's nature. Such things include actions that would not bring shame to the individual, family, community, and God.

F.8. Who is Jesus to you?

Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Messiah, the Saviour and Master of our lives. He is God's answer to our sinfulness. He is the Mediator between God and the people. He is the intercessor for the people of God. He is the Shepherd of our souls and the champion of our salvation.

F.9. What conventional symbol do you think would best represent Christ within your culture?

Participant admitted that the question of finding a representative symbol for Christ within the Zulu culture was not an easy one. Having made the admission they came up with the following: the Black Messiah- the example of how members of the Nazareth Church view Shembe was cited. Members however stated that that is not their view but a view held by a number of Zulu people hence their mentioning it. The second example likened Christ to the Elder brother in the family. That he performs all the functions that would be performed by the elder brother-the heir apparent. That all the duties the Father performs, once he is dead are assumed by the elder brother. The only difficulty they pointed out with regard to this example is that the elder brother only assumes his duties after the death of his father whereas Christ according to the Bible is given central focus and is active concurrently with God. The

third example, which others felt conveyed something of Christ, is likening him to the ancestors. The fact that he stands between God and people as mediator correlates best with what they know to be the role of ancestors.

F.10. Who is the Holy Spirit to you?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is the same Spirit who indwelt the prophets of old and spoke through. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter promised by Jesus who was to come into the world to be with believers forever, even the Spirit of truth. He dwells in us and through us continues Christ work of salvation. Through us he continues to perform mighty acts, which help us to recognise God's presence with us. He leads and guides believers into all truth.

F.11. What conventional symbol do you think would best represent the Holy Spirit within your culture?

Participants pointed out that the symbol that pastors often use is that of likening the coming of the Holy Spirit into a person's life to someone being possessed by an idlozi (ancestral) spirit. Similar changes that occur and become obvious in a person filled with the Spirit of God can be observed in someone possessed by idlozi spirit. This is not to say that they exhibit similar characteristics but the similarity is in terms of the radicalness of these changes. The person can no longer act according to his/her old ways. After possession the person becomes a new being with a new master.