

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT GROWTH PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

The study on understanding adolescent growth process is valuable in this chapter, for it enables the researcher to assess and discuss the impact of absent fathers on adolescent males (in chapter 5) in their journey to adulthood. Several writers like Santrock, (2005), Farrar, (2006) and Erikson, (1968) suggest the importance of this stage in human development. The author shows various views on the challenges faced by adolescents in their journey to adulthood, a world of responsibility, freedom and high expectations from the society. In many African cultures, parents are often concerned that their influence on their children will diminish, that their values will become unacceptable and that their children will conform to the wrong groups with strange unsupervised values.

The adolescent stage is plagued by conflicting opinions from different cultures and studies of human development have indicated it to be so. It is viewed as a risky period by some, while others takes it as a normal transitional time of growing up. The author in this chapter shows and discusses biblical, historical, psychological and African perspectives on adolescent identity formulation and development.

3.2 A PARADIGM SHIFT IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The reader has to note that the adolescent stage was unknown among the Africans in Zimbabwe. Human life had three recognised stages, namely childhood, adulthood and old age. Childhood represented the beginning of life, while adulthood meant maturity and old age was associated with wisdom and the end of life. The preparation of a boy to be a man

began before or immediately after a boy is weaned, which is approximately between four to five years. At this time, boys would accompany men or sit where men are gathered as a way to learn. The men would also discuss issues that instilled masculinity on the boys. This was necessary as it should be today because guidance is important in this unkind world. In this way, boys received courage from stories and experiences that men shared when with them; particularly in the evenings.

Training was not strictly confined to a specific age though certain aspects of the tradition would be emphasised at particular ages. Training continues through adolescence period through to the death bed of the father, just as David did to his son Solomon in 1 Kings 2:2-3; when he said to him, 'Be a man. Keep the charge.' Walk in the ways of the Lord all your days. This is the role of an African father to his boy child. This is why among Africans the last words said by an old dying person are greatly respected if not honored because of their wisdom. In his book, *Mentoring Boys* Farrar states about the adolescent stage:

“The teenage years are dangerous. What is remarkable is that teenagers (sic), as we know them today, didn't even exist a hundred years ago. So if you have a teenager, you are dealing with a whole new breed of cat” (Farrar, 2006:223).

He further states;

It wasn't until the twentieth century that a whole new stage of development emerged- the period we now call the teenage period. The first time the term teenager was ever used was in 1941, and it really didn't take hold until 1950s (Farrar, 2006: 228).

The above quotations show us that the infancy and childhood periods were one and that children were taught responsibility earlier than in our changing environment, when

childhood is divided into infancy, early, middle, and late childhood. This historical shift in human development has brought with it some challenges which has resulted in the society to label a particular stage as being at risk.

Historically, fathers exhausted most of their time with their children through herding cattle, hunting and doing other male related jobs. Boys after their infancy would spend more time with male adults as a way of nurturing them into mature adult males. This is why the adolescent stage was a less pronounced period. In the past few years, this period has been punctuated by a work environment that required fathers to work long hours away from home (Farrar, 2006:230). The time spent by fathers with their sons was, therefore, disturbed. Children also spent most of their life with other peers at school which delayed the age at which children are viewed by society as adults. They have to acquire a trade for themselves or achieve certain qualifications in order for them to be considered for adult tasks.

This shift in how children were educated took their influence away from parents and the mentors that they chose for the children. With this shift, the influence would now shift from the home to peers, and to a group of “elite” educators, who in time would be proven to have a value system that often undermined what the child was learning in the home (Farrar, 2006:230).

This is why the author particularly wants to find out how these boys can be helped to enter this world with societal qualifications even when there is a crisis in parenting today in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe. The situation in Zimbabwe reveals that a lot of men have left their families due to various reasons ranging from economic migration to political uncertainty; thus creating another challenge in the upbringing of the African male child.

The author in this study is concerned about the trauma that the absence of fathers have on their children in the African cultures today. No one needs to magnify the importance of parents-child relationship and the husband–wife relationship. Children do not choose their fathers but God chooses for them. But fathers choose to leave the children behind as they go to the Diaspora. The author is challenging the reader to consider and count the gain of mentoring the boy child against supporting the wounded children. What does it benefit a man to materially support the boy child and socially and spiritually lose him to the world? There is no reason why we should ignore the influence of African fathers on their children; no true society can be built without them, for no true society can be built on illusions and opportunism of its God given responsibility towards its own blood.

African fathers find it difficult and painful not to have children, particularly a son who is expected to carry the father’s name after his death as already mentioned in chapter one. It is equally traumatic for the male child to grow up in the absence of his father, who is supposed to guide him into adulthood.

It is important that we get to the biblical norms and traditional principles that made us a people that depend upon each other and respect the roles played by everyone in the community. For it is important for the male children to have good manners, be people of quality, to know how to read and count, and to know and worship the Lord. It is wonderful for them to respect parents, and more valuable for them to obey God in order to create stable societies which are guided by heads of families who fear God.

The stable family is the primary government for education and stability in every person’s journey to adulthood. It is in the family that fathers should help boys grow into responsible male adults, hence the English saying which states that ‘charity begins at home’. Interest in

this study is paid on the adolescent male not on the whole topic of human development. Although there is a mention of childhood development, attention is paid on the ages between 10-22 years. This is a period when African male children are moulded into adult males and need parental support in many areas of their lives.

3.3 A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

In biblical times, parenting was considered to be a very important family and religious role that was carried out whole heartedly. The bible shows us that it is and was the responsibility of parents to teach their children how to live. The parents and society instructed children by word and example in technical skills and behavioral modes essential to the household life.

The home was indeed an educational institution –a place of parental teaching and child learning (Zuck, 1996:142). This shows that parents who neglect teaching their children the bible and biblical standards of living and leaving it to others, peers or in no ones hands, are deviating from God’s design for the upbringing of children.

Moreover, during the reign of Joshua after the Israelites had conquered Canaan, Levites were not allocated land. Instead, they were assigned to various cities to go and teach the people the law of God (Numbers, 35: 11-15; Joshua, 21: 1-42. Deut, 17:11 33:8-10). Zuck states that these Levites did not in any way eliminate the need for parents to teach their children in their homes. The Israelites valued parenting to such an extent that when Israel was taken captive by the Babylonians (605-536), teaching continued even in the synagogues; which were places of worship and teaching in Diaspora. This shows that the church and the family should work together in teaching and helping the children to grow into adulthood.

Furthermore, the Synagogue continued the teaching that boys and girls received at home. It did not replace the family instruction but it complemented what the parents did in homes. The old English Proverb emphasises the importance of the father as a major source of influence in the boy's life when it states that; "One father is worth more than a hundred schoolmasters" (Farrar, 2006:74). Farrar's concept connects very well with the Shona proverbs cited in chapter four (item 4.5) which states that the father's behavior is reflected in the son; hence the saying "like father like son." When a son is to make a major decision in his life, his point of reference is his father. It is, therefore, clear that in order to have a healthy society, sons have to be mentored by their fathers.

Zuck, (1996) affirms that among the Jews, Greeks and Romans, children at the age between 6 and 7 were taught by parents at home, those between the age of 12-15 were taught Greek literature; mainly Homer's writings, mathematics science, geography, writing, physical training and music, while those of the ages between 16-20 were put under a rhetor who taught them logic and rhetoric. Compare Acts 22:3 which shows that the Apostle Paul learned rhetoric under Gamaliel, a Greek Philosopher.

"The Church was not intensely concerned with schools as such. It was willing to use such schools as there were for the purpose of ordinary education. But the church was intensely concerned with the home. The Church saw that in the last analysis the only true teachers of any Child are the parents of that child....The school is at best only an adjunct to the home. It is the parent who is responsible for bringing the child into the World; and it is the parent who is responsible for bringing the child to God" (Zuch, 1996:146).

Zuck acknowledges John Chrysostom (AD 345- 407) in his essay on bringing up a boy child ‘Impressing on Christian Parents the Importance of teaching their Children properly,’ who wrote;

“What will become of boys when from earliest youth they are without teachers...? In our own days every man takes the greatest pains to train in the arts and in literature and speech. But to exercise this child’s soul in virtue, to that no man any longer pays heed,” He urged Christian parents to discipline their sons, to teach them by stories(the “ear gate”) and teach by means of the smell, eye, tongue, and touch”(Zuck, 1996:147).

Zuck reminds the author how his father communicated with him by coughing early in the morning as a sign to say it was time to wake up and to go to the fields. The author and his brothers distinguished between the ‘*wake up cough*’ from an ordinary cough. Jesus showed in his relationships with his disciples that his followers know his voice. Therefore, the father –son relationship becomes very important in the boy’s life.

The father is to be the role model and an authority to be obeyed by his male adolescent. The father must make every effort possible to create a learning environment for his children on how to live. The boy child acquires the beliefs , customs, attitudes, values and roles of their culture or social group in order to be integrated into their own and larger society with confidence, responsibility and freedom. This is because they will have been socialised to identify with their fathers and particular family or society figures that matter to them (community).

3.4 A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

The definition of adolescence requires a consideration not only of age but also of socio-historical influences. Historians view the period 1890-1920 as the age of adolescence (Santrock, 2005:11). The Great Depression brought with it a series of economic and political challenges thus, replacing the hedonistic values of the 1920s. This was followed by the World war 11 which was a serious life threatening event for the adolescents. The World war exposed the adolescents to military service and different cultures, thus promoting a great sense of independence and an alternative view to life which was different from what they were used to.

As already noted (see item 3.1), by 1950, the developmental period that is referred to as the adolescence had come of age. It did not only possess the physical and social identities, but legal identity as well. For, every state had developed special laws for the youths between the ages of 16 -20 years, although the adolescents of this period were viewed as a silent generation (Santrock, 2005:11).

The adolescent period is very crucial in this study because it gives us an understanding of the various historical and philosophical thoughts which aid our intervention strategies. Santrock, (2005) sees the adolescent period as being the transitional period in human life which links childhood to adulthood. This period concerns any parent who takes parenting seriously. The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, both, referred to the adolescents as the youths. Plato believed that reasoning does not belong to childhood, but to youth (adolescents). Even so, the youth were not fit for great responsibility unless they where trained to become mature. For this reason, Aristotle is quoted by Kierman as saying that;

“The young are not proper students of political science, as they have no experience of the actions of life which form the premises and subjects of reasoning” (Kierman, 1962:521).

To the contrary, in many wars and political campaigns worldwide, the youths are greatly involved because of their strength. In the bible, we learn that during the war between the Amalekites and Israelites, David was prohibited from joining the war because he was young. Instead, David insisted to fight Goliath whom he eventually killed because of his trust in the power of the God of Israel.

Equally, Plato states that children should spend their time in recreation (sports and music) while youths (adolescents) should study science and mathematics. He (Aristotle), a student of Plato, was summoned to Pella by king Philip of Macedonia to go and take the principal hand in the education of the king’s son, Alexander, who was then 13 years old.

Alexander was being prepared by his father, through Aristotle, to subsequently play an important role on the political stage the era as ‘Alexander the Great’. As mentioned above, Aristotle at the age of 17 went to study medicine in the city of Athens. Therefore, adolescent period is very crucial in philosophical thinking. For them to study, they obviously needed serious guidance. It seems that during Plato’s time, this period equally drew the attention of society as it did among the Jews and Africans, who trained adolescents to defend their tribes and clans. Interestingly, Farrar acknowledges that,

“The New England Puritans had a great passion for their families and often wrote very tenderly about their love for their wives and children. They were concerned that as their sons grew older; their close ties with their sons would tend to make

them too soft at a crucial time of maturity. It was common for a father to decide that it was time to send his son away around the age of fourteen. The Puritans looked for good men who could take their sons to the next step of growth and responsibility. Around the age of fourteen once a son had shown a leaning toward a particular career “calling,” he would leave home to work under a “master.” This was an older man who was skilled at his trade or craft” (Farrar, 2006:226-227).

It is, therefore, very clear that in the past, arrangement was done to equip children in various areas. The tutors to these children were carefully selected by the head of the family for it was the father’s duty to see to it that children are properly guided towards a healthy future. Fathers, who take the mentoring of boys seriously, guide their children when choosing the schools they should go to. Children are taken to good teachers for extra lessons and coaching, and by so doing, the father continues to be a good shepherd to his family; particularly the boy child.

Aristotle further argued that the most important aspects of adolescence are the ability to choose, and self – determination; which are the hallmark of maturity. According to Hopson (2005), Aristotle’s emphasis on the development of self determination encompasses independence, identity, and career choices, which are key themes during ~~in~~ adolescence. In spite of the adolescent’s need for self determination, Aristotle recognises that there is egocentrism during adolescence. This is reflected in the adolescents’ belief that they know everything and are quite sure about it. However, when adolescents are properly guided in their journey to adulthood, they mature emotionally and become interested in others.

Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau believe that human development has distinct phases even though their views or ideas lacked scientific exploration (Santrock, 2005). As already

stated elsewhere in this chapter, the development of the concept of an adolescent dawned between the 19th and 20th century. It should, therefore, be noted that the phases of human development from Plato to date vary but the challenges faced by adolescents have not changed much.

Today, the adolescence phase is largely dealt with by psychologists, urban reformers, educators, counsellors and society since these children would have reached a period during which major decisions should be made. Allen (2003) in Meek et al, (2005:387) claims that many adolescents appear to be passive during, this stage of human development and that they experience considerable turmoil within themselves. Hall (1918) coined this stage as a period of “Storm Stress” cited in Meek et al, (2005:387).

Stanley G Hall (1844- 1924) is described by historians as the father of scientific study who sincerely dealt with adolescents and issues that concerned the adolescence period. He believed that the adolescence stage covers the ages between 12-23 years; which is characterized by considerable upheavals. For Hall, the adolescence period is a turbulent time which is charged with conflicts and mood swings or it can as well be said to be a period of self-exploration.

Today’s adolescents challenge us to continue with studies on children because they mature early and our global village has exposed them to a world view of their own before time. Equally, parents are living in a society which emphasises materialism at the expense of good moral behavior for their children. This has led to the unguided and unsupervised moral behaviors of children and as a result adolescents become a threat to themselves and to others when they are not guided by adults. This belief in material emphasis makes parents the mere danger to children because they rush for the acquisition of wealth at the expense of

guiding their children in God's way. Chapter 5 of this thesis reveals how fathers left their sons without choosing mentors for them or creating an environment in which they can be moulded into responsible adults.

The early development and exposure of adolescents has challenged them to handle life's issues by themselves when they are not cognitively and emotionally prepared. There are biological changes which occur during adolescence that affect adolescents' behaviors and moods. For example, a boy child may discover that his body and voice are changing; this can be traumatic if there is no one to direct him to handle such issues. Children who fail to learn respect for the authority in the home usually have trouble in the larger society Santrock, (2005). It is important, therefore, to understand the stages of human development from Erikson in order to appreciate and understand the importance of the father's role in guiding adolescent males into adulthood.

3.5 THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES THROUGH ADOLESCENTS

It is important to note that the adolescence stage like old age, gender differences or any other stage in life can be misunderstood unless someone or the society takes upon itself the task of educating itself about it. The author, therefore, seeks to illuminate human developmental stages through adolescence as coined by Erikson (1968).

Erikson's psychosocial theory provides considerable assistance in explaining how children are affected by social relationships and environments. The eight stages that he coined help us to understand the challenges that adolescent males may face when the father is absent and how it may impact on one's adulthood later in life. According to Erikson, these stages are governed by what he calls 'epigenetic principle' Erikson (1968), which states that anything that grows has a ground plan and that out of this ground plan, the parts arise. This

is because each stage helps in the building and integration of one's personality. Below are the psychosocial stages that signify the crisis involved in one's life cycle; which the author considered in the study on "Absent fathers due to migrant work; its traumatic impact on the adolescent male in Zimbabwe."

Trust *versus* mistrust (infancy) - the infant is dominated by biological needs and drives. The quality of their relationship with caregivers will influence the extent to which the trust (or mistrust) in others and the world in general is sensed. The virtue of hope is associated with this stage.

Autonomy *versus* doubt and shame (early childhood) - social demands for self-control and bodily regulation for example: toilet training influence feelings of self-efficacy versus self doubt. The quality of will, the will to do what is expected and expectable, emerges at this stage two.

Initiative *versus* guilt (pre-school age) – Here, children begin to actively explore and intrude upon their environment. Will they sense guilt in these self-initiated activities or will they feel justified in planning and asserting control over their activities? The virtue of purpose – the courage to pursue personally valued goals in spite of risks and possible failure - now ascends.

Industry *versus* inferiority (school age) - The social context in which the first three crises are negotiated is predominantly the home and immediate family. In stage four, however, children begin formal instruction of some sort. They master the tasks and skills valued by one's teachers and the larger society is now the focal concern. The quality of competence (with the tools and ways of adult world) is said to develop.

Identity *versus* Diffusion (adolescence) –This is a pivotal step in Erikson’s scheme, when adolescents actively attempt to synthesise their experiences in order to formulate a stable sense of personal identity. While this process is psychosocial in nature- social fit or “solidarity with group ideals” must occur –Erikson emphasises the role of accurate self knowledge and reality testing. Individuals come to view themselves as products of their previous experiences; a continuity of experience is sensed. Positive resolutions of prior crises, being autonomous, willful, and industrious- facilitate identity formation, whereas previous failures may lead to identity diffusion. Fidelity, the ability to maintain commitments in spite of contradictory value systems, is the virtue that emerges during adolescence.

Intimacy *versus* Isolation (young adulthood) - In this stage, one must be willing and able to unite one’s own identity with another’s. Since authentic disclosure and mutuality leave one vulnerable, a firm sense of identity is a prerequisite. Love is the quality that ascends during this stage.

Generativity *versus* stagnation (middle adulthood) – This is the time during the life span when one strives to actualise the identity that has been formed and shared with selected others. The generation or production of offspring, artifacts, ideals, products, and so forth is involved. The virtue of care now emerges: generative adults care for others through parenting, teaching, supervising, and so forth, whereas stagnating adults are absorbed in their own personal need.

Integrity *versus* despair (maturity) –The final Eriksonian stage focuses on the perceived completion or fulfillment of one’s life cycle. When individuals become aware that death may be imminent, do they feel despair, either fearing or welcoming death, or do they

perceive the order and meaningfulness of their one and only life within a larger perspective? Wisdom is the last virtue to emerge. The wise person understands the relativistic nature of knowledge and accepts that one's life had to be the way it was; this final recognition permits no suppositions (Corsini 1994:502)

The last three adult stages (6 to 8) are directly affected by the identity achieved during adolescence. The reader has to note that the negotiation of the eight stages largely depends upon the quality of relationship with the significant others at each stage of development as indicated in the fourth stage. Therefore, each stage of childhood development must be lived through completely in order for the person to be prepared adequately for the next. This stage (childhood) emphasises that the environment in which development takes place is very important in the upbringing of a child. Therefore, it is important for the fathers to assess the environment in which their child is passing through lest he becomes stuck by its circumstances. Children need supervision within every environment because of their level of experience and maturity. The fifth stage, which is identity versus diffusion, can swiftly be negotiated and achieved depending on the successes in the first three stages. This shows that there are various factors that have to do with one's identity development as pointed out by Blois in Richard;

“Blois (1941, 1979) modified the traditional psychoanalytic theory, stressing the importance of the “cultural milieu and social stratum” (Blois, 1941, p7) in personality formation and positing a reciprocal influence between the individual and the environment. Although he insisted that adolescent development must be considered in the context of a particular culture and the family's “unique version of the culture” (Blois, 1941, p. 260), he – like his psychoanalytic predecessors – saw

adolescence as a transitional period that involves a recapitulation of earlier familial patterns of interaction. However, he considered this process to be qualitatively different from earlier developmental experiences because of the significant maturation of the ego (ego supremacy and ego differentiation) during the latency period (Blos, 1941). This ego development allows the adolescent in most cases to resolve the oedipal conflicts and the component infantile dependencies” (Richard, 1995:18).

Blos further states that individuation is the second process during adolescence which requires ‘normative regression in the service of development (Blos 1987:153), that is, only in adolescence is regression an essential and normal process (Richard 1995:18). Although the regression is a normal process, there is need for adult guidance in order to attain a health personality development.

Development depends upon each previous stage. However, each attained stage needs hard work and support from the adults in order for one to qualify to a stage that follows. Otherwise, a lack of a supportive environment could cause one to be stuck in this crucial stage. In many African cultures, guidance is enlisted from the society. Among the Africans, elders in the society would be asked by the father to guide their adolescents on various issues that may affect children; however, today this is not done among Zimbabweans.

Christian parents and guardians at this stage would bring their children to be counselled or would encourage their children to join youth groups. Each stage needs to be completed sufficiently in order for a person to benefit physically, socially and spiritually in this life. The needs during each stage provide opportunities for growth, learning, and the evolution

of individual identity. Failure to meet these needs may result in a deficit on identity formation and a person becomes stuck and this leads to an unhealthy personality.

3.6 DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN ADOLESCENCE

The chronological periods that define the stages between infancy and adolescence have to be understood in order to deal with the separation of adolescents with their biological fathers. These stages might be understood differently in different cultures. For example, among the Ngoni of Malawi, the Shona of Zimbabwe and the Tonga of Zambia communities, in the pre- colonial days children up to the age of five (5) were still breastfed because they were perceived to be ‘infants.’ This reflects why the adolescence period was a latent stage as mentioned in item 3.1

Moreover, the adolescent stage is considered important in Zimbabwe because at this period various changes take place on an adolescent child. Aschwanden articulates this view in the following way.

“A boy attains his full strength only in adolescence, when his seeds ripen. Although this process of maturing takes it out of the boy and makes him thin, he becomes tougher and acquires more resistance at the same time” (Aschwanden, 1982:51).

These developmental stages help the reader to have a general understanding on why Zimbabwean adolescents require special attention in their journey to adulthood. It also reveals to the reader the developmental limitations that the society should be aware of. Below are the developmental periods from, middle age and late childhood. The adolescence period is important because the key task of African fathers to adolescent males is to prepare them for adulthood.

In this study, the adolescence period is considered to be between 10-22 years of age, as already mentioned elsewhere in this study. Hall (1844-1924) considered the adolescence period to be between 12 - 23 years and that it is characterised by considerable upheaval (Santrock 2005: 8). The author has taken that range because among the Africans, a young person of 22 years and below is still seen as not mature enough to be considered a man to make his own decisions. More also, at this stage most of these young men will still be at school and still depend upon their parents for nearly everything. Possibly, if the focus had included girls, the age range could have been reduced because, from the African point of view, girls mature earlier than boys. According to Hall, this period has been described that as characterised by 'stress and Storms' (see item 3.5).

The author concentrates on the adolescence stage with the five levels of development as stated by Amanat & Beck, instead of all the stages of human development. The levels show what goes on during adolescence on the journey toward adulthood among the boys and girls, though this study focuses on the boy child. The levels reveal to the author the biological changes that take place in the life of the boy child. This revelation helps the author to assess the impact of the absent father as a boy child journeys through adolescence into adulthood at a time that he is forming a sense of identity by negotiating relationships with parents and peers (Meek, et al 2005). During this period, rapid physical, emotional, social, spiritual and psychological changes are also taking place although Amanat and Beck emphasise the physical changes and the human chemistry as shown below.



Level 1	
Boys 9-12 (Average 10)	Girls 8-11 (Average 9-10)
Hormones are beginning to activate although no visual signs of development are apparent.	Rapid growth may begin
Level 2	
Boys 9-15 (Average 12-13)	Girls 8-14 (Average 11-12)
1. Begin to change from child to young man appearance.	1. Breast buds develop.
2. Testicles and scrotum enlarge with no penis growth.	2. Areolas increase in size.
3. Pubic hair may begin.	3. Rapid height and weight growth.
4. New muscle tissue and fat	4. Hips broader and softer shape
5. Areola around nipple may increase in Size and darken.	5. Pubic hair may begin
Level 3	
	Girls 9-15 (Average 12-13)
1. Penis begins to grow in length.	1. Breasts continue to grow.
2. Testicles and scrotum continue to grow	2. Pubic hair darker and coarse.
3. Pubic hair darker and coarse.	3. Growing in height and weight.
4. Growth in height continues.	4. Menstruation may commence
5. Voice begins to change.	5. Normal whitish vaginal discharge.
Level 4	
Boys 11-17 (Average 14-15)	Girls 10-16 (Average 13-14)
1. Penis increase in width as well as length	1. Underarm hair
2. First ejaculation.	2. Breasts have grown

3. Voice deepens	3. May begin menstruation if not in level 3
4. Scrotum and testicles continue to grow	4. Ovaries are enlarging.
5. Underarm hair.	5. Pubic hair more adult like
6. Some chin and lip hair.	
7. Skin more oily.	
8. Pubic hair more adult like	
Level 5	
Boys 14-18 (Average 16)	Girls 12-19 (Average 15)
1. Pubic hair and genitals have adult appearance.	1. Breast and pubic hair fully Develop
2. Full facial hair.	2. Ovulation regularly.
3. Rapid growth is slowing.	3. Menstrual period well established.
4. Mature male physique	4. Probably at full height.
5. Nearing full height and weight	

(Amanat & Beck, 1994:4).

The stages coined by Amanat et al, show that children need parental guidance during at the adolescence period because of the human chemistry that is taking place in their bodies. Adolescents at these stages require proper guidance from parents due to biological changes that need a social model in a form of “a living document”(Gerkin 1997) in order for an adolescent’s behavior to be biologically and socially induced. Santrock states that “Adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture” (Santrock 2005:23). This shows that the transition from childhood to adolescence begins with the onset of pubertal maturation, while the transition from adolescent to adulthood is determined by cultural standards and experiences of elders in the society.

At this stage, adolescents are getting ready to be men and they need a God-given man (their father) to emulate. The adolescence period without guidance can be a very dark period for the young boys. Consequently, boys lose control of their world in the absence of a male model while the fathers lose their sons to the cruel material world.

In many families today, these children lack proper adult role models. Unfortunately, they assume adult roles and responsibilities without undergoing preparation from adults. Hence; unscrupulous and heartless members of the society entice them into illicit behaviors of robbery and political violence.

Worse still, when parents decide to migrate to other countries, there is no or less time to plan for the proper custody of their children. Therefore, the probability of leaving their children in wrong hands or with an anxious mother, who may be wondering what it would mean to guide these boys in the environment in which the father is missing, is very high.

In 2009, the author's younger brother was deployed for peace keeping mission in Sudan (the author's brother was informed about the use of his situation for the purpose of this study). The younger brother informed the author about his plans a month before leaving that he had decided to leave his 4 and 10 year old boys in the rural area with relatives and that the 2 year old young girl would remain with his mother in -law. This is how a lot of parents have left their children. His wife was also joining him on the Sudan mission.

In the above situation, the author's younger brother left his son at a time when the boy was approaching early adolescence, a period that needs the father's presence the most. The boy at this stage is beginning to change from a child to a young man's appearance as indicated above on level 2. The changes in level 2 may be so exciting and challenging to the boy

child especially when the father is absent. According to Erikson, it is the stage for identity formation. During this period, masculine behavior should be imitated by the child from the father. When fathers are absent, they expose their adolescents to a dangerous environment because they will be independent, in the absence of the father and confused about their masculinity in the presence of women and friends. The boys will end up resorting to an unapproved boy code, which may destroy their morals in which “Violence and the threat of violence provide the immediate lens through which young boys struggled to forge their identities.”(Ouzgane et al, 2005:212).

The adolescence period requires parental supervision and father’s mentorship because of the challenges presented by this period in the boy’s life. They are developmentally immature and lack specific cognitive and behavioral skills to successfully counter external pressures (Vallender I & Fogelman K 1987; Santrock, 2005). While at adolescence, children lack specific skills and this, a period when boys cease to be children. It is associated with such rights as to vote, drive, and choose a career of which they need guidance.

The author is challenged by the 2008 harmonised election campaigns, particularly towards the election “Run Off” when the youths (adolescents) terrorised people in an effort to force them to vote for the party that had hired them.

Male youths gang raped women, killed people and used dirty language in their campaign threats on elderly men and women. Perhaps some of these young people were well above adolescent stage, but could be understood in the context of lack of guidance during this crucial phase. The researcher observes four forces that were at work on these youths and these are; overly impressed by popularism, insensitivity when the will gets challenged,

irresponsibility when the world gets appealing, and instability when the world gets rough. The activities obviously have after effects especially to African people who believe in the avenging spirits and bad omens for insulting, beating elders and killing innocent people as inferred in chapter 4. These youths were not paid anything, and if ever they were, it was nothing meaningful other than food, beer and enjoyed the political immunity which protected them against any arrest; thus giving them the freedom to loot, rape and kill.

Although adolescence period is generally stressful, it also presents unique positive outcomes in children. For example, the physical growth and strength may mean that children are able to fend for themselves more effectively and are better able to defend for themselves from unscrupulous people; especially if they have adults to guide them and whom they look up to.

3.7 IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

Identity refers to the individual's awareness of himself or herself as an independent unique person with a specific place in society (Santrock 2005:178). Therefore, development implies that adolescents need to define who they are, what is important to them, and what directions they want to take in life referred to as an identity crisis by Erikson that is a temporary period of confusion, during which adolescents explore a set of values and goals which lead to a formation of a personal and social identity (Erikson, 1968; Santrock, 2005:182-183). Erikson points out that the society allows adolescents a certain period of time called psychosocial moratorium in order for adolescents to find themselves and their roles as adults (Meek et al, 2005: 426).

During this period of identity formation, themes such as gender roles, relationships, marriage, religion, politics, an own value system, independence from parents, social responsibility and work roles, are important (Ackermann, 1990; Bester, 1990; Burns, 1988; Meeks, Heit, Page, 2005: 426).

This means that through self examination, self evaluation experimentation and formulation of an own value system and philosophy of life, they want to know who they are and what they want from life. According to Santrock, (2005:294) adolescents usually become faithful to their own values and principles in order to gain self confidence. As part of their search for identity, adolescents begin to grapple in more sophisticated, logical ways with such questions as “ why am I on this planet” Is there really a God or higher spiritual being, or have I just been believing what the church imprinted in my mind?” What are my religious views” (Santrock, 2005:294). It is during this period of identity formation that adolescents are likely to change their religious believes or to change from one church to another.

Although in Luke 2:44-50, we see Jesus in his early adolescence grappling with issues which children in our age wrestle with, he never identified with his peers as the parents expected him to, but he was with the elders to learn and seek clarification from them. He asked questions and projected his religious views to teachers and other religious leaders about God. The conflict that emanated when his parents learnt that he was in the temple was that of his mission which his parents were unclear of. Jesus found the issue of identity very crucial in his life. He understood who he was, what he wanted and was aware that his parents, community and disciples were not clear of who he was. In Matthew 16: 13-16, He asks his disciples about his identity whether people and the disciples knew who he was.

The Gospels show us that people did not understand him until after the ascension. The author does not intend to discuss the life of Jesus but to draw the reader's attention to the importance of Christ's relationship with the father who was and is in him and who actually confirmed that Jesus was his son; whom the earth and its inhabitants should listen to. If, then, one is to understand the role of the father in the life of a boy child, he should appreciate God's relationship with his boy child in this study.

The author is not losing sight of a girl child, Mary, the woman in whom God created space for Jesus' entry into the world. The focus in this study is to assess and find ways on how the boy child can be mentored into adulthood in the absence of his father; who is in the Diaspora.

During early adolescence, the young person forms a separate identity by negotiating relationships with parents and peers. This often happens at the same time that rapid physical changes are occurring typically between the ages of 13-15 (Steinberg, 1981, in Santrock, 2005:25). Conflicts between parents and adolescents reach their peak as conformity with peers increases, when the process of pubertal maturation is at its apex and then declines by later adolescence (Clark – Lempers, Lempers & Ho, 1991, Steinberg, 1981, 1988). It is a time of turbulence and emotional stress in which conflict is characterised by parent-child disagreement over everyday issues such as adolescent's personal appearance and choice of friends (Smetana; 1988, in Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R , 2005: 426).

Jesus' illustration of the prodigal son in Luke 15 affirms parent – child conflict during adolescence when He gave a lesson on God's love and forgiveness. This period of identity development is crowded by numerous conflicts emanating from different view points in life between parents and their adolescent children. During this period, the son thinks he knows

better than his parent while the parent feels that the son knows nothing much about life. However, the father gives his son time and space for self exploration and the son used his freedom irresponsibly. Though the story has many lessons that can be learned, the author identifies the issue of identity confusion as stated by Newton that,

“The adolescent often perpetuates the confusion by immaturely using this ambiguity for manipulative purposes” thereby leading to trauma that reveals itself in eating with pigs in the case of the prodigal son” (Newton, 1995:3).

During adolescence there is an increase in taking drugs and in committing various crimes if parents ignore their role of guiding the adolescents. The children learn from the father through what they see not so much by what they hear. The prodigal son was called home by his father’s love that he had learned during his stay with him before he decided to leave. When he returned, he confessed that he had sinned to God and his human father. This showed that charity began at home. Jesus articulates this method of teaching and learning in Matthew in the following way.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew, 5:14).

While Buchan states of his experience in the following way;

“There is no human relationship more important for a son’s journey into manhood than the relationship between him and his father. Whether the father knows it or not, a son will develop his idea of what a man is by who his father is. It is impossible for

a man to hide his true character from his family, who know his strengths and weaknesses...” (Buchan, 2008: vii).

This shows how during adolescence, fathers play an important role in guiding adolescent males by their life. Children learn more from our interactions with them at all levels. Fathers are the only light for a Christian family and society to their male children. They cannot hide their life from their children. Buchan valued his experience with his father because his everyday experiences with his father made him what he became in life for his own sons. Whatever the father portrays to his sons creates an idea of what a man or a husband is to be like. This can be negative or positive but the son will have learnt from the weaknesses and strengths of his father and negotiate for his own position in life. Moreover, that no father is an angel. The absence of the father would lead to identity formation or confusion.

Separation of legal status from biological maturity contributes to the confusion. The ambiguous status as half –child/half legal adult promotes a continuation of adolescent anger against authority. The adolescent often perpetuates the confusion by immaturely using this ambiguity for manipulative purposes (Newton, 199:3).

Newton shows that identity development is a complex multi-dimensional activity in which interaction between the cognitive, social and personality changes take place. These changes may lead to identity confusion that is traumatic in the development of a healthy adult if not guided. It is the father’s responsibility to help the boy child to be happy in life. When the son is well mentored by his father, identity confusion is avoided and he becomes responsible and mature because he will have learnt lessons from his father. Freedom without responsibility brings about identity confusion which leads to unhappiness, rebellion

and unresolved anger on a male child because he will lack self confidence in whatever he wishes to do (refer to chapter five items 5.6).

3.8 AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON PERSONAL INDENTITY

DEVELOPMENT

Mucherera, (2005) guides the reader and author to understand that a person in the African context is viewed in light of the community. He is considered as being whole if he belongs to a community. On the other hand, the community depends upon the individual for its survival because the community is made up of individuals. This is why the author looks at the trauma caused by the absence of the African father on an adolescent male child in this era when the community is faced with various challenges. The community and individual are important in understanding the environment in which African adolescents are growing up. When the child is growing up, the community provides the materials that an adolescent uses for his identity development. The failure by the male adolescent to draw his strength from the community resources leads to anxiety and trauma because it is a disruption of ones normal growing environment.

When a boy child chooses someone to marry, the family should approve of that relationship; otherwise a healthy married relationship is difficult to come by. An African adolescent depends and develops an identity through the involvement of a community of embeddedness that helps in building his identity. It is through the community that he is taught that the adolescent understands what it means to be a person and the importance of communal life. Proverbs riddles and stories that emphasise the importance of the community and how to build character are taught and repeated at appropriate times as a

child interacts with elders. For example, *Chara chimwe hachiurai inda*, meaning one finger can not kill lice. *Kana uchida kukurumidza kufamba, famba wega asi kana uchinda kufamba rwendo rwakareba famba ne vamwe* meaning that; If one wants to walk fast he should walk alone but he who wants to walk a long distance should walk with others, are said and explained.

The community builds and influences an individual's personal identity. In spite of the various role models from the community, the father's role to guide the boy child remains crucial and central. The adolescent child emulates a male figure in the family in order to be a man.

Identity development is community tailored and the community is involved in one's life from birth to death and from death to eternity. After death, it is the community that talks about the dead person and carry out rituals which help the person's siblings to value the role the deceased played in their lives when he was still alive. This makes the community more powerful than an individual. The role of the community is illustrated by Mbiti in the following way;

“In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to the other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole.

The community must therefore make, create, or produce the individuals, for the individual depends on the corporate group. Physical birth is not enough: the child must go through rites of the incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society. These rites continue throughout the physical life of the person, during

which the individual passes from one stage of corporate existence to another”
(Mbiti, 1997:139).

The dependability of African life guides us to understand that it takes the whole village to raise and guide an adolescent male. The adolescent male child is guided by both males and females in the development of an identity and mentored by males to be a man. According to Mbiti, physical birth is not enough because one should grow into an adult within a particular social context or culture. It is in this social context that one is said to be alive. Failure to hold on to the cultural values and to successfully go through the rites of passage would be considered as death. One would hear people say *hapana zvomunhu* meaning he is a person of no value.

Mucherera highlights Gelfand’s concept of the African thought in guiding and in the bringing up children by stating that;

“As Gelfand says, the next arbitrary phase extends from about twelve to eighteen years of age. Among the Shonas, this phase includes the physical and /or mental developmental changes in the child. Girls develop breasts and they have their menstruation. Boys develop deeper voices, pubic hair, and sometimes they experience their first ejaculation. This is a period in which the aunts, uncles, or grandparents do a lot of work to educate the adolescents about adulthood. The education is mostly done during the evenings.....Both boys and girls are taught about sexual relationships. Sexual intercourse before marriage is highly discouraged” (Gelfand, 2005:85).

The old women would call him (male child) “*Murume wangu*” which means my husband, and they would remind him of his roles especially what they expect of him when he gets married as indicated in chapter 5:3. They will be reminding him of what he will have been taught by the male elders at various levels. In some Shona traditional, communities perform particular ceremonies such as the circumcision of boys between the ages of 12-20 years.

The adolescents are also taught lessons such as self control and respect. In order to grow from childhood towards adulthood, adolescents have to accept to accomplish certain developmental tasks. The successful completion of these tasks will enable individuals to function optimally during adulthood. In modern Western societies, adolescents need to master the following developmental tasks.

- ❖ Acceptance of a changed physical appearance.
- ❖ Development of masculine or feminine gender role.
- ❖ Development of cognitive skills and the acquisition of knowledge.
- ❖ Development of an own identity
- ❖ Development of independence from parents and other adults(Granted among the African)
- ❖ Selection of socially responsible behavior.
- ❖ Acceptance of and adjustment to certain groups.
- ❖ Establishment of heterosexual relationships
- ❖ Development of a strong emotional bond with another person

- ❖ Preparation for marriage and family responsibilities
- ❖ Achievement of financial independence (in Zimbabwe one should own land or an animal.)
- ❖ Development of moral concepts and values that could serve as guidelines for behavior
- ❖ Development of a value system based on a realistic and scientific world view(African metaphysical world)
- ❖ Development of a philosophy of life
- ❖ Satisfy their sexual needs in a socially acceptable way so that it contributes to the development of their identity (Garrison & Garrison, 1975; Havighurst, 1972; Hurlock, 1980; Sebald, 1984).

These aspects are very important in the development of children into responsible adults. Adolescents reach a level of development where psychologically, and spiritually they could be regarded as adults (They will have developed their own identity and emotionally independent of parents and peers) While socially, they are still in the adolescent phase (ie, they are still economically dependent (Dacey & Travers, 1994; Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005: 385).

While the above aspects focus on Western adolescents, most of the expectations tally with what the Zimbabwean adolescents are expected to develop through. The noted difference is in the development of a value system based on the realistic and scientific world which may differ with African spirituality and environment. Hall (1904) acknowledges that the

environment accounts for more developmental changes during adolescence than in earlier periods and believes that hereditary interacts with environmental influences to determine an individual's development (Santrock 2005:8). This is the reason why parental control is valued because parents are “second gods’ or second to God, therefore they are to be respected by their children-always. Though westernization and urbanization seem to have influenced African parental control and supervision, the belief in parental control is still strong among Africans.

3.9 THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGING TIMES

It is possible that Fatherhood is being denied or avoided due to economic and socio-political pressures in most African countries. The urban environment, which is the focus of this study, is faced by the crisis of parenting. Lack of a sense of community, which is created by the urban context, causes anxiety on parents who are raising children in an environment which is different from the one in which they were brought up. The importance of communal training, as it is known in the traditional community, is unknown or unacceptable by some of the young urban children. -Adolescents have no elders to train them into adulthood and their growth lack adult flavor; where traditional values are taught.

While the traditional African man emphasises communal life and is worried about poor relationships, the urban culture stresses an individualistic life influenced by competition and material success. The author recalls how his late grandfather encouraged that all male children above 5 years should eat their food with boys and that those who are over 13 years should eat with adults from one dish of sadza (African porridge) and another of relish. In modern Zimbabwe, each person, particularly in the urban setting, is given his own plate and glass of drinking water at each meal. Despite that, the urban people having adopted some

individualistic patterns of the westerners, the rural people have upheld some of the traditional practices that bound them together for centuries, particularly, in societies where old men are there to guide.

However, the reader should be informed that, in urban communities, it is common among the adolescents to sit in a group married to their mobile phones, radios, playing music or watching television. Individualism removes an African child from his fellow human beings and joins him to certain celebrities alive and dead through these Medias. The most important values that influence African identity formation, which include fathering, are now derived from the western standards. Unfortunately, most Africans have emulated the western patterns of living and accepted these to be the yardstick with which to measure their own lives. The Africans, have by so doing, neglected their values and have become detached and disengaged from their communal relationships.

Mwikamba cited by Mucherera notes the changes that the Africans are faced with, by stating the differences between African and Western cultures in the following way.

“.....it is clear that the Western identity and the African identity differ, and that they have different emphasis. Friendship, solidarity, respect for nature, respect for human dignity, the relationship within community and extended family, which includes both the living and the dead, are values regarded with high esteem in African traditional society. However, these values seem to be fading away from ‘modern’ African society.

Many of the so called ‘modern’ Africans are strangers to themselves, to other people and nature. The harmonious and symbiotic relationship between a person

and the object, between a person and the world, seem to be breaking down. In the past, the symbiotic relationship made an African world of experience to be personal, for the world could not be separated from the self. The self could not be separated from other people or from the world; and all of them could not be separated from God” (Mucherera, 2005:91).

In the Western individualistic culture, initiative and self – directional attributes are valued and a child’s autonomy is encouraged. In contrast to the traditional African cultures in Zimbabwe, obedience and conformity are valued. Parental control is more accepted and exercised. African adolescents respond positively to parental control unlike the Western youth. Although the values seem to have weakened, they are more evident among the Shona people in Zimbabwe.

The reader has to be aware that African families that have imitated the Western culture in parenting have not fitted well in their African communities. These parents have consequently cut ties with their extended family members. This is because most urban families are disturbed by poor grades than poor moral standards, while the traditional African gives more emphasis to high moral standards than on the academic achievements. Therefore, an African child needs a good quality Western education as well as a good training in progressive African culture in order to create a pendulous equilibrium in the society.

When the Africans talk of a person, they measure him or her against societal values. A person of good morals is of great value and high regard than a well educated professor without good morals. This would mean society may need one for his moral and the other for his financial resources. The one with good morals remains a source of strength and hope for

the adolescent's future. But he who combines both good morals and material comfort is an icon in the society.

It is generally believed among many African families that children who fail to learn respect for the authority in the home usually have trouble in the larger society as already mentioned elsewhere in this study. The author recalls how his father used to remind them how bad behavior would cost him and his brothers, when they will be away from home. To him, a good child is the one who combines good behavior, which was, respect for other people and academic excellence (hard work). Unlike many fathers who neglected their role of bringing up a well balanced African boy child, he was more concerned about the child's social, educational and career statuses. If the balancing is not taken seriously, the pendulum swings heavily in the direction that leads to risky behaviors to our sons.

An African adolescent child is faced with the necessity of meeting the demands of nature while at the same time working towards an understanding of an overall view of life. The elders create a normal environment that assists an adolescent to come to terms with the outside world and the demands of nature. Sexual matters are dealt with by the elders of the society. The first emission, which is an event that designates adolescent's life, is viewed as a happy event because it is a sign of fertility and growing up. The adolescent has to inform his uncle or grandfather of the nocturnal event and the uncle, in turn, informs the boy's father. The boy's father then performs or asks the grandfather to carry out a ceremony that represents the symbolic passing of the family's fertility from the grandfather via the father to the son (Aschwanden, 1976:75).

During this period of growth, the boy is given thorough instructions on sexual matters by older members of the family such as cousins, elder brother's wife (Aschwanden, 1976:75),

grandmother, maternal uncle (the brother to the boy's mother), grandfather, paternal uncles and other respected members of the society. The father guides his son through to individuals whose advice he should follow among the many family members who will be interacting with him. He plays a consultant role to his male child. The instructions involve what the adolescent should do and not do and the punishments and rewards of particular behaviors. Particular relationships allow for intimacies, which make a talk about sexual matters between the experienced women and the male adolescent easy (Aschwanden, 1976:75).

The boy's new social position is expressed by new duties and rights, and the symbols of childhood cease to be valid. At this stage, he is allowed to use an arrow and bow or the gun. The weapons which he could not be allowed to use before his first emission can now be used by him for hunting (Aschwanden, 1976:76).

In Zimbabwe, when a boy enters the age of puberty, he is expected to sit where the men sit in order to learn from their discussions and to be instructed on various issues of adulthood. He may not be expected to roam around aimlessly or as he likes but must start working diligently. He is also instructed on his duties within the tribe and, especially, his behavior towards elders and ancestral spirits or God in cases where parents are Christians.

The adolescent is told about his tribe's past and his ancestors to whom appeals are made in times of need and from whom punishment is meted out if they offend against the laws of the ancestors. On the other hand, Christian parents instruct their children on the importance of fearing God and trusting him at all times for he has guided them as a family. They relate how the almighty God guided and directs them in their lives. For many Africans, nothing is

done without remembering their dead; their religious world is not different from their every day life.

Their daily life is religious; this can be seen from their every day activities. Africans live in societies where religious and every day activities are strictly kept in unison. This helps the child's personality development and in his relationship with the outside world. A world that is divided from the everyday life constitutes a danger in personality development of a boy child. It can also be a threat to the process of growing a boy child into adulthood. Traditionally, there are many other standards that the adolescents are taught to observe to ensure a healthily environment for their development. Parenting can be summarised by Aschwanden in the following way.

“The influence of the whole group upon the child is decisive, but the most lasting influence is that of the child's father and mother. These two play different roles, and the child understands these. The father stands for authority, respect and severity, the mother for love and understanding” (Aschwanden, 1976:62).

While Aschwanden contends that the father and mother together are important in the life of every adolescent, the challenge today in Zimbabwe is the migration of fathers to other countries, living behind their children at a very crucial period of their lives, without preparing them for adulthood. Many adolescents are growing up in an environment in which their fathers are missing. Some of these environments have proved to be unfavourable for the growth of the child especially to a male adolescent who is wrongly thought to be surviving the absence of a father. An environment that has no deliberate influence from the older men of the society is difficult for the boy child to grow in.

The urban emphasis has made many men to leave the country for greener pastures, thereby, leaving the boy child in this study to grow in the community and out of the community that does not uphold the traditional way of life. In this environment, fathers are not available; they are out in the Diaspora to acquire wealth that would enable them to support their families. Consequently, the Diaspora has created emotional and moral boundaries between fathers and their sons.

3.10 LACK OF GUIDANCE LEADS TO IDENTITY CONFUSION IN ADOLESCENTS

Meeks L, et.al (2005), indicate that identity confusion occurs when adolescents are indecisive about themselves and their roles. When a father is not present for his son to provide guidance and discipline in matters of life, he robs his son of the God given potential and freedom to decide over his own future or develop an identity of his own. Learning to be a man in the postmodern world is being challenged by feminists who insist that male role model is not necessary in the upbringing of male children. The patriarchal society is blamed for developing an oppressive system of governance on women (Fiorenza, 1984:289). These feminist movements make it more confusing to fathers and boys in their mentoring relationship. As a result, new definitions of the Father are being recognised.

They (adolescents) cannot integrate the various roles, and when they are confronted by contradictory value systems, they neither have the ability nor the self-confidence to make decisions. This confusion causes anxiety, as well as apathy or hostility towards roles or values (Meeks, et al, 2005:427).

Therefore, fathers should understand what they are up against in order to graciously guide their sons from the damage that comes with changing times. They should discipline or train their children to be committed to integrity no matter the pressures exerted on them by unscrupulous individuals. Many of these individuals gain both economic and political mileages at the expense of the children; during this period of identity formation.

Identity confusion comes in when parents ignore this period of identity formation. The identity confusion if not managed, can lead to an identity forecast or a negative identity, contrary to cultural values. Negative identity foreclosure means the identity crisis is resolved by making a series of premature decisions about one's identity due to external pressures. Though Meeks et al., indicate that adolescents will, therefore, fulfill the roles simply to conform without really identifying with these roles (Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005: 427) they conform to please the significant others and in the process this causes confusion.

Erikson (1968) thought of identity formation as a process that continues throughout one's life, but he believed that identity "has its normative crisis in adolescence" (Erikson, 1968:23). While identity has its normative crisis, the probability of an irreversible damage cannot be ruled out if the child is not disciplined at a time that he is undergoing various biological and social changes in his life.

"Men are described as hard (*kuoma*), difficult, and annoying (*kunetsa*). They are stubborn and cannot be easily deflected from their purpose. A boy needs discipline because once he has become a man; he is like a grown tree and cannot be bent or formed to someone else's will..." (Ouzgane et al, 2005: 175).

The author contends with the view that during adolescence, boys need discipline (training or guidance) because most of them struggle with what is happening in their lives. Drinking beer, fighting for girls, food and enjoyment of other mischievous behaviors are considered as normal ways of growing up into adults. Therefore, when adolescent males are not guided, the circumstances they find themselves in can easily remove them from the social context of their community.

Erikson, (1968) like other psychosexual theorists, described adolescence as a period of turmoil and stress. He saw the turmoil and stress as a result of identity crisis, rather than a conflict between the ego and the identity. The identity is formed through the individual's psychological integration as well as the social environment which serves critical functions during this process. Various literatures have indicated that during this period of self definition, self-evaluation, and self- exploration conflicts may arise between the adolescent and the significant other; particularly parents (Erikson, 1968, Santrock 2005, Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005: 427). The adolescent's experiences of new freedom and sense of self and social awareness have resulted in rootless isolation for they are still in the discovery period.

The greater the freedom and choices, the greater is the possibility of making wrong decisions. This is because in their search for identity, adolescents do not know whom to identify with or what they would really want to do in their lives. The wrong choices that adolescents make create permanent damages to the adolescents' lives; thereby, producing a lost and wounded generation. Steinmann et al, State that.

“If identity is what it is all about, then here again today's younger generation is unique, for the adolescent quest for identity is, at one and the same time, much

easier and much more difficult than it has ever been before. Easier because today there are many more acceptable alternatives to choose from in every sphere of personal and social expression. Many of the old distinctions of class, color, and even sex, no longer restrict the opportunities for choice. Even within those distinctions that still exist to some degree, there are greater opportunities and freedoms. But apart from the physical and psychological facts of life that contribute to personal identity, there are the social values, standards and judgments that determine its dimension. And these, too, at least those moral concepts once reinforced by the authority of the family, church, government and the law, and the subtle pressures of society itself have begun to lose some of their form certainty. Hence increasing difficulty for a young person, boy or, girl to discover just who he is and where he would like to go. The greater the choice, the greater the possibility of making the wrong one. The fewer the “givens,” the greater the temptation merely to take” (Steinmann et al, 1974:156).

Steinmann et al convincingly show how many of the decisions that adolescents make are unguided and confusing to the young people, lead to dilemma. Most of these male children are affected by the unspecific and uninitiated stages of attaining adulthood. This is because their fathers have been caught or torn in between their traditional role model and the permissible Western model of parenting. Therefore, the period of searching for identity without a standard has made the adolescent males’ behaviors to lead to violent deaths from accidents, suicides, murder and sexually transmitted diseases. These greater freedoms and choices create difficulty to make healthy decisions.

This previously safe and healthy period, which society guided, has become an unsafe period in the lives of adolescents who are indicating a lack of adult role model and showing that parents are too busy and unsure of their role in the lives of their children today. The writer of the Epistle to second Timothy wrote that the love of material things would make people selfish; leading to stressful lives.

“But understand this that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy inhuman...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it”

(2 Timothy 3:1-5).

It is this love of self that has made society to have little concern to what happens to children as they grow into adults, thereby, leading to a crisis in the lives of adolescents. The writer, here, portrays the type of society that is created when fathers ignore their role of guiding their male child. He gives a picture of a lost generation whose behavior is irreversible if society does not revert to God’s standard of caring and loving. Future generations will repeat what their fathers did to them because there is no one to emulate. For example, the Bible tells us how king Rehoboam followed his father’s footprints as a leader of the people Israel. He married foreign women and was harsh to the people. Farrar states that;

“Solomon became harsh when he abandoned biblical authority. Instead of leading out of kindness and firmness, he became harsh. And he passed on his poor example to his son. Solomon was harsh. Rehoboam became even harsher than his father.

Solomon did mentor his son. He just mentored him in the wrong things” (Farrar, 2006:193).

Adolescents are more likely to hear, personalise messages, change attitudes and behavior if they believe that the messenger is similar to them and faces the same concerns and pressures, otherwise, there is a feeling of being misunderstood by others (parents), (Mpofu, W., Chiremba, W., Kent, D, 2003:135). Because adults are dissimilar to adolescents in a number of ways, they are often viewed as lacking a keen and deep understanding of issues facing adolescents. In most cases the parent – adolescent relationship has been made difficult by both parties. The inability to connect makes many parents wonder just what’s “wrong” either with them or their child (Meeks, L, Heit, P, Page, R 2005)

The reason why communication seems to be difficult is that the adolescence period is not easy in today’s world where there are a lot of challenges and alternatives to many things in the adolescents’ environment; unlike in the past. Normal adolescence development brings a variety of unsettling biological, psychological and emotional changes. With all the pressures, adolescents feel that the community does not understand them. While on the other hand, parents don’t mean to react negatively to the growing independence that most young boys seek.

3.11 THE NUMBER ONE ENEMY IN OUR MIDST

A lack of adequate parental monitoring is the factor that is related to juvenile delinquency among male adolescents. However, the absence of a father is the number one enemy to male adolescents. Many parents have overlooked the importance of nurturing boys into men

of substance; instead, their absence has created non confident males. Lack of knowledge from either side makes adolescent parent relationship a problem.

This lack of knowledge on the adolescents' side and neglect from the father's side create a deficiency that frustrates the process of development among the male adolescents. It is unfortunate that parents expect adolescents to grow into socially mature individuals without their input. How can a plant grow without someone caring for it? The farmer should do his part on his maize field and leave God to bring the rains. In the same way, fathers should play their part of caring for the male children and leave God to fill the boy with the Holy Spirit.

Looking after children whose parents are absent creates a fertile ground for conflicts between couples, between the children and parents and between the guardians and the extended family members. For example, fathers who are absent may blame those who are living with the child for not administering discipline. At times, when discipline is administered, the absent father might feel that it was over done. As a result, a number of family members are unable to impart traditional values into these children; thereby, making it difficult for fathers to inculcate a good sense of African culture and tradition in their children from a distance.

Poverty is another factor and an enemy among Africans. The exodus of many African fathers to foreign countries are a result of lack of food, shelter, the inability to meet the educational needs of their children and the lack of access to meaningful medical treatment.

The relationships in many extended families have been strained because of the high expectations from the extended family members and the society on those in Diaspora.

Societies regard them highly, thereby, making it difficult for those who are not well-to-do to advise them and to correct or discipline their adolescents. These children do not fit well in the society because they form a class of those who are supported with the United States dollar.

The African concept of a person shows that a child grows better in a family that values interpersonal relationships. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, “*Munhu vanhu*” is a saying which translates to (a person is because of other people). While the Bemba people of Zambia say, “*Imiti iyikula empanga*” (meaning that the growing shrubs make a forest) and this is an emphasis of parenting which should be taken seriously. It is important to note that Africans take parenting seriously in every society. This is because children grow better when they journey together with their responsible parents into adulthood or guardians. In order for the forest to grow, there should be shrubs which should be taken care of. Mucherera cited Chidyausiku, a Zimbabwean writer, who stated that:

“We the Shona have a culture which is in danger of being forgotten. Nursed within a colonial context many of us have come to think that “the nanny is better than a mother;” We are now going through a period of transformation which affects all aspects of our way of life as it was in the past and it has persisted to this very day... It is very sad to witness how our heritage is now being eroded and in danger of getting lost. If we are not careful, our generation may become like a dying tree with broken roots” (Mucherera, 2005:57).

Chidyausiku is citing the challenges that Africans are facing in this period of socio-economic and political transformation. The transformation has made many people, who have left the country, feel contented to leave their children with guardians; regardless of

their age. The adolescent male child is considered by the community to be well looked after through the resources from his father in the Diaspora. This perspective leads him being neglected during his journey to manhood. To be a man; one needs to understand an African world view and philosophy of life that is community based, physically, economically and spiritually. It is through these aspects that an adolescent male gets his security, identity, health and interpersonal relationship with his world which fathers are missing.

It is what the community does and the person's positive response to the community values, morals and norms, which is understood to create a personal identity as already stated above. From birth to death, the community is crucial in providing interpersonal relations which contribute to the formation of a personal identity (Erikson, 1968 Mucherera, 2005:80). It is, therefore, important for the reader to understand the context in which the adolescents find themselves in relation to the traditional world view of the family.

Values which have guided the African people for years can be over hauled in one generation if Africa is engaged in the economical war, which is eroding the cultural value systems that had guided the extended families for generations. When society neglects its role, the cultural values are compromised and a lot is lost. Success is measured by having well behaved adolescents because children are the future of the African family. Those who determine what young people are taught, what they experience, what they see, hear, think and believe, will set the course for the future of our nation, if fathers neglect their responsibility of mentorship.

The current situation in Zimbabwe reflects the fading of the cultural value systems in Africa, and the upbringing of a well balanced child is becoming a doubtful process. The scenario reveals the task that lies ahead of civic leaders, church leaders, extended families

and the institutions of learning, to strengthen the sanctity of life. Otherwise, the research is igniting a sense of urgency to all who consider the upbringing of the adolescent males as a major human task.

3.12 A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY MADE DIFFICULT

Santrock, 2005 indicates that a large number of adolescents are searching for meaning at a time that they are considered rebellious, in crisis, pathological and deviant by parents and society. Actually, at this stage, they are trying to discover themselves in a society that is finding it difficult to understand them. The society's attitude to the young people reflects that many people have forgotten that they were once children who behaved in the same way as their adolescents do today. The confusions that are caused by the parent's failures to understand the adolescent period may also make it difficult for them to create a model to grow adolescents into healthy adults.

The search for meaning is associated with excessive isolation, loneliness or rejection that makes a young person to develop deep fears. He becomes anxious and fearful when isolated. This fear may turn into hate or self blame; especially when other children are living with their parents, celebrate birth days or are visited at school during the term. It is also possible that the fear may lead the adolescent to identify with the wrong clubs in order to be accepted.

This sense of rejection may account for great unhappiness or suicide attempts. It may create a vacuum in one's life. The adolescent then joins gangs of juvenile delinquency simply because they accept him (Molitor, 2004, Santrock, 2005:527). Children end up acquiring a new status of self-centeredness rebellion due to frustration. These social pressures lead a

boy child to the irresistible life of drugs, sex and love as a panacea that guarantees happiness and security. By this stage, adolescents set their standards of their social behavior and the guardians become objects of contempt because they are indifferent and unwelcoming in the child's world view.

As adolescents search for meaning, they need guidance before they can make their own irreversible destructive decisions. The first time the author got to the University of Pretoria, there was an orientation that was carried out by the University. The orientation was very important though it was not the only thing in which students needed guidance. It is, therefore, prudent for adolescents to have someone with experience and who belongs to their culture and family to guide them into adulthood. This can be evidenced by King Philip's engagement of Aristotle to guide his son, Alexander, into a mature Alexander the Great. As their search for meaning continues, adolescents should be guided and connected to people who would guide them, and who are approved by their father or adults in the society.

“The wounded boy or adolescent male may find himself picking stereotypic role models from the society in his search for meaning of masculinity. He is relegated to a conscious process because he was not able to obtain it naturally through receiving masculine nurturing. He imitates. He role plays. Gangs may become places of enmeshment ritualized through role playing and pseudo initiation experiences that result from a lack of connectedness in his life” (Horne et al, 1999:23).

According to Horne, there is likely to be an uninitiated boy/man searching for his masculine identity in all the wrong places. He must find a way to heal and to empower the masculine part of himself, so that he can take his place in mature relationships with women,

other men, and children. The culture's task is to put this young man in touch with his deep masculine power and teach him appropriate stewardship of that power.

It is, therefore, clear that when male adolescents search for identity in wrong places, they get wounded spiritually and emotionally in their journey into adulthood as they strive to make a choice between two unsatisfactory alternatives. This is because they will be partially aware of the behaviors that have been associated with men in the history of humanity.

On the other hand, they are aware of the psychological and social pressures from the feminist society, which demands the opposite. In their dilemma, they do not know what to do when their fathers are no longer with them to answer their questions and be their role models. The adolescent suffers the conflict and confusion that inevitably result from living an unguided life. The effects of these spiritual and emotional wounds affect their personal lives and relationships in the immediate and larger society, and in their roles as fathers.

In Zimbabwe, it is becoming of less importance to be a good person than to be a successful person; this is evident through the discussion in chapter 4 (item 4.4.2). This is adding to the confusion on what one should live for. Should one live for God or the riches? For, it seems that to be good is becoming less desirable, and less rewarding, than to be successful. If being good is to look after ones family, why is the father absent when he is needed to guide his male adolescents? Of what benefit is it to the father to gain the riches and lose his boy child to juvenile delinquency?

3.13 THE NEGLECTED ROLE, LOST SONS

The Zimbabwean adolescents, whose fathers are absent, lack ritualised discussions and ceremonies that help them to understand where they are coming from, and going to, as they

learn who they are, and what role they are to play in society. These discussions contribute to their achievement of a healthy adult status in a society in which they are active members. The absence creates a class of ‘Diasporas children’, which makes it difficult for healthy interactions within the society, with peers and with family members. Ritualised discussions teach them to be responsible for their families and environment. The fathers’ absences encourage the adolescent males to suffer resulting from unfulfilled roles which they did not learn from their fathers due to their absence.

When teachers are absent from classroom, pupils tend to create an image of a teacher. These pupils cannot pass their examinations because “Boys cannot initiate boys into manhood; only men can do that” (Horne, 1999:22). Through initiation, children are helped to make transitions from one stage to another (Steinberg, 1993).

Horne et al, (1999:22) states that the purpose of male initiation is the transformation from immature masculinity to mature masculinity because, to him, men are fixated at an immature age level of development. They suffer the loss of what Winnicott (1965a) calls the “holding environment”. They are destined to experience a premature, psychic separation- from care giving (Horne, 1999: 23). These children have not been given the opportunity to share in societal beliefs, attitudes, and priorities by their father’s absence.

A study in Britain showed that there is a correlation between child abuse and the type of family of the abused child (Fagan & Fitz Gerald, 1997:143). The safest and happiest environment for a child is with biological parents who are married and have an intact family. The rate of abuse was found to be higher where the child lives with biological parents who are unmarried or cohabiting (Fagan & Fitz Gerald, 1997:143).

The effects of today's child abuse and neglect will be tomorrow's most dangerous criminals as there is a significant link between child abuse and crime. Fagan and Fitz Gerald also reports that:

“The three most frequent factors in the history of a killer are physical or sexual abuse, a failure in emotional attachment to the mother and a failure to use parents as role models” (Fagan and Gerald, 1997:4).

The inadequate role played by the father to his son, makes the son a wanderer in a society in which he should be one of the family leaders. It creates confusion on him and leads to the avoidance of responsibilities which require masculine decisions that are involve keeping with the social values and expectations.

The Bible and World history have revealed to us that when fathers neglect their role of mentoring and guiding of their sons, the results are unbearable both to them, if they are still living, and to the society. The biblical examples are that of the Sons of Eli (1Samuel 2:12, 17, 22, 29), Samuel's sons did not please God (1Samuel 8:1, 3), Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was harsh to the people of Israel, loved riches and women; just like his father. These are just a few. History has it that Mugabe, Hitler and Stalin did not get a fair treatment from their fathers during adolescence stage. Mugabe's father left him when he needed him the most during adolescence (Meredith 2002: 12-23) and the absence affected his personality and political career in many ways. Holland states that,

“One of the consequences of Robert Mugabe having grown up in a dysfunctional family is his fragile self-image. He absorbed his information about political concepts like Marxism from dogmatic advisers and books, not from humanity and

human relations. His own mother dealt exclusively in abstractions- her idea of the man Robert would become had nothing at all to do with him as a person. If he was as easily influenced by others as Tekere suggests, it was because a frail sense of self made him so vulnerable that he listened to anybody who acted like a parent and seemed to offer valuable guidance.’ In addition Holland states; with his poor childhood development record, even minor criticism would be experienced as a wound by Mugabe. He is a person who cannot tolerate difference.....” (Holland, 2009:49)

Holland (2009:200), believes that by denying his (Mugabe) negative feelings, Mugabe projected them on to others and proceeded to punish them through the individuals and groups who became his implacable enemies.

Similarly, Adolf Hitler was often severely beaten by his father. One beating that Hitler received from his father left him in a coma for weeks.

“Adolf became very stubborn with his father and, according to his sister Paula, provocative. Probably the repetition of what had happened with his first son was too much for Alois. Paula said he beat Adolf daily and severely. Then, at ten, Adolf too decided to run away. On discovering this, Alois beat him so badly he went into coma. For days the family did not know whether he would live. Frequent or severe punishment conveys to children that they are evil. Being nearly killed by parents conveys that they are unworthy to live. Adolf began to experience himself as evil and worthless- feelings he would describe in middle age and be troubled until his death” (Victor, 2007:29).

This is one of the cases in point that show a background issue that was budding within the life of Adolf. More also, Stalin's father beat him on a regular basis when he was a young boy growing up. These fathers wounded the spirits of their sons and their sons, in return, tortured, maimed, (wounded other people's spirits) and murdered thousands and millions (Farrar 2006:244). The tendency is that a hurting boy will hurt others. This will depend on the type of wound and scar that the boy carries. However, emotional wounds take time to heal and their scars easily remind individuals of their past wounds.

In Zimbabwe, the children's protection and Adoption Act Chapter 33 (Government Printers: Acts 22/1972, 39/1973, 43/1973, 18/1974) is an instrument that promotes the welfare of children. This chapter protects children and young persons from ill-treatment or neglect, corruption, begging and their employment. The author, however, wonders whether this instrument on the protection of children is effective with regard to neglected children due to migratory work. It seems there is no talk about the trauma that is brought about by the father's absence toward his children in this instrument.

When the father is absent, the child does not know what his father wants. Without a learning journey with his father, a male child will not know himself in light of his father. And the father cannot say to the society and to the child in the presence of the child's late adolescence, like Jesus did to his father in the presence of his disciples when in his prayer he said: "for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me" (John 17:8).

What will our sons accept from fathers of value before they (fathers) pass on? What account will fathers give to God over the neglected responsibility of journeying with their male children?

Various authorities are , however , in agreement that the reason for the high prevalence of HIV/Aids cases , though complex, include historical and cultural causes of family separation, such as migrant labor, poverty, poor education, access to health services and acceptable gender norms(Woelk 1997, Bassett and Mhloyi 1991, Loewenson 1998 in Fieldman et al., 2002:7). African parents find it difficult to educate their children on the consequences of indulging in illicit sexual activities. This was done by grandparents who were expected to handle sexual issues of their grandchildren. However, with the changing times, the grandparents are no longer available for the task; hence the need for biological parents to facilitate the selection of mentors for their sons.

To help adolescents reach their full potential the father's parental role is to be effective because from his experience in life as they provide guidance to their adolescents in all honesty; and carefully choose their mentors. Fathers, who fulfill this important role, help their sons to avoid many pitfalls in the journey to adulthood. Fathers are to be managers of their son's journey to life. Santrock cites Parker and Buriel (1998), who stated that parents can play important roles as managers of adolescents, social relationships, and as social initiators and arrangers (Santrock, 2005:317).

When these adolescents are not managed, parents suffer emotionally and materially. This is because the adolescents may be involved in early sexual activities and drugs, as well as become a menace to the society, because unmanaged behaviors are a burden to the society. The spread of Aids viruses cannot be avoided or reduced if fathers do not see themselves as managers of their sons. The world has become a very risky and dangerous place; it is unwelcoming to many children.

The fathers should accept the stages of growth in the development of their children and take them seriously. There is a period that fathers can tell their children that something is wrong without much explanation. This period can be between 0- 5 years when the relation is that of a parent and son where the son is totally dependent upon the parent. When it comes to adolescence, the 5-10 years relationship becomes that of a father as teacher and issues such as HIV/AIDS can be discussed. During the 10-21years, the relationship becomes that of a friend and a mentor. The last stage is that of the father (parent) as a dependent (this is purely an African concept) when parents become dependent upon their children (see item 1:2). Migrant work has offered both the psychological and physical distances between the father and the son, while fathers assuage to Western and other foreign ways on a successful African man at the expense of their future male generation.

3.14 Preliminary conclusion

The author in this chapter, dealt with the journey of an adolescent male child. The biblical, historical, psychological and the African perspectives have been discussed. The African environment in which the child grows has been discussed as a way of showing the importance of the context in which the boy child forms his identity. The individual has been shown to be as equally important to the community because the community is made up of individuals who are born in biology and brought up in culture to form an identity. Though the challenges faced by adolescents are numerous, the roles played by fathers in guiding their sons cannot be overemphasised. In the next chapter, the author shows the roles of a father in guiding his son.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF A FATHER TOWARDS HIS SONS

4.1 Introduction

The author, in this chapter, introduces the sacredness of parents in the upbringing of African children; especially in Zimbabwe. He defines and discusses the Western and African perspectives of father, fatherhood and the roles played in both categories. The conditions in Zimbabwe that led to the migration of males to foreign lands are highlighted. He further underlines forces behind the absent fathers. The importance of the father and the influences he has towards his adolescent male children is discussed.

4.2 PARENTS: A SACRED REALITY TO CHILDREN

According to Streng, the term -sacred comes from the Latin word *sacer*, which means “set off” “restricted” (Streng, 1985:47). It originally designated something out of the ordinary or off limits to most people for the ancient Romans; it could be thought of as analogous to the restricted area of an electrical or nuclear power plant because of the danger for the person coming close to it or its destructive power for the community if the power were misused. Whatever that was sacred, was awesomely powerful. Therefore, the sacred reality is, like the Holy presence, the awaresome mystery; but unlike the Holy presence, sacred reality manifests an eternal, universal structure known either through the interaction of gods with

each other or human beings, as known by inspired seers or oracles or visions, or through special revelation in words and actions (Streng, 1985:47).

Parents are a symbol of sacred reality to their children in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, the Shona people say that “*Vabereki ndivo vanaMwari vedu panyika*” (meaning that, parents are our gods on earth). Therefore, parents who are second only to God have a central role in the upbringing of children. The responsibility of raising children is in their hands. Children are taught the importance of co-operating with others, obedience and acceptance of parental authority. They are further taught that parents should be respected at all times. As a result, a child who insults or beats his parent, especially a mother, would have committed a chargeable crime which should be paid for accordingly. If the child does not pay, it is believed that he or she would suffer in life. For example, he would have problems at work, in marriage, miscarriages, and chronic illness; just to name a few. Therefore, to insult a parent is to insult ‘a god.’

It is the parents who are primary in the formative age of every child. The child knows the parents before he or she knows God. Parents introduce children to the belief system which includes the teaching that there is a creator of earth and heaven. The parent instructs him what to and not to do. They teach him to understand that while they (parents) are important in the child’s life, there is a God beyond, who created them and controls the universe. They provide for the child’s wellbeing, thereby, becoming the source of the child’s life. It, therefore, follows that an adolescent male grows up into a man when he is following the examples of a God fearing father. By following his father’s footsteps, the son realises that he is one in spiritual, emotional and physical characteristics. As a result, the father image is introduced into the boy’s socio- cultural setting.

The Zimbabwean understanding of respect for parents connects well with the Hebrew practices, cited below, that remind all children to respect parents.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (Deuteronomy 5:16; Exodus 20:12).

While in Proverbs, sons are taught to respect their fathers and mothers

“Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old” (Proverbs 23:22).

The Hebrew teaching is closely related to how the author has been socialised to accept that parents are ‘primary but, second only to God’ in the life of the child. Parents are considered so highly because they biologically created a person with God’s help.

These verses remind Jewish children of the obligations and benefits for honoring parents; see chapter one, item 1:2. The implication of this understanding is that parents may not be liked by all children and yet they are to be respected by all children. Children learn the respect of authority in the external world by firstly honoring their own parents.

The proper response of this ultimate reality can be seen when parents are involved during certain major events whether they had cared for or abandoned that child in life. For example, when a child wants to marry and have a wedding, he or she will ask the parents or family representatives of both parents to be present and be involved at such functions. In spite of the role played by a parent in the life of the child, a parent would still be given a portion of the *lobola* (dowry) that is perceived to be for them. This simply shows how the African children feel in spite of what happened in life; parents should be respected.

The image of a father enables the African children to live in harmony with their world in which the story of the God of their parents is revealed as the God of their clan, nation and the world (Mucherera, 2005:91). Therefore, the father's presence and role assists the boy child to master his environment and himself correctly. This perception guides the development of the boy's healthy inter- personal and intra – personal relationship in his environment. Subsequently, children see life beyond their biological parents and appreciate that parents, who are primary in their lives, hold a second place only to God in their lives.

However, the socio-political environment in Zimbabwe has challenged parental influence, thereby, forcing the children to grow in the absence of their second gods (the parents). They, instead, grow up in the presence of strangers or by themselves. The author wonders whether these children, who are growing up in the absence of their fathers, are noticed by the society as lacking the providers of love. Secondly, can the children reveal to society that they are missing their fathers in this world of shame and guilty since they seem to be materially well-off?

Consequently, the family, which is the primary social context for the upbringing of children, has encountered political and socio-economical challenges that have led to its disintegration. The challenges that have been encountered in many societies due to migration have broken the fibers which connect an individual to the extended family and its environment. Therefore, the parents in the Diaspora are raising frustrated children, sons in particular, because these children enter a time of increasingly distress and darkness when they grow without role models and a community of embeddedness.

Parents play a very important role in the lives of their children. However, the author in this study takes a special interest on the role of the father in the life of his sons in Zimbabwe.

One would like to ask whether fathers are aware that they are role models to their sons. If they are, how have the African and Caucasian perspectives been of influence in the upbringing of the boy child in Zimbabwe? Furthermore, what have they done which is of benefit to the child before they left for the Diaspora?

4.3 FATHER AND FATHERHOOD

4.3.1 Father

It is important to understand what a father and fatherhood mean in Zimbabwe as compared to the Western world. In this study, the term father stresses the role played by a biological father which extends to the extend family and community. This gives a biological and social role to a man. A man may be called a father even when he is not married and have no children. What the society values is the role that one plays in the society.

The term father (BABA in Shona and UBABA in Ndebele) are used to represent fatherhood, though a father can be a man who impregnates a woman and cares for his children. The term father is also used to refer to an older person as a way of respect ascribed to him by society, and whose authority is backed by the community. He is expected to be respected by his family and community. He is consulted or informed of any major decisions that are to be taken in the family. A father (Baba) normally has positive influence to the young and old people whom he interacts with within the family and the outside world. The Western world, however, sees a father as a man who impregnates a woman. This understanding gives a biological explanation to the meaning of a father.

The Western understanding falls short of the African concept of a father that goes beyond the biological role, but recognises it as a collective, spiritual and social role. Moreover, the

advent of technological advancements poses a challenge to the Western understanding. For, it is possible to create human life without physical contact or sexual relationships with a woman or man. Richter et al state that;

“*In vitro* fertilization is now common. The law recognises that in some instances when a man’s sperm fertilises an ovum, he is not the father. This is the case, for example, when sperm is donated to a sperm bank. In short, modern technologies are forcing new definitions of what a father is” (Richter et al, 2006:13).

The reader should note that while *In vitro* fertilization might be practiced in the Western world, it is not necessarily used by most Westerners due to the costs involved, and reasons of ethical and religious nature. For example, what would the mother tell the child who the father is? Is *In vitro* fertilization the will of God? What is the psychological and social impact to a child born without male love or conceived in the absence of feminine and masculine emotions? These are some of the questions asked by African people who believe that every child should identify with a father or his family; which is possibly not so when the sperm comes from a sperm bank.

4.3.2 The role of a father

The role of a father is important in the life of a son. It is through a son that the name and pride of a biological father is positioned and remains. When a son succeeds in life, all credit goes to the father; and failure destroys his pride and name. This is because success illuminates the character of a father and failure humiliates every father.

This view is revealed in Proverbs 17:21, where the writer articulates the pain that fathers go through when their sons fail to live according to cultural and social expectations. The writer

to the book of Proverbs states that. “To have a fool for son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool”

Equally, among the Africans in Zimbabwe, fathers derive their position, pride and authority from cultural prescriptions of manhood. Society determines the roles and responsibilities of its members. In an African family, a father should provide for his family, be a leader and be able to protect the family from outside influence. If a man fails to provide material needs and guidance for his family, he is considered a bad father and he sees himself as a failure too. The defining feature of fatherhood is particularly measured by the ability to guide and economically provide for the immediate and extended families.

The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Rev S. Sithole in his Good Friday and 100 years celebration messages at Chemhanza High School, encouraged men as fathers to support the School by providing water to the School in the following way;

“to be a father is to provide, it is not the wearing of a pair of trousers that makes a man a father, one can call ‘*sekuru*’ (a grandfather) who provided for him ‘father’ therefore providing for the family is the man’s role...” (Bishop Sithole, April 3, 2010 Good Friday speech at Chemhanza School)

The implication of this statement is that fathers and mothers represent different roles in the life of their children. The function of the father continues to be of providing love, which he attaches to successful fulfillment of tasks by his son, while the mother’s remains unconditional. The father feels greatly pressured when his sons do not meet the tasks which he perceives as important in helping them to adjust to the external world. This is because it

is generally accepted among many people in Africa that the success or failure of a son reflects the type of a father one has.

To the contrary, African men blame the failures of both a girl and boy child to their wives while all successes are attributed to the father. The author believes that this is in line with the leadership position ascribed to men in the family by society that cause shame, which leads to feelings of blameworthy on the part of fathers, or feelings that are redirected by, husbands to their wives. It is generally thought by many people in all walks of life that when an organisation fails to realise good results, success and failure would be attributed to poor leadership skills or incompetence on the part of the manager (Marie-France Perrin Jossy, 2001). When sons fail in their tasks, fathers perceive themselves as having failed in developing an image which is supposed to be emulated in their societies through their sons. Moreover, it is human nature to blame others for ones failures or mistakes; compare how Adam avoided blame for his failure to keep the promise of God by accusing his wife for disobedience (Genesis 3:12).

Therefore, the father is responsible for helping the son to be ready for entry into the world. He sets expectations of consistent discipline that provide the son with the sense of responsibility and security. The father sets a tone for values in the son, and by his teachings and examples, he leads his son into the external world; a world beyond his village or country. A Zimbabwean News paper, *Sunday Mail*, articulates the important role of a father to his son when it narrates the role that one of the Zimbabwean's great Saxophonist (Musician) Oliver Mutukudzi played in the life of his late son Sam. The extract reads as follows;

“The hugely subscribed show was recorded live and the DVD was to set the tone for the younger Mtukudzi to stand on his own- as well as enter the global stage. The February show was to be followed by a series of equally significant shows where the father was taking his son to some of the places that he performed over the years, places like *Mushandirapamwe* Hotel in Highfield.

The series of shows was aptly dubbed *Perekedza Mwana* (escort the son) or *Nzou ne Mhuru Mudanga* (father and Son), where the two would share in some songs, with Sam showing his growing stature as a Saxophonist. Sadly, on Friday Mtukudzi will be performing in remembrance of his son, the son he was ready to wean off and present to the world. The series of shows that he was holding with his son gave many the feeling that he was preparing Sam for the day he would retire” (The Sunday Mail of April 4-10, 2010 p. L1).

Sam’s involvement in his father’s trade gives evidence that Oliver Mutukudzi’s commitment to fathering impressed on his son’s view of himself and the world. The father involved his son in his trade in order to prepare him for the future. The role played by the father prepares the son for the future, because the boy’s journey with his father helps his view of other men in light of the role his father plays in the society.

The father has a critical role in decision making, influencing the child’s career choice and the enforcement of standards through behavior modeling of his children as they grow into adulthood. He also connects his children to the extended family and guides them to participate within societal roles. This also means that the son’s connection with the extended family members in the rural area is influenced and enforced by the father. The sons learn from their father to love, forgive and not to quarrel with women or use violent

methods to resolve issues with women and other men. As is mentioned elsewhere in this study, the father should practice self control in every thing in order to have positive outcome in his role as a role model to his sons.

Fathers are teachers and custodians of such societal values. The fathers convey these societal values through their behaviours and attitudes on respect, hard work, concern, generosity, forgiveness and mercifulness towards their children and other people in the society. The male children admire, emulate or resent the non-verbal communication from their fathers. The father expresses his roles by being physically and emotionally available for his family. The situation in Zimbabwe has made it impossible and hard for many of these caregivers and role models to be available due to political and social environments (refer to Chapter 4.4.1).

4.3.3 Fatherhood

The different explanations of fatherhood guide the author to understand how the Western world, which has greatly influenced the modern African ways of thinking, views a father and fatherhood. Fatherhood stresses the social relationships between men and children.

In addition to the above Richter et al states that;

“Fatherhood is a role that is understood and exercised in different ways. One does not need to be the biological father to accept the fatherhood role and act as a father towards one or more children. Particularly in the context of the developing world, other categories of the Father –economic and social- are important. Economic fathers are men who contribute to the upkeep of a child. Social fathers include a range of men who live with and /or care for children who may not be their offspring.

Such men might be in situations of formal adoption, or in a living relationship with the mother of the children, or a member of an extended family who has taken on the role and responsibilities of caring for children (for example, a man's brother might see himself as having the responsibility of father when his male sibling is out of work, or because he is the older son)" (Richter et al, 2006:14).

While Richter et al., states that one does not need to be a biological father to accept the fatherhood role and act as a father towards one or more children and further noted that, in many African contexts, being a father has more to do with kinship ties than with medically established paternity (Richter et al 2006:13). In Zimbabwe, blood relationship in members of extended family is valued dearly. For example, a non biological child cannot be an heir to property of the social or economical father. Despite the African concept of communal life stated in chapter three that continually guides our understanding of caring for one another, in the Zimbabwean Shona culture a blood relative is the one who is responsible for the traditional rituals that may be performed for an individual. This shows that the training of boys to become men can be done by any male adult in the society while rituals are confined to blood relations. For that reason, fatherhood is both inclusive and exclusive because the training of a child can be done by a person who one is not related to while guidance and performance of rituals is exclusively directed by a relative.

The reader should further note that in times of serious illnesses or deaths; fatherhood has some limitations, because of the Zimbabwean religious belief system which takes cognisance of the role played by the departed in the lives of the living. For example, rituals are carried out to heal mental problems. The rituals are carried out by family members who consult those who have departed but living and are able to intercede for their living.

Therefore, fatherhood involvement in the lives of nonkin is mostly limited to matters that do not require African rituals. Browning partly articulates the Zimbabwean understanding by the term “kin altruism” which denotes that all creatures, including humans, are more likely to invest in and sacrifice for those who share their own genes than they are for nonkin (Blankenhorn et al., 2004:70).

While the author recognises Browning’s conviction and limitations, he takes the comparison between humans and animals with great caution though there can be some similarities in some of their behavioural aspects. Browning seems not to be aware that the Africans extend their role of caring to members of the extended families, some of whom do not share their genes. For example, a married man or woman cares for those of the spouse’s relatives as if for his or her own blood relatives.

Furthermore, Browning does not explain why people like mother Theresa of India and Nelson Mandela, the former South Africa president, invested and sacrificed so much for the people of all races or most whom they did not share their genes. Likewise, he does not give the reasons as to why some Westerners are so passionate about investing on the adopted children? While this is a civic responsibility derived from compassion, in Zimbabwe a national leader like the late vice president Joshua Nkhomo is understood to be the father of Zimbabwe because of his political carrier, and so in Zimbabwe fatherhood is ascribed by society.

One of the major reasons African men invest so much in their sons and those who are blood relatives is because they are the future of their family’s existence (see chapter 1:2). This shows why social and economical fathers in the Zimbabwean context are normally members of the extended family who can perform or initiate rituals. Step fathers, like

economic and social fathers, are limited in caring for the living child on issues that do not require African traditional rituals. The relationships between and among persons is found through the network of spiritual and familial relationships within which religion and views of transcendence are pervasive in all of life.

The spiritual and familial relationship in the African tradition creates the network that makes the biological father play shared roles together with other male family members in the life of his children. Serious issues that concern the children are dealt with by other male members of the extended family in consultation with the biological father. For example, matters of courtship and marriage concern the aunts, grandparents and the young brothers of the biological father to the children.

The reader has to be informed further that among the Africans in Zimbabwe when death occur, the bereaved biological parents do not play a leading role in funeral arrangements. Moreover, the bereaved parent's name is not included on the list of the speakers at the memorial service of the deceased; it is the young brother and the elder or young sister of the biological parents, relatives and friends who speak on their behalf.

Generally, in their typical speeches, the young brother and sister of the child's parents would say : *I have been hard hit by the death of my son, he is the one who I thought would bury me when I die.....* . It is, therefore, important to note that the term father would be ascribed to other males in the family and society.

The migration of men to the Diaspora is not something new among Africans in Zimbabwe. Historically, men did migrate to South Africa, Zambia, and other neighboring and distant

countries in search of employment. These men left the children within their extended family members.

In spite of the absence of the biological fathers, the children did not remain without someone to identify with as a father or who represented the father. Another factor is that in the extended family system, the responsibility of bringing up children does not exclusively fall on the biological fathers. This does not mean that the absence of the biological father is not realised and felt completely, but it is carried out by the males within the extended family. Through their care-giving and nurturing roles, the extended family members help the children adapt to the environment which their fathers are missing.

The Shona people say, *gomba harina mwana*, meaning a man who impregnates another man's wife is not the father of that child; this implies that a sperm does not beget a child; which is in contrast with the Western concept mentioned earlier on where a sperm is bought from the sperm bank. For example, in a situation where a child is born of a wife whose husband was in prison or away for a long time, the child would be considered to be the husband's son; hence the saying that *Gomba harina mwana* as already explained above that an adulterer has no child. This is because infidelity harms marriages and leads to fatherless children in the society. Therefore, African societies discourage a situation that allows a fatherless child. However, the only challenge in Zimbabwe in this case is that although the child can be taken as part of the family, he may not inherit from the man's property. This is because the man who impregnates someone's wife is considered as a thief who enters someone's house through the window. In the event that he buys food or leaves money in this promiscuous relationship, everything belongs to the owner of the wife. It is generally known that a thief does not own stolen goods because they are not his. In this case, an

adulterer cannot father a child born in an adulterous relationship. The point the author wants to draw is that father and fatherhood reflect the role that a man plays in the African family and society. More importantly, fatherhood in the Zimbabwean African culture is both an ascribed and achieved role.

Although a discussion on the African and Western concepts of father and fatherhood give the impression that they are the same when presented for discussion, they are not because of the cultural differences involved as mentioned above. This is because African spiritual world is understood differently from the Western in many aspects.

4.4 THE CONDITIONS IN ZIMBABWE THAT FORCED MEN TO MIGRATE

Migration, as stated in chapter one (item 1.8.6), is an important population event. In Zimbabwe, the movement of these men to the Diaspora was motivated by economic and political events.

The Political, socio-economical situations and conditions in Zimbabwe have scattered and broadcasted men and women of various age groups all over Africa and other continents. The mobility of parents means that children often leave far away from their close relatives or extended families. It also means that families may not have had adequate time to develop the kind of relationships with neighbors in the urban area that enabled them to take custody of the children. Therefore, new challenges have been added to parents who had broken ties with the rural folks. It is also not easy for children who have grown in urban areas to adapt to rural life and be looked after by relatives whom they had not visited or known. One

would like to obviously look at the political and social environment in which the children grow up into adulthood because the process does not happen in a vacuum.

4.4.1 Political events

In 1998, the government of Zimbabwe got involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo war. During the same time, ‘War Veterans’ were paid gratuities by the government. Furthermore, land and farm invasions by these War Veteran gained momentum. An unpublished article by Shamuyarira describes war veterans in the following way;

“It is important to note that the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWV) is a grouping of former freedom fighters and an appendage of the Zanu (PF) structures. It is a very important ally of the former ruling party which is familiar with all the goings of the party. So its assessment cannot be far from the truth” (Shamuyarira, 2010:1).

Accordingly, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Morgan Tsvangirai, in his Newsletter on 12 August 2010 castigated the status given to a small group of people (Freedom Fighters or War Veterans) who are thought to have liberated the country when he recognised many who are silent both now and in their graves.

“We must acknowledge and celebrate the lives and the sacrifices of our departed and living heroes so that future generations could benefit from their deeds. In the same vein we must not forget our old and young, who for various reasons, could not be on the forefront of the liberation struggle but contributed immensely in some way to the cause. Some fed the gallant fighters; some clothed them while some sang songs to relax their spirits and inject confidence and boost their morale. This

therefore means that no one person or group can claim title to the liberation struggle. We all own the victory that came as a result of working together towards bringing Zimbabwe” (The Prime Minister, 2010:1).

The above quotations seek to reveal how a group of people have been elevated to higher levels at the expense of the masses that should benefit from the gains of liberation struggles. The war of liberation was waged to fight for freedom, democracy and respect for human rights; which are dishonored by the freedom fighters themselves. The Prime Minister shows that the country belongs to all Zimbabwean; therefore, all Zimbabweans should benefit from the gains of the struggle.

The activities by War Veterans bred corruption among leaders and eliminated the sense of love, caring, tolerance, truth and planted hatred and brutality to all humanity. In the process, the law was circumvented (Shamuyarira, 31 August 2010:3).

It was during this period that the economy of Zimbabwe saw the rise in inflation due to the unbudgeted spending and political instability in the country. Many companies started to close down, thus affecting those people who were employed. Investor confidence was threatened by economic speculation, political repression or patronage, hyper inflation, land reform programme that saw many white commercial farmers lose their land.

The land reform programme saw war veterans invading farms; thus displacing white farmers who owned vast acreages of land which they had taken from the black people during the colonial era. The land invasion became an option and a tool of promise to the populace to occupy land from the white colonial masters. Since the 1979 Lancaster house agreement of ‘willing seller willing buyer’ to the land failed to become visible, the

government had to grab the land as a way that would make many of the landless Zimbabweans own land. Holland summarises Lancaster House Agreement in the following way;

“This is a rather odd summary of events. Lancaster House enshrined the willing – buyer willing seller principle for 10 years – until 1990. Mugabe did not touch the concept until 1992 when he passed the Land Acquisition Act, making compulsory purchase a possibility, and no one except the white farmers cried foul. In the event, this Act laid down such complicated rules for acquiring a farm that nothing serious happened in respect of land redistribution until the farm invasions of 2000” (Holland, 2009:129).

The failure also created an opportunity for the government to use land as a campaign strategy for the year 2000 elections and thereafter. Furthermore, Mugabe felt he had been made a fool and tricked like Lobengula, who was double crossed by Cecil John Rhodes (Holland, 2009:130).

The issue of the land became central in the government’s campaign. This provoked the colonial masters because its citizens had been displaced and had no control of their properties in Zimbabwe. It is at this point that targeted sanctions on political leaders were imposed on Zimbabwe by Britain and its allies. These sanctions made the social conditions of many Zimbabweans to deteriorate because their leaders were not able to travel freely to countries that have the resources for helping poor and developing nations. The reader should note at the origin of the Zimbabwean crisis evolved long before sanctions came into play. Therefore, the researcher attributes it to bad governance and economic mismanagement.

4.4.2 Social conditions

While the researcher has indicated that bad governance, economic mismanagement and sanctions were the reason for immigration of the fathers, Zimbabwe's prosperity was not evenly spread throughout the population by the government. Secondly, corruption was the root cause of bad governance that made a few people to enjoy the gains of independent Zimbabwe. The white farmers, politicians, and the upper class city people in general, became wealthy largely by exploiting poor people, such as peasant farmers and the unemployed. With their wealth, came social and political power. Corruption in the law courts made it easy for them to do as they wished; since the law courts were corrupt, thereby, compromising the rule of law.

These cruel injustices gave rise to a new political party in the name of MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) which is led by a trade unionist, Morgan Tsvangirai.

Hudleston acknowledges by stating that;

“The MDC was formally launched, to massive public acclaim as well as concern on the part of government in September 1999 at a rally at Rufaro Stadium in Harare.....” (Hudleston, 2005:55).

At this time, the Zimbabwean crisis enlarged the number of Zimbabweans that left the country in search of greener pastures while, others were running away because of their involvement in politics. Most of these men and women left children behind. A Zimbabwean News Paper indicated that:

“At least three million Zimbabweans live outside the country, the majority of them in South Africa, Having fled political repression and poverty after a decade long

economic crisis blamed on president Robert Mugabe's controversial policies" *The Zimbabwean News* On Sunday, 7-14 June, 2009:3).

These figures might fall short of the facts on the ground because the statistics of the people who have left the country are difficult to collect. The people who have crossed the borders legally may be fewer than those who have gone out illegally. Some of these people may not want their whereabouts to be known for various reasons. It is this exodus of people that motivated the author to think of the male children that are left behind by their fathers who are role models to them. The fathers are to teach traditional values to their children. It is the father, as a leader, who should initiate this traditional role to his male children but he is absent.

4.5 ABSENT FATHERS

An absent father in this research is a man (Biological male parent) who has left the country leaving behind his male child with the mother, family members, and other siblings or by himself. In this way, he will be physically, emotionally and spiritually away struggling to be connected to his wife and children since he will be missing them. The absence of the father or masculine insufficiency of the father could mean a failure to activate the father archetype within the boy's psyche, so that if uninitiated into the masculine world, he is doomed irredeemably to languish under the dominance of his mother's complex (Richter et al, 2006:123). In Zimbabwe, many children are under the custody of mothers who are generally staying very far from their extended families; as already mentioned in chapter one.

The author acknowledges Richter et al., (p.123) for recognising that the absence disconnects the son from his father's emotions, thereby, making it difficult for the child to learn how to deal with his own emotions in a way that he would have learnt from his biological father. This is so because it is the attitude of the father toward studying, relationships, family responsibilities and care that guide the future behavior of his sons. A healthy son should understand his relationship with his father and mother in order to appreciate their roles and influences in his journey to healthy manhood. As already subscribed to elsewhere in this chapter, one of the commonly recognised and important functions of the father is the establishment of gender identity or gender consciousness.

The absence of fathers in the lives of their sons means that from birth to adolescence, children are exposed to the feminine side of life; which is likely to create confusion in their identity development. One typical example is that, a child is born of a woman, looked after by a house maid, guided by a female teacher at nursery school, taught by a female Sunday school teacher at church, taught by a female teacher at school from grade one to secondary school and finally marries a woman. In short, they are surrounded by a world of females all the time. This has impact on our sons in many ways, though one of their major challenges is finding it difficult to form a healthy male identity.

The reader should note that the author is not underestimating the positive impact of the mother –son bonding which is very important for the growth of the male children. He recognises the impact that comes with the absence of a father in the life of the male child, which requires the masculine influence. At the same time, the author recognises and acknowledges the role carried by mothers on their male children as indicated by Dobson in his book *Bringing Up Boys* when he states that;

“Researchers found that early bonding is vital. It is even related to physical health forty or fifty years later. Incredibly, 91 percent of college men who said they had not enjoyed a close relationship with their mothers developed coronary artery disease, hypertension, duodenal ulcers, and alcoholism by midlife years. Only 45 percent of the men who recalled maternal warmth and closeness had similar illnesses” (Dobson, 2002:96).

In addition, Nancy Chodorow (1978) recognised that women rather than men do most of the parenting as a result of social structures rather than an immediate product of physiology.

Dobson and Chodorow have shown that when the father is absent from home, the boy child grows up in the presence of the mother alone. The boy in such situations must derive notions about masculinity from the mother rather than from a personal involvement with his father. The author, therefore, wonders how a male child who has spent so much of his life in the company of women would learn to be a man. Mothers may find it difficult to explain to their sons at adolescence what to be a man means. It is the father whom the boy child can easily understand when he relates to how he as a father dealt with the feelings of masturbation, sexual drives, and abstinence, anger and peer pressures.

When fathers are absent, male children grow at the mercy of their mothers on masculine issues which are traumatic to both the mother and the son (refer to chapter 5 table 8). It causes trauma to the boy child in that he will be looking for a father for particular and crucial situations in his life as already pointed out above; the mother will be overburdened by playing the role of a father which she, in most parts, understands in theory while on the other hand, carrying out her motherly role in sincerity. The reader has to understand that there are things in life that men do not know about women and women do not know about

men or even understand about each other. These are the issues that matter and need fathers to explain to the male children as they grow.

Hammond et al (2009), in his book; *What Women don't know (and men don't tell you)* warns his readers of the following dangers in each person's life by summarising his book with the following statements;

“What You Don't know about Yourself Will Hinder You.”

“What You Don't Know about Men will Hurt You.”

“What You Don't Know about Relationships Will Cost You.”

Hammond et al., have highlighted important points that are crucial for understanding the importance of the intra and interpersonal relationships in a person's life. Though Hammond is helping to empower couple;, particularly women in relationships, he gives important insight to every person. What has been described by Hammond apply to people since we all live in a community that requires good relationships. For example, when the above concepts are applied in the lives of sons, these male children will be helped to grow into manhood. For it is important for every male child to know things which affect men and women in order to avoid the hurt. If boys are not prepared emotionally, spiritually and mentally, they are likely to wound and be wounded by others, for they will have missing information about the role of a father; who is one of the key people in their lives.

One is, therefore, forced to believe that when the father is absent, he is not connected to the emotions of his son. The physical and emotional absence of the father wounds the son and as a result, he finds it difficult to learn how to deal with his own emotions in a way that he has learned from his biological father.

The author is reminded of how his son, Simbarashe, found it difficult to be taught by a male teacher, for the first time in his fourth grade. Simbarashe is a very active and playful 10 year old boy, but he presented a very different attitude to his male teacher and that led to the deterioration of his class performance.

At the time, the author was struggling to find the cause of Simbarashe's sudden poor class performance and his wife attributed the decline of her son's class performance to the comfort he had found in being in the hands of women from the time he was born. The other contributing factor may have been because from the time Simbarashe was born, the author had little time with the children because of his studies in Zimbabwe and South Africa; in addition to work commitments.

The author's absence contributed to his son's fear of male teachers because he missed the father -son relationship. When the author realised the impact of his absence on his son, he discussed with his study supervisor, Professor Masango, how he managed his family life in his busy schedule. The discussion helped the author to balance family life with his studies in addition to work. The author took upon himself to help his son with homework and extra lessons and this has yielded some noticeable results to his son's performance.

Jesus shows how proud he was with his father over his identity. He (Jesus), at one time told Philip that he who had seen him had seen the father because the father is in him and the son is in the father (John 14:6). This is an indication that the father had developed a father archetype in Jesus' psyche; which made him (Jesus) to see his oneness with God. Adolescents need their fathers, though other schools of thoughts under-estimate the importance of the biological father. The above underestimation creates confusion in male children about what it means to be a man in the modern society.

Many children in Zimbabwe live with mothers or extended families due to divorce, abuse or death of biological fathers. The author is aware of these other factors that have created another category of absent fathers. It is common in Africa for a child to grow in the absence of his biological father due to migrant work; however, the presence of men in the family, who play the role of the father, is paramount. The collective or communal parenting system is conducive for normal or health growth of a child. However, the system is weakened by the absence of the fathers who are the heads of their families. In Zimbabwe, being a father means one should guide his family in African religious activities such as the initiation of funeral ceremonies that provide healing to the extended family members.

Historically, the absence of the father was created by the colonial era which did not allow permanent stay of the African migrant workers in urban areas. The prohibition by the employers towards these male workers meant that family members could not join these men because only ‘single quarters’ (or single-sex hostels) accommodations were provided for the workers (Richter, L & Morrell R ed. 2006). Many migrant male workers in the neighboring and distant countries have not gone with their families. The reader should note that this is traumatic to these fathers as well. This is because most of them did not intend to do so, for a number of reasons discussed below;

Accommodating a larger family may be difficult and expensive. It is not easy to raise a family in the foreign land away from the extended family members. Most African men look after one or more members of the extended families, who might be a burden to be looked after if gone with to the Diaspora (for example parents, grand parents, in- laws, orphans just to mention a few categories).

The Zimbabweans have hope and believe that one day they will go back home when the socio-economic and political environment normalises in Zimbabwe. With the negotiations initiated by SADC and brokered by South Africa, the Zimbabweans in the Diaspora and at home continue to pray the ‘thy kingdoms come’ prayer and have a trust in the new Zimbabwe. The question to ask is, will it not be too late for the boy child?

Another possible reason is to protect the properties which include land that they own at home. Many African men value rural homes even though some do not normally visit them; they take pride in having attachment with the place they call home. Those in the Diaspora invest back home, for, it provides a place for them to return to if they become economically inactive, due to health reasons or loss of job (moreover most of them are employed as contract workers).

The other major motivating factor for the Zimbabwean parents is the belief that children can be raised well; according to traditional customs. In Zimbabwe, it is generally believed that the father’s role is to protect his family from outside influence (see item 4:2:1). The fathers, therefore, find it important to protect their children from foreign influence because of the differences in cultural practices and beliefs. This is because many African men have an allegiance to an African cultural value system which they would like their children to own and remain in the hearts of their sons.

The unpredicted safety in countries like South Africa on the fate of foreigners due to the selected cruelty on the foreigners by some security forces and nationals makes these fathers fear for their families. Lack of official documents or work permits by those in the Diaspora creates uncertainty. A Zimbabwean Newspaper reported that; officials from Zimbabwe

were expected to travel to South Africa to assist the Zimbabwean nationals in South Africa, who do not have proper identity and travelling documents.

“The teams will be targeting nearly a million of our fellow Zimbabweans who have been living illegally in SA after their documents expired or were lost during xenophobic attacks against them” (Sunday Mail 4-10 April 2010.p.3).

It is further reported that.

“The programme is aimed at stopping SA police and immigration officers from harassing our brothers and sisters. Due to continued attacks against Zimbabweans, many continue to lose their identity and travel documents” (p.3).

It is, therefore, difficult for many Zimbabweans to be accompanied by their families due to the difficulties and challenges mentioned above. While it is clear that some lost their documents and others have expired documents, the reader has to note that there are some who crossed the Limpopo illegally and are surviving in ways that are threatening and posing danger to the South African citizens.

A Zimbabwean news paper, ‘The Standard’, affirms this assumption in the following way:

“BEITBRIDGE- Enock Madziro (36) was sharing a room with six colleagues from Zimbabwe at Westerberg Settlement in South Africa’s northern city of Polokwane when an army of men wielding iron bars burst in. The menacing South Africans were shouting: “Zimbabweans we want to kill you now! You are taking our jobs, you are raping our sisters and you are killing South Africans.”.....The attack was sparked by the discovery of a body of a South African woman who was raped in the

streets of Polokwane. Zimbabweans became prime suspects” (the standard’ 13-19 December 2009:.3).

While one would not ignore the suspicious activities of the unemployed Zimbabweans in South African, it should, however, be noted that every country has its nationals who are destructive to its own citizens as well. The allegations should, therefore, be taken as emanating from a few South Africans who have their own agenda and some Zimbabweans who are unemployed and surviving through criminal activities.

However, the major factor for the absence of the father is to fulfill the traditional role of being the provider and breadwinner, since the conditions in Zimbabwe do not provide them jobs and opportunities to fend for their families. Richter et al., points out the reasons that force fathers to continue staying in such difficult situations when he states that;

“When the father or both parents are unemployed, this has negative economic and psychological consequences for the family as a whole. Unemployment impacts negatively on people’s quality of life” (Richter et al, 2006:185).

Richter et al., show that these absent fathers are aware of an important component that they offer in the society because of their role in providing for the family, though their emotional and social absence is of consequences to their sons. While the father’s financial commitment makes family members appreciate their absence, it disrupts the numerous roles played by the father. Fatherhood has become more associated with material provision than the performance of other important functions in community such as that of being role models.

The father's integrity and personality is violated when one dimension of his role is valued at the expense of the whole person. The violation of the father's integrity which reveals itself when families see a man in his one role relay a wrong message about the role of fathers in the upbringing of their sons. The son who masters only one role from his father's life might find it difficult in return to mentor his sons into a responsible adult with other missing roles. The cycle will continue to the next generation.

The Zimbabwean society is becoming more materialistic on its view of the father. A person's value is being measured by what he provides materially to his family. This way of thinking that removes men's dignity and integrity illuminates the anguish of Zimbabwean males, for, it reduces them to objects of production depending mainly on the ~~with~~ availability of jobs. Consequently, their role is further threatened since most women are having economical means to provide for their children. While material provisions are important to the son, fathers are important to their sons in a very special way. Despite the fact that the author discusses the adolescent trauma, he is mindful of the trauma that fathers go through in the absence of their families.

4.6 WHY FATHERS ARE IMPORTANT

Traditionally, fathers have fulfilled numerous roles, including those of breadwinner' and 'protector' of women and children, they also direct family decisions and administer discipline to their children and other family members. When the heart of a father turns to his sons, our nation will become a healthy generation because the son's heart will turn to his father and the love and influence of the father remains in his heart. This shows that the father is not just a provider of material support but he is a confidante to his son; among many other factors.

The author recalls how the love and care that his late father showed is important and has a bearing in his life today. Highlighted are that he, bound our wounds, attended to our teething problems by removing some teeth, went fishing with us, administered discipline, and worked hard for us, taught us forgiveness, tolerance, firmness and how to respect other people.

The author also recalls how men in his village treated their wives. He grew up in a society which believes that a woman who had not been beaten at least once or twice in her married life was not loved. However, the author noted that these men did not stop the beating when it was done; especially if it yielded some seemingly perceived positive response in behaviour change of the wife. This patriarchal control of the weaker partners in marriage has promoted continued violence against women. If boys are brought up by fathers who fear God, society will benefit so much in dealing with family issues because violence is something that is learned from fathers and people we emulate.

When fathers take a lead in positive mentorship, the whole society will follow because they are the heads of their families. It is the role of fathers to explain issues that affect other people to the boy child; especially in this era when the law is against anyone who takes the law in their hands. The reader has to understand that not all males support violence against women in the African culture. The author remembers how his grandfather chased after his sons and wanting to beat them for quarreling with their wives (his daughters in laws). There were times when the author's grandfather would ask his daughters in law not to go back to their husbands until their husbands came to ask for forgiveness from him.

Violence against a wife (his daughters in law) humiliated the grandfather and other male folks in the family because it is generally believed that women should be tolerated; while

Paul's letter to the Ephesians 5:25-29 emphasises that they should be loved and not violated. For example, they should not be beaten but be respected just like any other human being. Moreover, other men in the society would feel so humiliated and angry that they would fight or beat a man who beats his wife in public. This sent a message to the author that violence can be tolerated in private by some men while it was not accepted at all times by some like his grandfather.

While violence is perpetrated by those who disrespect and disregard human dignity and integrity; for example when women and children are abused, it can also be used to protect the weak from the perpetrators as a sign of punishment as indicated above. It is, therefore, the role of the fathers to teach their sons to transform antisocial aggression into socially useful aggression. For example, men should use their strength to defend the weak and work for their families; and in that way, it is possible to engage assertively with the world without being destructive.

This information is important to the author because it helps him recall what he learned at adolescence on how violence against women was dealt with by the men mentioned above in the family and society in which he grew up. Secondly, the author learnt how women were defended against their own husbands by some concerned male members of the extended family and society. Thirdly, that it is possible for men to fight for the rights of women. Fourthly, that our adolescents can be taught to be non violent and that such a society is possible. One has to understand that not all families deal with abuse and conflicts in this same way. Each family is unique in the way it deals with family matters though it is a generally known fact that most women are suffering from abuse in most African societies.

Many of the male children who were brought up by their fathers will show their father's characteristics in their lives, if they fail to be mentored by people who are touched by Christ's love to love. The pain endured by sons as a result of their fathers' action manifests itself into violent tendencies/behaviors (The children become violent or are victims of violence). It is easy to pick up from the son's behaviour the kind of a father who mentored him. Jesus underlines the results and influences that come from particular attachments in life in the following way,

“By their fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit”(Matthew 7:16-18).

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7 reflects an analysis of one of the prominent musicians and his son posted in one of the country's Newspapers in Zimbabwe written by Mtandazo Dube in the following way.

“Like father like son.....Life has this sad tendency of imitating art. Whilst the above chorus has proved a hit at many a Suluman Chimbetu show, what is transpiring in real life is that, indeed, Suluman is walking in his father's footsteps. Literally in every facet of life. Whereas many rejoiced when the young man left the Air force career to concentrate on music, especially to take up from where his father had left, many did not see him mimicking his father's entire way of life.

Shona's have a proverb which, translated in the following way, equates to: like father like son, “*mhembwe rudzi inozvara mwana ane zhumu.*”

Simon “chopper” Chimbetu was very popular with the ladies, for he was always smart – and he loved them as well. Simon was survived by nine children, most of them from different mothers. And his son, Suluman (kanenge chopper) is proving to be like his father, not only in music but in his love life as well. He is embroiled in a controversial marriage set-up, where he has impregnated his wife’s elder sister” (The Sunday Mail, August 23-29, 2009, p.L4).

The son’s behavior reveals the kind of the father the son had. It is important to note that a responsible son is, generally, the fruit of a good father; though exceptional cases can not be ignored. However, such exceptions may have entered the son’s life at childhood. Therefore, the role of the father cannot be compromised for anything material if they are to be fathers of substance. No one else is primary to the son other than the father who cares for his son’s journey into adulthood. The son can learn from the father’s mistakes and improve his perspectives in life for the better. This simply shows that the father’s behaviour can influence the child from two angles, that of being indifferent or he becomes like his father in certain aspects in life. Denton states that;

“Whatever else is done to us by whom ever else will only add to his good root, or if evil, will be overcome by the father’s more basic example” (Denton,1952:191).

When fathers decide to migrate to the Diaspora as bread winners, they should count the cost of their decisions, and ask whether the tangible benefits are worth the possible cost of the loss of intangibles or whether going to the Diaspora is the perfect will of God.

Children should experience the openness and humility of a father that emanates from his love. The father’s love cannot be taught by word of mouth, instead, it is experienced

through the concern that is revealed in the way he cares for his family. As the boy child hears and sees the father talk about things that matter, he receives the basic structure of life in a natural way which will form the fabric of the boy's life. The author recalls very well how his father showed love to his mother and other members of the family; especially females. The big man had a large forgiving and generous heart that impacts the author so much.

There are times when one thought he would revenge when some family members treated him unfairly. For example, when his own brothers gave excuses when it was time to go and work in the author's father's fields, he would not give any excuses when it was his turn to go and work as a family in their fields. What disturbed and annoyed the author at that time enriched, benefitted and empowered him to appreciate the hard syllabi his father had created for him as the first born son in a family of 2 sisters and 7 brothers.

The author is convinced that children learn more from their parent's way of life than what they say, because of the consistent examples that he received from his father. Whenever he thinks of his late father, he remembers how he responded to situations and little of what he exactly said. The author believes that his father shaped the author's personal identity as a man.

4.7 SONS AND THE MEDIA

Fathers play a great role at a time when the media divert the moral values and principles of their sons. Peer pressure drives children at dangerous speed leading to evil deeds that damage human relations. The electrical gadgets and toys are slowly replacing the father's role of guiding their sons in what it means to be a man. For example, children can eat their

food with their earphones on. They spend more time watching the television, playing games or on the internet watching pornography. At times, a child can spend the whole day in bed playing games and listening to music alone. The media has robbed our young people the richness of fellowship.

The father's love, humility and faithful responses to life situations have an impact on the future life events and circumstances of his sons. Unfortunately, parents have been made to believe that gadgets would help their children to be modern. The failure by fathers to show love for their sons compromises their role of caring. Fathers care for their children by teaching them to love, through their lives. The care of male children is in the father's hands.

Sandford articulates this view nicely when he states that,

“The children's blessing waits upon our invitation, without it, though God wants to help our children more than we do. Consequently a boy without his father's blessing wanders in a spiritually arid and fruitless land” (Sandford, 1984:247).

Sandford shows how the love of the father is important for his sons' care for themselves and others. The author found out that society is faced with various challenges which derive from the lack of knowledge of what is good for the children. When people believe that toys and other gadgets can give happiness to their children, then our society is not spared from the sin of the Israelites of worshipping idols (Deuteronomy 32:16). It is amazing to see young people leaving their cell phones on during the church service. Some of them will be playing games on their phones in church.

However, Means draws the researcher to an understanding that the existence of evil in many cultures at various levels leads to harmful practices in the following way:

“The first indication that is present is that people are hurt, which can occur on many levels: intellectual, emotional, physical, psychic, relational, or spiritual. Evil can attack one’s possessions, relationships, sacred objects and beliefs, character and self-esteem, physical well-being, and even one’s contexts of meaning, while hurt takes many forms, it leaves a wound and a scar, and people are never the same” (Means, 2000:38).

Means draws the attention of every father to the consequences of evil in the world. It is clear from the quotation that evil should not be ignored when training our sons. We should keep them (sons) alert of its existence, if they are to be safe. When fathers disregard their role of training their children in the way they should go due to their absence they will be hurting them. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians connects this idea nicely when he states that:

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The absence of fathers may cause brokenness on which evil builds its war zones that suffocates the process of the upbringing of sons. As families have fragmented due to various reasons already mentioned elsewhere in this study, fathers have remained the only hope for their boy child; despite the fact that the Diaspora has made many children grow up without parental love as it should be the case.

While these sons understand that their fathers as breadwinners who went to the Diaspora to fend for them, they may not know the impact and how catastrophic that is to their future. They may not know how to love their own children when they have their families because

they would not know how to give masculine love since they had not received and experienced it from their fathers in a natural way.

However, the presence of Christ has placed men as role models of their families, particularly; their sons. For, it is in Him that fathers find the deepest need and meaning in caring for their sons. Evil contaminates the cohesion and good will among people, for, it devalues, intimidates, degrades and destroys the sacredness of communal life. It is evil that makes fathers turn against themselves and their sons when they are in the Diaspora.

For example, the gadgets that they buy for their children as a way of compensating for their absence have destroyed their sons instead of building them into good and responsible children; they relate more to the gadgets more than human beings. The gadgets have drilled the minds of these children to such an extent that they have pressurised their fathers to buy them harmful toys. The fathers have bought toy guns for them without realising that they are fulfilling the child's wishes for violence. The television programs are full of sex and violence which at times makes it difficult to watch television as a family. The compensated lives that have created comfort zones for these boys have come with high costs which are realised later in life by both the fathers and their sons. Many of these children are irresponsible because of the freedom they have and the amount of material support, which excludes the emotional attachment, which they may be receiving from their fathers.

Consequently, some of the boys have more money than their teachers and at times they lend money to some of these teachers, and peers; they pay their peers to do home work for them and laundry. They are naughty and disregard the advice from their mothers. While in other situations, the mothers are frustrated by the absence and the lack of communication resulting from distance; which may lead to suspicion. As a result, the mothers of these

children may be unwilling to correct these boys. Absence has compromised the sanctity of marriage; especially when the children discover that their father is cohabiting.

The false freedom would be traumatic when the boys realise later in life that their fathers were building them a future on sinking sand. The reader has to note that the above characteristics may depend on the level of relationship between the mothers and other male members in the extended family; which may vary as there are other factors that come into play in such situations. However, the frequencies of the above traits, although written from a Western perspective, have revealed themselves in many situations among boys than girls (Corsini & Raymond 1994:27) in Zimbabwe.

4.8 Preliminary conclusion

This chapter showed that every father is responsible for moulding his sons, although the extended family members may complement the father's role in shaping the male child, the father plays a crucial role. The fathers, who have left these children in the hands of mothers to play the undeserved role, have made their boy children grow without a masculine identity. Several extracts and the author's experience of his father have revealed that as the father carries out his traditional roles, the male children will describe, learn and imitate what they have observed from their father. Other members of the society are important in fathering as well. However, family relationships have been noted to focus in the caring of one's own blood today and beyond the grave.

Many family members have put resources together so that one of them goes to the Diaspora with the hope that he will support the family back home. The Diaspora has brought with it

irreversible challenges in most families and has damaged the future of many sons. The forces behind leaving their mother land are numerous.

It should also be noted that the conditions in which these fathers are working has created some uncertainties, thereby, making it difficult for these fathers to be joined by their family members and children. A father should be a man of integrity and strength; who provides for his family. He provides material resources such as food, shelter and clothes. He also provides security for his family in the form of protection from damaging ideologies or influences. He provides guidance to his family by transmitting his values to his sons. He provides love to his sons. He provides an opportunity for his son to learn how to handle his own life.

This chapter revealed that healthy masculinity is formed through the son's relationship with a God fearing father. In the next chapter, the author will listen to the children themselves on how they feel about the absence of their fathers. This helps the author to understand and appreciate how male children feel about the absence of their fathers. It will also test and verify the theory that states that the absence of a father emotionally and spiritually affects the child's positive view of himself as a man (absence wounds the child) or lead to identity confusion.