

CATHERINE DUBA
KATARZYNA ZIELIŃSKA-KRÓL

PARTICIPATORY VIDEO-CONFERENCE MEETING ON THE FAMILY IN AFRICA – SUMMARY

Meeting attended by:	ACTING ADMINISTRATORS: Robert Lezohupski, Radosław Malinowski, Jerzy Pałucki, Witold Janocha FACULTY: Institute of Family and Social Work of Lublin (KUL), Tangaza University College, School of Theology, Pastoral Department and Canon Law Department in conjunction with Institute of Social Ministry Participants: Rev. Dr. habil. Witold Janocha, Rev. Prof. Jerzy Koperek, Prof. Maria Chuchra, prof. Urszula Dudziak, Dr. habil. Julia Gorbaniuk, Rev. Dr. Jarosław Jęczeń, Dr. Agnieszka Zaborska, Dr. Adam Zadroga, Dr. Katarzyna Zielińska-Król
Absent from meeting:	NONE
Date:	March 12,2014
Time:	1:30pm-3:00pm
Facilitator:	Rev. Robert Lezohupski, skillman
Agenda Topic #1: Opening Introductions:	Rev. Robert Lezohupski TUC
Opening Prayer:	Rev. Prof. Jerzy Pałucki
Invitation to Participate and Greetings:	Rev. Prof. Witold Janocha, Rev. Robert Lezohupski

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Presentation of both Sides:	Rev. Prof. Witold Janocha, Rev. Robert Lezohupski
Purpose of the Conference:	
Opening Remarks:	Mr Radosław Malinowski
Introduction and Moderation:	Rev. Prof. Witold Janocha, Dr. Katarzyna Zielińska-Król, Radosław Malinowski
Notes: After introduction of members, each constituent group were identified by Rev. Robert Lezohupski, the process used to identify the representatives was through face to face visual learning method.	
Action Items: Purpose of the Conference: Opening remarks: Second remark:	
Presentation by R. Malinowski	
Aspects of African family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Culture – Social aspect – Tremendous change 	
African culture There are many cultures in Africa, but they share some common characteristics. Majority are patriachal while others are matrilineal. Often anthropological aspect of family has complex belief and it is seen as social rather than biological. We are not slaves to culture but we use it Family plays a greater role, it is the only social institution that links past, present and future. However, it is under a serious threat today. Social aspect Family is a social entity The state is supposed to support the family but cannot because of many reasons;	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African family has inherited colonial state. The colonizers had exploited land, people to maximize the profit. Today Africans have also emulated the same. Therefore this is not helping African families. - Rapid urbanization- developed recently and not controlled. People have moved from rural areas to urban to look for employment (he mentioned analysis of American Anthropologist) - Transitional period from colonial to independence was not done properly - Exposure to a number of factors 	
<p>Slavery – Africa was enslaved by Arabs The mentality that only women should work in agriculture Lack of sustainable social security Erosion of culture e.g respect for elders by young people is fading Harmful cultural practices like early marriage and FGM affecting the society and girl child AIDS pandemic left many children orphans Human trafficking is carried out for financial gain Change of transition period from childhood to adulthood e.g becoming adult before the age of 18 for instance child marriage, children are forced to take up responsibilities before the right time, child labour.</p> <p>Presentation by Rev. G. Kocholickal He quotes Pope John Paul statement that 'there is precious found in African culture', therefore we need to support it. African culture upholds human value. The African understanding of life is broad. It embraces past, present and future. Similarly, the death, living and not yet born are valued and seen as part of whole. Life is perceived inclusive and creation is whole. This notion</p>	

<p>also appreciates the family of church aspect. Having children is more important, lacking is a great curse. If a couple cannot bring forth offspring, the family is considered dead. Children ensure continuation of the lineage, for this reason, the idea of contraceptive make no sense to African traditional family.</p>	
<p>Marriage is a community contract. Marriage is one of the important rites of passage where a young man or woman is expected to undergo. Community members are involved in the activities which mark marriage process for instance, the visiting, taking of dowry and wedding ceremony. In case of marital crisis the family and community members especially elders intervene. Today educated people are much more on the personal than communal, where extended family support each other in case problems or difficulties. Traditional African families are integrated, Pope John Paul II urged everyone to emulate this example.</p>	
<p>In African culture respect for elders is widely held. Parents ensure that their children grow up with the values that are required. Women play important roles in the society, African women are more industrious than men. They usually take part in farming, house chores, nursing and taking care of children. In Africa we also have women who are of formidable characters like Wangari Maathai.</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>In urban areas people are bombarded with idea of sex, it is commercialized. This is not so with African families. Sex is not talked about publicly but is taught or discussed in special gathering, like initiation. Any type of sexual discussion openly is not encouraged. Sex is not for pleasure, but rather continuation of life. For this reason, homosexuality is rejected because it is contrary,</p>	

<p>no children. In Africa there is high hope despite the pandemic; Africa is still continuing and embracing children (Pope Benedict XVI).</p>	
<p>Challenges to family</p> <p>Family in Africa is currently experiencing cultural shock;</p> <p>Political, social and economic challenges-change from traditional set ups which has caused Separation of couples, separation of parents and children, these happen when husband leaves the wife with children in rural and move to town to look for job. It has also led to unfaithfulness and divorce.</p> <p>Failure to get a job, education, food leads to depression, alcoholism and sexual promiscuity. This happens to young men if they find themselves inadequate and unable to meet the need of the family.</p> <p>Break of support from the extended family. The individualistic paradigm has overtaken the old system of communal. This has created gap between rich and poor.</p> <p>Contraceptive mentality is spreading very easily due to foreign pressure to control growth of population. They belief that contraceptive is the best solution by having fewer babies. However, this is a wrong a notion because population is not a problem so long as people are educated. Availability of contraceptives has more harm than good. It promotes adultery and sexual dishonesty.</p> <p>Spread of abortion practices. This is silencing the conscience of many lives.</p> <p>Polygamy – though it is associated with African culture, it is not only practiced in Africa. It is an ancient practice which was common among Jewish during the time of Jesus. It is usually seen as negative practice, but it is encouraged in African culture especially in rural areas because of the</p>	

<p>the heavy tasks which one wife may not be in a position to accomplish (polygamy should be analyzed from a sociological point of view). Today, this has been replaced by divorced. Moreover, it is also fading away due to education.</p> <p>Challenges in implementing Christian teaching in African family</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some couples are avoiding responsibility 2. Alcoholism 3. Media influence, like contraceptives adverts 4. Mixed marriage not clearly understood 5. External force to leave out call of Christ 6. Some parents ignore the lives of their children 7. Problem in implementing family prayer-praying in the family is not a norm in many homes. Family members are addicted to watching various TV programs, hence no time for prayer. Busy schedules of the parents and other family members have also contributed. In most cases, men do not take charge, they leave the family responsibility to women. 8. Spread of co-habitation 	
<p>The way forward</p> <p>Human person is integral, consists of soul, body and spirit. We are all God's creation; therefore, we discover our true self and God by loving one another. To some extent African culture uphold value of life through acknowledging importance of children, loving one another and encouraging spirit of sharing.</p>	
<p>Questions, responses and comments</p>	
<p>Some of the questions which were raised from Lublin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Social aspect, policy and challenges ii) Education system, impacts in up – bringing family iii) How to help children learn mix culture (if the parents are from different nationality) 	<p>Rev. Prof. Dr. habil Jerzy Koperek, Konrad Czernichowski, Dr. Katarzyna Zielińska-Król</p>

<p>Gender policies</p> <p>There is a distinct rule regarding the understanding of feminine and masculine. A man and a woman come together to form a family. In this new era gender is being erased. There is curriculum revision which is connected with the current situation e.g children will be able to know that a man and a woman vs woman can form couples.</p>	
<p>Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC) is struggling to influence the curriculum to save our traditional value.</p>	
<p>Gender has become a political issue, for instance, some of the developed countries are refusing to give aid unless the targeted developing countries embrace practice of same sex marriage (homosexuality).</p>	
<p>Response to question of education system in Kenya</p> <p>This greatly depends with school or kind of teachers who are bringing up children, however, formation of the teachers matters. In the process of education, family has a greater responsibility as well.</p>	
<p>Technology has affected the up- bringing of the children</p> <p>It was also acknowledged that free primary education has increased enrollment in schools.</p>	
<p>R. Malinowski shared the challenges of couples of different nationality</p> <p>There is difficulty in teaching the children native language as people around do not speak the same language.</p> <p>Identity is also a major challenge because there is no specific nationality the children may belong to</p>	

<p>Comment on importance of Family (by a Nigerian from Dublin)</p> <p>The African culture of linking past, present and future was appreciated. Children are brought up in a proper way, e.g the parents instill good values in children while they young, for instance children are taught to respect elders and their parents. Africans have maintained the values despite the external forces. Nigeria has been against the issue of homosexuality because it is not in favor of human dignity.</p>	
<p>It was also acknowledged that Africans have upheld dignity for human person as a whole. The word 'dignity' was translated into other languages e.g Otto in China, Ubuntu in Zulu. A student from Dublin shared an experience he had in Africa concerning how human beings treat each other. He observed that in African culture, community is important than individual, people create time for each other by greeting, sharing and knowing how the person the progress others. He recommended this kind of life to whole world. Everybody matters in the world, no one is insignificant.</p>	
<p>Vote of thanks</p>	<p>Mr. Radosław Malinowski</p>
<p>Thanked the people of Tangaza college for organizing the program of exchanging ideas on Family in Africa. He acknowledged that it was an interesting discussion</p>	<p>Rev. Prof. Dr. habil. Witold Janocha</p>
	<p>Next scheduled meeting (2nd April 2014) International symposium (John Paul II- The heritage for Africa)</p>
	<p>Next Scheduled Meeting: Human trafficking</p>
	<p>Ended by Prayer: Rev. Prof. Dr habil. Jerzy Pałucki</p>