

# DOWNLOAD PDF PASTORAL APPROACH TO AFRICAN TRADITIONAL VALUES OF FECUNDITY AND MARRIAGE

Chapter 1 : Vatican says believers are shunning Catholic lifestyle after scandals | World news | The Guardian

*The pastoral approach to African traditional values of fecundity and marriage (AMECEA Gaba Publications spearhead) [Constance R Banzikiza] on calendrierdelascience.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers.*

Permission is hereby granted to reproduce excerpts in articles or newsletters or for reproduction and free distribution in its entirety. Introduction Today almost half the couples who come for marriage preparation in the Catholic Church are in a cohabiting relationship. Living together in this way involves varying degrees of physical and emotional interaction. Such a relationship is a false sign. It contradicts the meaning of a sexual relationship in marriage as the total gift of oneself in fidelity, exclusivity, and permanency. Over the past twenty-five years cohabitation has become a major social phenomenon affecting the institution of marriage and family life. The intent of this volume was to be a resource for those involved in marriage preparation work. It remains a very useful and comprehensive pastoral tool. Faithful to Each Other Forever discussed pp. In this latter section the handbook drew upon the written policies of a few dioceses to present a range of possible options for working with cohabiting couples who come seeking marriage in the Church. Now, nearly twelve years after the original work of Faithful to Each Other Forever, the cumulative pastoral experience of ministering to cohabiting couples has broadened and deepened. This is reflected, at least partially, in the increased number of dioceses that now include a treatment of the issue within their marriage preparation policies. The paper adopts the same two-part structure: Its purpose is two-fold: This paper is neither an official statement of the Committee on Marriage and Family nor of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. It does not offer formal recommendations for action. It is intended as a resource paper, offering a compilation of resources and a reflection of the present "state of the question" regarding certain issues of cohabitation. In this way, it wishes to help: As pointed out in Faithful to Each Other Forever p. They are not identical matters. One can exist without the other. Couples may engage in sexual intercourse without living together; other couples may share the same residence but not live in a sexual relationship. The focus of this paper, however, is on cohabitation understood as both having a sexual relationship and living together in the same residence. Moreover, in Part Two, the paper focuses even more narrowly on a segment of cohabiting couples, namely, those who choose to move out of this type of relationship and into the lifelong commitment of marriage. It is this group of engaged couples who pose certain unique pastoral challenges. In both sections of the paper the Committee has chosen a question-and-answer format in order to organize the material in a concise manner. The Committee is very grateful to Sr. In order to develop the second section, Committee staff collected marriage preparation policies representing dioceses from around the country. The pastoral approaches outlined in this section emerge from an analysis of these policies, from knowledge of current pastoral practice, and from consultations with pastoral ministers. In particular, the Committee thanks Dr. Fellhauer, chairman of the Committee on Canonical Affairs reviewed and recommended changes in the text. We are very grateful for their expert involvement. Part One Empirical Information About Cohabitation and Marriage Those couples who are in a cohabiting relationship and who come to the Church for marriage preparation represent only a percentage of the total cohabiting population. Nonetheless, to understand and respond to them one must appreciate some aspects of the broader phenomenon of cohabitation. This, in turn, is set within a context of widespread sexual activity outside of marriage. In this section we provide highlights of what social science has discovered about cohabitation in general and with specific reference to cohabiting couples who eventually marry. Cohabitation is a pervasive and growing phenomenon with a negative impact on the role of marriage as the foundation of family. The incidence of cohabitation is much greater than is indicated by the number of cohabiting couples presenting themselves for marriage. Slightly more than half of couples in first-time cohabitations ever marry; the overall percentage of those who marry is much lower when it includes those who cohabit more than once. Cohabitation as a permanent or temporary alternative to marriage is a major factor in the declining centrality of marriage in family structure. It is a phenomenon altering the face of family life in

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first-world countries. The percentage of couples marrying from second and third cohabitations is even lower. The profile of the average cohabiting household is both expected and somewhat surprising. Persons with lower levels of education and earning power cohabit more often and marry less often than those with higher education. The average cohabiting household stays together just over one year and children are part of two-fifths of these households. Men are more often serial or repeat cohabitators, moving from woman to woman, while women tend to cohabit only one time. Bureau of Census, , Wu, ; Schoen, Median duration of cohabitation is 1. Previously married persons cohabit more often than never-married; two-thirds of those separated or divorced and under age 35 cohabit. They are more likely than never-married cohabiting couples to have children in the household and they are much less likely than never-married to marry their current partner or someone else. The higher the level of education, the more likely the cohabitor is to marry the partner. There is no difference in frequency of cohabitation by religious denomination; there is a significant difference in cohabitation frequency by level of religious participation. The declining significance of marriage as the center of family is in large part a result of growing secularization and individualization in first-world cultures. Aversion to long term commitments is one of the identifying characteristics of these trends and a major reason for cohabitation. Key milestones previously associated with marriage, such as sexual relationships, child bearing and establishing couple households, now occur without marriage. Individuals choose to cohabit under the influence of these cultural values but also for very individual reasons. Some are seeking to ensure a good future marriage and believe that a "trial marriage" will accomplish this; many are simply living together because it seems more economically feasible or because it has become the social norm. In general, cohabitators are not a homogenous or monolithic group, however fully their general characteristics can be described. The reasons for choosing cohabitation are usually mixed: There are both broad cultural reasons and a range of individual reasons for cohabitation. The cultural reasons are descriptive of most first world countries: Overall, less than half of cohabiting couples ever marry. Those who do choose to marry are in some part counter-culture to the growing view that it is certainly not necessary and perhaps not good to marry. Those who choose to marry instead of continuing to cohabit are the "good news" in a culture that is increasingly anti-marriage. Those cohabiting couples who move to marriage seem to be the "best risk" of a high risk group: They are a high risk group for divorce and their special risk factors need to be identified and addressed, especially at the time of marriage preparation, if the couples are to build solid marriages. The percentage of couples marrying after second and third cohabitation is even lower. The data on this are mixed. Cohabitators and noncohabitators have the same rate of marriage stability if the marriage remains intact over seven years. They appear to be the best risk of a high risk group. Individuals who choose to cohabit have certain attitudes, issues and patterns that lead them to make the decision to cohabit. These same attitudes, issues and patterns often become the predisposing factors to put them at high risk for divorce when they do choose to move from cohabitation to marriage. The cohabitation experience itself creates risk factors, bad habits, that can sabotage the subsequent marriage. These attitudes and patterns can be identified and brought to the couple preparing for marriage for examination, decision-making, skill-building, change. Without creating "self-fulfilling prophecies," those preparing cohabiting couples for marriage can help them identify and work with issues around commitment, fidelity, individualism, pressure, appropriate expectations. Many studies explore why cohabitators are more at risk when they marry. The research suggests that there are two overlapping and reinforcing sources for risk: Predisposing attitudes and characteristics they take into the marriage; Experiences from the cohabitation itself that create problem patterns and behaviors. Predisposing Attitudes and Characteristics: Cohabitators as a group are less committed to the institution of marriage and more accepting of divorce. As problems and issues arise to challenge the marriage, they are more likely to seek divorce as the solution. In this regard, cohabitation is more like dating than marriage. After marriage, a woman who cohabited before marriage is 3. There is evidence that some cohabitators do have more problematic, lower-quality relationships with more individual and couple problems than noncohabitators. Often this is why they feel the need to test the relationship through cohabitation. There is the probability that some of these

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significant problems will carry over into the marriage relationship. While married persons generally value interdependence and the exchange of resources, cohabitators tend to value independence and economic equality. These values do not necessarily change just because a cohabiting couple decides to move into marriage. While it is generally better for the children in a cohabiting household or a child to be born to a cohabiting couple to be raised in a stable marriage, this is not by itself sufficient reason for the marriage. While family and friends are often right to encourage marriage for a cohabiting couple, a marriage made under such pressure is problematic unless the couple chooses it for more substantial reasons. Cohabitators generally report lower satisfaction with marriage after they marry than do noncohabitators. There is danger that they think they have "worked out everything" and that any further challenges are the fault of the institution of marriage. Often they have set patterns of autonomy or competition about making and handling money during the time of cohabitation and this carries over to the marriage. Many couples have one pattern of money handling in the cohabitation household and have not discussed clearly how one or the other individual expects this pattern to change after marriage. Cohabiting partners can have a lesser felt need to protect the relationship while they are cohabiting because they do not see it as permanent. If this is the case, some will begin dysfunctional patterns of problem-solving. Either a fear of upsetting an uncommitted relationship or the lack of need to protect a temporary relationship can be factors that lead cohabiting couples into poor patterns of conflict resolution which they then carry into marriage. Reinforcement of negative family of origin patterns can also have occurred in the cohabiting relationship and be carried over to marriage. Both of these patterns are common issues that dating couples carry into marriage, but they can be exaggerated by the cohabitation experience. In his Apostolic Exhortation *On the Family Familiaris Consortio*, 81, Pope John Paul II strongly urges that young people be educated about chastity, fidelity, and the meaning of marriage as a sacrament.

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## Chapter 2 : Of African Family Values and the Synod

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Mass media and religious information Science, technology, bioethics and ecology Art and artists Cultural heritage and religious tourism Young people Conclusion: At the same time, some traditionally Christian cultures or cultures imbued with thousand-year-old religious traditions are being shattered. Thus, it is not only a question of grafting the faith onto these cultures, but also of revitalizing a de-Christianized world whose only Christian references are of a cultural nature. On the threshold of the Third Millennium, the Church throughout the world is faced with new cultural situations, new fields of evangelization. The heart of every culture is its approach to the greatest mystery: How can the Church of Christ make itself understood by the modern spirit, so proud of its achievements and at the same time so uneasy for the future of the human family? The Church is the messenger of Christ, the Redeemer of man. She keeps in mind the cultural dimension of the person and of human communities. The inculturation of the faith was the object of a detailed reflexion on the part of the Pontifical Biblical Commission 4 and the International Theological Commission. The careful examination of the different fields of culture proposed in this document show the breadth of what is meant by culture, this particular way in which persons and peoples cultivate their relationship with nature and their brothers and sisters, with themselves and with God, so as to attain a fully human existence Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, Culture only exists through man, by man and for man. It is the whole of human activity, human intelligence and emotions, the human quest for meaning, human customs and ethics. Culture is so natural to man that human nature can only be revealed through culture. Moreover, the very progress of cultures demonstrates that there is something in man which transcends those cultures. In its essential relation to truth and good, culture cannot only spring from the experience of needs, centres of interest or basic requirements. Marked as they are by the very tensions aimed at achieving their fulfilment and the human dynamics of their history Cf. When the Word of God takes on human nature in all things but sin Heb 4: Bringing the Good News of the Gospel to different cultures 3. In order to reveal himself, from the rich panoply of age-old cultures born of human genius, God chose for himself a People whose original culture he penetrated, purified and made fertile. The history of the Covenant is that of the rise of a culture that God himself inspired in his People. Sacred Scripture is the instrument willed and used by God to reveal himself, that which raises it to a supracultural plane. The message of the Revelation, inscribed in the sacred History, always presents itself in the guise of a cultural package from which it is inseparable, and of which it is an integral part. The Bible, the Word of God expressed in the words of men, constitutes the archetype of the fruitful encounter between the Word of God and culture. In this respect, the call of Abraham is significant: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, living in tents The history of the People of God begins with an adherence of faith which is also a cultural split and culminates with what can be seen as another, the crucifixion of Christ. He was lifted up from the earth, but at the same time became the focal point which directs the history of the world upwards and gathers in unity the scattered children of God: Abraham was spiritually and culturally uprooted to be, in faith, planted by God in the Promised Land. Indeed, this break emphasizes the fundamental difference of nature that exists between faith and culture. Unlike idols, which are the product of a culture, the God of Abraham is totally different. The cyclical time of the ancient religions becomes obsolete: It is not a people making itself a god, but God giving birth to a people, a people of God. The culture of the Bible has a unique place. It is the culture of the people of God at the heart of which he became incarnate. The promise made to Abraham culminates in the glorification of Christ crucified. The Father of Believers, intent on the fulfilment of the Promise, announces the sacrifice of the Son of God on the wood of the Cross. In Christ, who came to recapitulate the whole of creation, the love of God calls all men to share in the condition of sonship. God who is totally different from us, manifests Himself in Jesus Christ as totally one with us: But faith has the power to get to the core of every culture and to

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purify it, to make it fruitful, to enrich it and to make it blossom like the boundless love of Christ. Christ is the source of this civilization of love, for which men, since the original fall in the Garden of Eden, are nostalgic, and which John Paul II, like Paul VI, incessantly calls us to make into a practical reality with all people of good will. For the fundamental bond of the Gospel, that is of Christ and of the Church, with man in his human nature is a creator of culture in its very foundation. By living the Gospel, as two millenniums of history demonstrate, the Church illuminates the meaning and the value of life, broadens the horizons of reason and strengthens the foundations of human morality. Evangelization and inculturation 4. *Dei Verbum*, 13 , transforming their search for meaning into a quest for transcendence, and these stepping-stones into moorings for the acceptance of the Gospel. Nevertheless, the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures. Though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any one of them. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. In order to do this, it is necessary to proclaim the Gospel in the language and culture of men. This Good News addresses human persons in their complex wholeness, spiritual and moral, economic and political, cultural and social. The Church therefore does not hesitate to speak of the evangelization of cultures, that is to say mentalities, customs and behaviour. While cultures are subject to change and decay, the primacy of Christ is an unquenchable source of life cf. As bearers of the absolute novelty of Christ to the heart of different cultures, Gospel missionaries incessantly exceed the limits of each individual culture, without allowing themselves to be ensnared by the earthly visions of a better world. Rather she fosters and takes to herself, insofar as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of peoples. The evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the Gospel go hand in hand, in a reciprocal relationship which presupposes constant discernment in the light of the Gospel, to facilitate the identification of values and counter-values in a given culture, so as to build on the former and vigorously combat the latter. She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. *Fides et Ratio* In tune with the objective demands of faith and its mission to evangelize, the Church takes account of the essential fact that the meeting of faith and culture is a meeting of things which are not of the same order. The inculturation of faith and the evangelization of culture go together as an inseparable pair, in which there is no hint of syncretism: Successive Synods of Bishops, including both the African and European ones, and the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Santo Domingo, insist on the particular importance for evangelization, for inculturation to be understood in the light of the great mysteries of salvation: This emptying of self, this kenosis necessary for exaltation, which is the way of Christ and of each of his disciples cf. The dominant wave of secularism spreading through the different cultures, harnessing the suggestive power of the media, frequently idealizes life styles that are opposed to the culture of the Beatitudes and the imitation of Christ; poor, chaste, obedient and humble of heart. Indeed, there are some major works of culture that are inspired by sin and can incite sin. She stigmatizes the counter-values and exorcises them. She thus provides a critical element to cultures The awareness of the cultural dimension of human existence brings with it a particular attention for this field of pastoral work. Anchored as it is in Christian anthropology and ethics, this pastoral approach gives rise to a Christian cultural project which gives Christ, the Redeemer of man, centre of the universe and of history cf. These elements may appear to be contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive. In fact they are complementary and mutually enriching. At the same time, it affirms the absolute newness of Revelation in Jesus Christ and the need for conversion which is manifestly the result of meeting the Saviour: This shows the importance of the specific tasks of understanding in loyalty to the faith and of pastoral discernment that are incumbent on theologians and pastors. What is at stake is the conversion of persons and, through them, of cultures, the Christianization of the ethos of peoples cf. For the Church, it is like a new *kairos*, when the time is ripe for a new evangelization in which the new features of culture are to be seen as both opportunities and challenges for

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a pastoral approach to culture. While these situations vary greatly, there are some common factors in responses. In the cultural situation which prevails in different parts of the world today, priority is given to subjective criteria and measures of truth cf. *Fides et Ratio*, Positivist presuppositions on the progress of science and technology are now seen as questionable. After the spectacular defeat of collectivist atheistic Marxism-Leninism, the rival ideology - liberalism - is struggling in its efforts to bring about happiness for the human race and to ensure responsible dignity for each person. Galloping urbanization and cultural rootlessness 8. Under various pressures, such as poverty and the under-development of rural areas deprived of indispensable goods and services as well as, in some countries, armed conflicts which force millions of people to leave behind their home and culture, the growing number of people on the move is emptying the countryside of people and causing the great cities to expand excessively. In addition to these economic and social pressures, cities have the fascination of the well-being and entertainment they offer, as vividly portrayed by the means of social communication. Through lack of planning, the outskirts or suburbs of every megalopolis are like ghettos. These are often huge agglomerations of people who are socially rootless, politically powerless, economically marginalized and culturally isolated. Cultural rootlessness, which has so many causes, shows how important cultural roots are. People whose lives are thus unravelled become easy prey for dehumanizing business practices. In this century, as never before, people have shown how capable and talented they are. But, at the same time, never throughout history had there been so many denials and violations of human dignity, bitter fruits of denying or forgetting God. Cultural fragmentation confines values to the private sphere: *Evangelium Vitae*, and Mass media and information technology 9. The means of social communication have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behaviour as individuals, families and within society at large The very evangelization of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media The advent of the information society is a real cultural revolution: So the constant repetition of selected items of information involves a decline in critical awareness and this is a crucial factor in forming what is considered as public opinion. Television and radio can be a means of cultural formation and development, and also of evangelization, a way of reaching out to those who have no point of contact with the Gospel or the Church in secularised societies. Like any other new technology, the Internet involves risks which have become tragically clear in cases where it has been used for evil purposes, and this calls for constant vigilance and reliable information. It is not simply a question of moral use of the Internet, but also of the radically new consequences it brings: A great deal is at stake.

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*Traditional Values Associated with African Marriages* When we talk of values we refer to interest, pleasure, likes, preference, duties, moral, obligations, desires, wants, needs, aversions and attractions and many other modalities of.

We pray that international bodies and foreign donors may respect African traditional family values. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Consequently, there are customs and institutions that safeguard these values. Marriage has as many faces as there are various cultures and beliefs. Celestine Ofoegbu in his book, *Human Development*, paints the picture vividly. While the economist sees marriage in terms of contract, the biologist views it in terms of reproduction, the sociologist views it from the perspective of a social structure, the theologian believes it to be a divine injunction for procreation, and the psychologist may view it in terms of fulfillment of psychological needs! One thing is clear: It involves most of the time, procreation. The Meaning and Purpose of Marriage in Africa Generally, marriage in most African cultures is both an institution and an event. As an institution, marriage is the union of a man and a woman as husband and wife, who to all intents and purposes are joined principally for procreation. This difference must be pointed out since in African societies, the primary intention of every married couple is to have a representative born within marriage that will sustain and perpetuate the family name and lineage. Without marriage and the consequent bearing of children, the African man and woman feel incomplete. As an event, boys and girls are made to understand as early as possible that marriage is an important event in their lives that must be accomplished. Series of preparations are, therefore, put in place collectively and individually, for entry into this institution which include among other things the initiation rites. Marriage involves not only husband and wife, but also the two families, and in the final analysis the community as a whole which share their very existence as they now become one people. Thus, John Mbiti rightly points out that marriage is the meeting point for the three layers of human life, namely, the departed, the living and those to be born. While the departed are the roots on whom the living stand, the living are the link between death and life, and those to be born are the buds in the loins of the living. It is marriage that makes it possible for them to germinate and sprout. Anything that deliberately goes towards the destruction or obstruction of human life is regarded as wicked and evil. Hence, in African societies, everything possible is done to make them think in terms of marriage. This most basic value, to beget or bear children, was instilled in all members of the society from early childhood onwards. Nobody was allowed to shirk this duty. Since marriage is at the centre of human life, it also serves many purposes in addition to procreation. The summary provided by John Mbiti captures the situation. Failure to do so is considered a crime; it is a uniting link in the rhythm of life: For the peoples, through marriage and child-bearing, the parents are remembered by their children, and thus life continues after death. Marriage brings people together, increases them, multiplies them, and keeps them alive. It is also a status symbol, everyone recognises that the individual is a full person when he or she is married and has children. The more children a person has, the higher is his status in society. Marriage is considered successful, especially when it is fruitful; that is, when it culminates in bringing about offspring. Since marriage is so important, various arrangements are made to ensure that everybody is married and has children. These various types of marriage fulfill the meaning and purposes of marriage for the people. The Procreative Emphasis in Traditional African Marriages As already mentioned, the main purpose of marriage among Africans is to raise children. Marriage and procreation are therefore inseparable. At the centre of this emphasis on procreation is perhaps the issue of immortalising an individual. In many African cultures, unfortunate is the man or woman who sees nobody to remember or immortalise his or her name after physical death. Only on the birth of a grand-child is a man in a position to be truly sure that his name and spirit will live in the history and genealogy

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of his people. This desire, among others, obviously makes them have as many children as possible to immortalise their lineages and communities. Fertility thus, is the central requirement in marriage. This might cast doubt on the ability of the whole family to transmit life. Male sterility and impotence were regarded and are still regarded as the most shameful condition possible for married couples. This informs all the traditional remedies and medicines for sexual potency that are seen advertised in African societies today. Female barrenness, which in many cases was more obvious, though not more frequent than male sterility, was an even greater reproach in African traditional society. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, women were blamed when marriages were childless, although in almost half the cases of childlessness is due in fact to male sterility. This was the aim of the social institution of marriage and family. As noted by Alyward Shorter, the family was the central institution of African society. It was even the central institution of African religions since religious worship was expressed at the family level. Family was seen as a corporate community extended in space and time, reaching back to the ancestors and forward to the unborn. It could be argued that in traditional Africa, marriage did not create families; it was incidental to the on-going corporate life of families already in existence. In view of the fertility-oriented African marriage, polygamy had its procreative end. It was esteemed because it ensured a large progeny and the extension of the family to an eminent degree, through more children and more alliances. However, such arrangements were inevitably a second best. For him or her, life should normally be reproductive, and being alive meant transmitting life. Among African peoples and cultures, therefore, there was procreative emphasis on marriage and this emphasis pervaded the whole of society till date. Virginity at marriage was highly esteemed, but not ultimately as highly as the capacity of having children. Procreation was an essential aspect of being alive, and personhood was the attribute of living, reproductive people. To be alive, to be a person, therefore, one had to generate children biologically. To opt for celibacy priesthood and religious life appears to be the most heroic sacrifice an African man or woman makes. Also contact with western culture has its negative impacts on the cultures. But it is important to stress where Africans are coming from, what marriage and family mean to the people, and to make the point that every group of people has its past on which they build the present and ensure their future. Any nation that neglects their past can never have a future. I have attempted to highlight the above facts about African worldview, marriage and family particularly, to show that Africans are procreation-oriented and that family life "not just between a man a woman , but in its extension to include all the relatives of the married couples" are ingrained in African peoples and cultures. Any programmes coming from anywhere that do not respect this procreative value are at worst insensitive and destructive to the psyche of the Africans. But as can be seen, poverty is not the reason for her procreative mentality. To ask Africans, therefore, to kill their children "their future" amounts to sterility and infertility which are highly dreaded among the peoples of Africa till date. While addressing the present-day problems of the Church in Africa, he identified among other things, this unhealthy imitation of other cultures and accordingly exhorted Africans: I put before you today a challenge "a challenge to reject a way of living which does not correspond to the best of your traditions, and your Christian faith. Today, I urge you to look inside yourselves. Look to the riches of your own traditions, look to the faith which we are celebrating in this assembly. Here you will find genuine freedom" here you will find who will lead you to the truth<sup>89</sup> John Paul II is unquestionably correct. To look inside ourselves and to look to the riches of our own traditions are what this research advocates. Therefore, Africans need an indigenous Procreative Health Policy that incorporates our traditional values about human sexuality and human life in all their ramifications. It can never augur well with posterity. In fact, posterity may never forgive this generation of Africa for killing millions of its future citizens today! Open to this sense of the family, of love and respect for life, the African loves children, who are joyfully welcomed as gifts of God. It is precisely this love for life that leads them to give such great importance to the veneration of their ancestors. They believe intuitively that the dead continue to live and remain in communion with them. Is this not in some way a preparation for belief in the Communion of the Saints? The peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life. Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion Nairobi: East African,

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Obuna, African Priests and Celibacy , cited in Obiagwu,

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## Chapter 4 : Catholic Teaching on Marriage and Sexuality

*It is imperative to emphasise that despite the western disregard and disrespect for many African traditions and values, marriage and family life still remain sine qua non for most of the African peoples.*

Bishops launched the National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage, a multi-year collaborative effort to promote, preserve, and protect marriage, understood as both a sacramental reality and a human institution. The bishops directed their Committee on Marriage and Family to develop a pastoral letter on marriage as the centerpiece of the Initiative. As one of the first steps in this process, the Committee asked the Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth, which staffs the Committee, to collect and analyze diocesan marriage preparation policies. The purpose was twofold: This analysis looks at the marriage policies of Latin-rite dioceses. It identifies common practices, significant differences, and current trends that are evolving, such as cultural adaptations, an emphasis on the total life cycle of the marriage, and liturgical rituals. It references specific diocesan policies that are especially well-developed on particular topics. It also suggests sources for additional information and explanations. This analysis was completed in the fall of 2008. The Committee recognizes that dioceses continue to revise their marriage policies in response to changing circumstances in society and in the Church. As the Committee receives copies of these new policies, it will make every effort to keep this analysis up-to-date so that it remains a useful resource.

**Overview of Diocesan Policies** Of the policies, a few were in revision and eight were over 15 years old. Eight states had joint policies Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Texas, and Wisconsin although sometimes dioceses had their own supplemental or updated policies. Generally, policies allowed parishes to add further specifics, as long as they did not conflict with the diocesan policy, i. Dioceses looking for sample standard practices might start with neighboring dioceses, then look at state policies, since they are the product of several dioceses. Others involved in marriage preparation, including sponsor couples, Engaged Encounter leaders, natural family planning teachers, and Pre-Cana speakers, are not the direct audience, although policies usually outline the kinds of programs that are accepted and the general content of those programs. Although the policies do not usually address the engaged couple directly, many dioceses offer a brochure that welcomes the couple and summarizes the important points of the policy that couples need to know.

**Style of policies** Policies range from brochure-length to over pages. The average comprehensive policy is about 75 pages. The discrepancy in length is often due to appendices that cover canon law, church documents, details regarding mixed marriages and second marriages, description of programmatic content, and liturgical guidelines. Thus the core of each diocesan policy is usually about ten pages. Some policies state the policy and then add documentation such as canon law and pastoral tips. Others simply state the policy, provide a brief explanation and put related information into an appendix. Others focus on canon law and impediments to a valid sacramental marriage. Sources Policies draw on Scripture, canon law, church documents, and the lived experience of generations of faithful Catholic married couples and their priests. Sources that are foundational for marriage preparation ministry in the U.S. Almost all policies include these elements:

- Letter from the bishop promulgating the policy
- Overview of the purpose and goals of the policy
- Brief reference to the remote and proximate stages of marriage preparation
- Description and timing of the initial interview with the engaged couple
- Explanation of special circumstances that might need attention: It is brief, with a tone of welcome and pastoral care. More broadly, the policy aims to strengthen marriage in the Catholic Church through effective formation, pastoral care, and celebration. This section is unique to each diocese as it lays out particular needs and emphasis. Many policies do point out that remote preparation begins at birth, e. It includes all family and environmental factors that influence the person in positive and negative ways regarding marriage. It is through the "family of origin" that the role models, values, traditions, communication styles, attitudes, etc. Proximate marriage preparation is usually defined as the time from puberty to formal engagement. Proximate marriage preparation involves, through appropriate catechesis, a more specific preparation for and rediscovery of the sacraments. It is the responsibility of parents,

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along with pastoral ministers, to provide integration here of the religious formation of young people with their preparation for life as a couple canon It is also critical to address the role of media and the importance of media education during this stage. So often the role models, values, expectations, etc. Los Angeles Although parents continue to be instrumental in the formation of healthy relational skills and attitudes during this period, many policies refer to the value of classroom instruction in marriage and family life during junior high, high school, and college. The Archdiocese of Louisville aptly phrases one of its sections on proximate preparation as "Learning about Weddings in the Eighth Grade. The Provincial Guidelines for Marriage Preparation for Michigan deals with remote and proximate preparation more concisely but also includes family components and pastoral applications. Faithful to Each Other Forever provides the standard foundation for total marriage ministry throughout the life cycle. Most often couples are required to have an initial, face to face meeting with the priest or deacon at least six months before their wedding over 70 dioceses. A handful of dioceses require either less four months or more nine to twelve months. A growing trend is to ask couples to complete their marriage preparation programs at least six weeks before their wedding. This allows the final phase to be spent in more direct spiritual preparation, i. The priest or deacon welcomes the couple, gets to know them a little, and does a preliminary assessment of possible impediments to the marriage. If there are no obvious impediments the couple continues the process. If this is a second marriage, one partner is not Catholic, or other special circumstances exist, the discussion may continue in a second interview. If a delay is necessary to deal with impediments, the couple is advised on how to proceed. See Section 5, Special Circumstances, below.

**Setting the Date** When the initial interview does not indicate any impediments, most dioceses allow the date the wedding to be set. If an annulment is not final, or there is another impediment, a date cannot be set until the impediment is removed. Some dioceses ask that only a tentative date be set even for couples without obvious impediments. The wedding date is then confirmed after the couple participates in a marriage preparation program. **Getting it Right** says: That team should always include a member of the clergy, for couples consistently judge the presence of clergy valuable and their absence detrimental. For example, bulletins can announce upcoming wedding s and ask parishioners to pray for the couple s. Petitions can be added to the General Intercessions, the priest may publicly recognize engaged couples at the beginning of Mass, or photos of engaged couples can be put in the vestibule or a parish newsletter. However, specific, identifiable special circumstances may be present which indicate a need for further assessment and growth before the final decision is made to proceed with the marriage. Other impediments, such as a previous marriage, may take months or years to resolve. The following list of special circumstances is drawn from various diocesan policies. Most dioceses mention most of these. No diocese lists all of them. Typical commentaries are listed under each category with special attention to mixed religion and previous marriages, since these are the more complicated and sensitive issues. Many policies ground their discussion of special circumstances in the Code of Canon Law that states "all persons not prohibited by law can contract marriage" c. It does, however, empower the local ordinary to "prohibit marriage, but only for a time or a serious cause and as long as that cause exist" c In addition to canonical requirements, the policies usually emphasize the increased pastoral care and attention the Church desires to give the couple so that their marriage will be as strong as possible. Most policies make provision for appeal to the bishop if a couple disputes a decision to delay or deny a marriage. The priest refers the couple to a professional for assessment and treatment if necessary. The burden of that decision rests solely with church authority.

**Age** Age usually refers to young couples where at least one partner is a teenager. **Maturity** varies with the individual and many couples past their teens are not ready to take on the commitment and responsibilities of marriage and would benefit from similar extra attention. In addition to professional assessment, discussion facilitated by a premarital inventory can help such couples to recognize their need for more time. Many policies include parents in this discernment process. The policies of St. Petersburg and Wisconsin have extensive resources for meeting with parents. Age, however, can also apply to older couples. Despite the tendency to believe they need less preparation because of their presumed maturity, many policies note the special issues that are unique to older couples that merit

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discussion, i. If the couple only started to discuss marriage following the pregnancy, then the issue of undue pressure to marry needs to be explored. The Church recognizes all duly performed marriages and recognizes ecumenical marriages as a sacrament. Pastoral Approach The confusion over terms is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to interreligious marriages, with over 15 different combinations of Catholic and "other. Policies range from one to over 40 pages. Many policies put the details for interreligious marriage in an appendix. Joseph, and Harrisburg treat these details extensively. What is common to the policies is the admonition to acknowledge the issue. Partners are also urged to learn about their future spouse's faith; not for the purpose of conversion but for understanding and family harmony. The Promise Historically, perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of interreligious marriage has been the promise that Catholic partners must make to raise their children in the Catholic faith canon The promise is made in the following or similar words: I promise to do all in my power to share the faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics. The non-Catholic partner is to be informed of the promise, so that he or she is aware of the promise and obligation the Catholic partner has made. The non-Catholic partner no longer has to make a promise or sign a statement. The Decree on Ecumenism, no. It does not mean an absolute promise at the risk of jeopardizing the marriage itself. As the Michigan policy states, "The possibility also exists that, despite their best efforts, Catholics will be in a situation where some or all of the children are brought up in the religious tradition of their spouses. In such circumstances the obligation of Catholics to share the Catholic faith with their children does not cease, but should take the form of prayer, good example, witness to the faith in word and deed, and maintaining a Christian or religious atmosphere in the home. See Section 9 for more detail on wedding liturgies. It is the primary duty of pastors to facilitate a rediscovery of this faith, nourishing it and bringing it to maturity.

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## Chapter 5 : catrighana â€“ CENTER AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL INITIATIVE

*Some Major Values in Traditional Religions. In many traditional societies there is a strong sense of the sacred. Religion permeates life to such an extent that it is often difficult to distinguish between strictly religious elements and local custom.*

Worldview and divinity No single body of religious beliefs and practices can be identified as African. It is possible, however, to identify similarities in worldviews and ritual processes across geographic and ethnic boundaries. Generally speaking, African religions hold that there is one creator God, the maker of a dynamic universe. Myths of various African peoples relate that, after setting the world in motion, the Supreme Being withdrew, and he remains remote from the concerns of human life. According to a myth of the Dinka of South Sudan, God withdrew from the world after the first woman lifted her pestle to pound millet and struck the sky. In West Africa, among the Asante of Ghana, for example, elders regularly pour libations and offer prayers to Nyame, the Creator, giving thanks and seeking blessing. The most significant aspect of Asante ritual life, however, is the veneration of matrilineal ancestors, who are considered the guardians of the moral order. According to the mythology of the Dogon of Mali, the Creator, Amma, brought the world into existence by mixing the primordial elements with the vibration of his spoken word, though the principal cult is directed to the Nommo, primordial beings and first ancestors, rather than to Amma. In Nigeria the Yoruba hold that the Almighty Creator, Olorun, oversees a pantheon of secondary divinities, the orisha. Devotion to the orisha is active and widespread, but Olorun has neither priests nor cult groups. Similarly, in the Great Lakes region of East Africa, the Supreme Being, Mulungu, is thought to be omnipresent but is sought only in prayers of last resort; clan divinities are appealed to for intervention in most human affairs. Among the Nuer people of South Sudan as well as the Dinka, God is addressed in prayers of petition only after recourse to the secondary divinities has been exhausted. Dogon sacred cult site Dogon sacred cult site, Mali. Rene Gardi

Ritual and religious specialists African religiousness is not a matter of adherence to a doctrine but is concerned with supporting fecundity and sustaining the community. African religions emphasize maintaining a harmonious relationship with the divine powers, and their rituals attempt to harness cosmic powers and channel them for good. Ritual is the means by which a person negotiates responsible relationships with other members of the community, with the ancestors, with the spiritual forces of nature, and with the gods. The cults of the divinities are visible in the many shrines and altars consecrated in their honour. Shrines and altars are generally not imposing or even permanent structures and can be as insubstantial as a small marker in a private courtyard. Right relations with the divinities are maintained through prayers, offerings, and sacrifices, especially blood sacrifices. The shedding of blood in ritual sacrifice, which is believed to release the vital force that sustains life, precedes most ceremonies in which blessings are sought from the ancestors or divinities. Ancestors also serve as mediators by providing access to spiritual guidance and power. Death is not a sufficient condition for becoming an ancestor. Only those who lived a full measure of life, cultivated moral values, and achieved social distinction attain this status. Ancestors are thought to reprimand those who neglect or breach the moral order by troubling the errant descendants with sickness or misfortune until restitution is made. When serious illness strikes, therefore, it is assumed that the ultimate cause is interpersonal and social conflict; serious illness is thus a moral dilemma as much as a biological crisis. Ritual often marks a transition between physiological stages of life such as puberty or death and a change in social status as from child to adult. Rites of passage are natural occasions for initiation, a process of socialization and education that enables the novice to assume the new social role. Initiation also involves the gradual cultivation of knowledge about the nature and use of sacred power. The Sande initiate girls by teaching them domestic skills and sexual etiquette, as well as the religious significance of female power and womanhood. Masks are an important part of ritual in many African religions; they often represent ancestors, culture heroes, gods, and cosmic dynamics or the cosmic order. The neck coils function like the halo in Western art, signifying the wearer as human in

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form but divine in essence. Yoruba cap mask Yoruba cap mask for the Gelede masquerade, wood, pigment, 1960; in the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Indianapolis Museum of Art, gift of Mr. Although the surgical removal of the clitoris and parts of the labia minora is more radical and more dangerous than male circumcision, both forms of genital mutilation are understood to be important means by which gender is culturally defined. Some cultures maintain that genital surgery removes all vestiges of androgyny, as the anatomical parts correlating with the opposite sex are cut away. Cosmogonic myths justify the surgery as reiterating primordial acts that promoted fecundity; the myths thus define the sacred status of sex and fertility. Possession trance is the most dramatic and intimate contact that occurs between devotee and divinity. In most cases possession is actively sought, induced through the ritual preparation of the participant. Techniques that facilitate this altered state of consciousness range from inhaling vapours of medicinal preparations to rhythmic chanting, drumming, and dancing. Worship of the vodun is the original source of the Haitian religion of Vodou, which emerged as a syncretism of African, Roman Catholic, and Caribbean religious traditions by African slaves in Haiti. Once the spirits have taken possession of a devotee, they establish a dialogue with their followers and answer questions. Contact with the divinities is not always so direct; mediators between the human and divine realms are often necessary. The Lobi of Burkina Faso carve such figures, which they call bateba. Once activated, the bateba can be invoked for aid but will die if neglected. Other intermediaries range from simple officiants at family altars to prophets, sacred kings, and diviners as well as certain priests, who are invested with powers that identify them more fully with the gods. Thus, for the Dogon the hogon, or spiritual leader, is not just a simple officiant but a sacred figure. His saliva is the source of the life-giving humidity, and his foot must not touch the earth directly or the ground will dry up. Such persons must submit to a number of ritual interdictions, because their ritual purity guarantees the order of the world. The staff depicts a woman kneeling in supplication, the symbolic two-headed ax extending from her head. The dark colour of the staff represents the trance itself, the hidden quality of spiritual knowledge. The sculptural depiction of Shango and other deities represents an important intersection between African art and religion. In Swaziland the king is both a political and a ritual leader; the ritual renewal of his office is performed in conjunction with the summer solstice, when the celestial bodies are believed to be at their most powerful. During the rite of renewal, the king is purified and washed, and the water running off his body is thought to bring the first rains of the new season. Among the Yoruba a succession of kings were deified, and their histories were infused with myths about a royal pantheon of secondary divinities, such as Shango. Diviners are ritual specialists who have mastered a technique for reading signs that communicate the will of the divinities. Thought to possess the gift of clairvoyance, diviners are believed to share in the power of insight usually reserved to the spirits. Divinatory ritual is the centrepiece of African religions, because it opens to all a channel of mediation with the gods. The diviner shakes various objects in the winnowing basket and, by interpreting their final juxtaposition, seeks to predict the outcome of an illness and to name the sorcerer responsible. Their power is ambiguous and therefore dangerous, however, and must be controlled. The Gelede ritual masquerades of the Yoruba are one way to control witches. The rituals are lavish spectacles designed to represent and honour witches, the Great Mothers, who can bring wealth and fertility or disaster in the form of disease, famine, and barrenness. Throughout Africa misfortune is ultimately explained as the work of witchcraft, and witches are often seen as forces of evil, even if they are unaware of the ill they do. To combat the misfortunes brought about by witches, witch doctors and diviners are sought to provide protective medicines and amulets and to counteract the work of witches through exorcism and other rites. Photograph by Katie Chao. Woodward Memorial Fund, Unlike Western mythology, African myths are not recounted as a single narrative story, nor is there any established corpus of myth. Instead, myths are embedded and transmitted in ritual practice. African mythology commonly depicts the cosmos anthropomorphically. The human body is a microcosm that incorporates the same primordial elements and essential forces that make up the universe. Twinship is a predominant theme in much West African myth and ritual, because the human body is conceived as the twin of the cosmic body. According to the cosmogony shared by the Dogon, Bambara, and Malinke peoples of Mali, the primordial

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beings were twins, and twins therefore represent the ideal. Every individual shares in the structure of twinship. Among the Asante of Ghana, twins are assigned a status akin to that of living shrines; a sign of abundant fertility, they are deemed repositories of sacredness. For the Ndembu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, by contrast, twins represent an excess of fertility more characteristic of the animal world than the human, and rituals are undertaken to protect the community from this anomalous condition. The trickster is a prevalent type of mythic character in African mythology. Tricksters overturn convention and are notorious for pursuing their insatiable appetites and shameless lusts, even at the price of disaster. Although the trickster introduces disorder and confusion into the divine plan, he also paves the way for a new, more dynamic order. To the Fon of Benin, Legba is such a trickster. He is a troublemaker who disrupts harmony and sows turmoil, but he is revered as a transformer and not viewed as evil. Like other tricksters, Legba presides over divination. Tricksters thus communicate an important paradox: New religions, independent churches, and prophetic movements Religious vision and fervour, combined with the desire for political self-determination, have inspired a variety of New Religious Movements throughout Africa. Such movements proliferated in sub-Saharan Africa in the wake of European colonialism as one response of Africans to the loss of cultural, economic, and political control. Independent, or indigenous, churches arose largely in reaction to European Christian missions and played a significant role in the postcolonial struggle for national independence. At the end of the 20th century, independent churches constituted more than 15 percent of the total Christian population of sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast to the indigenous religious systems of Africa, which are generated and sustained by the community, Christian prophetic movements are organized around an individual. They are like indigenous African religions in that they are preoccupied with healing. Prophets are considered charged by God with the task of purifying the people and struggling against witchcraft. Public confessions, exorcisms, and purifying baptisms are dominant features. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Simon Kimbangu inaugurated a healing revival in that drew thousands of converts to Christianity. The Kimbanguist Church survived and was eventually recognized by the state, and in it was admitted to the World Council of Churches. In the late 20th century the church had more than four million adherents. Another prophetic movement, the Harris movement, was one of the first to receive the sanction and support of the governments of Western Africa. His followers would establish a number of independent Harrist churches in Western Africa. In contrast, neotraditional movements retain elements of indigenous African belief and ritual within the context of Christian liturgy. These syncretic religious movements incorporated important aspects of African religious expression, such as the practice of secrecy characteristic of the Sande societies in Western Africa. They also adopted fundamental beliefs of indigenous religions, such as the reliance upon the intervention of ancestral spirits. An example is the Bwiti movement, which originated with the Fang of Gabon and fused traditional ancestral cults with Christian symbolism and theology and messianic prophetic leadership. Such new African churches have tried to sustain a sense of community and continuity, even amid rapid and dramatic social change.

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## Chapter 6 : An Analysis of Diocesan Marriage Preparation Policies

*Buy The pastoral approach to African traditional values of fecundity and marriage (Spearhead) by Constance R Banzikiza (ISBN: ) from Amazon's Book Store. Everyday low prices and free delivery on eligible orders.*

The very first thing that has to be decided by someone seeking counseling is whether or not they believe in God. There are three types of counseling offered in the world to help us deal with human problems and dysfunctional lives. Integrated Christian Counseling 3. Secular counselors go to secular colleges and graduate school programs and their training is in the field of psychology and the humanistic approaches to human difficulties and challenges. Their philosophy is based on man solving his own problems, using his own resources, and not relying on any outside source to guide us. Very rarely will they address moral issues and values and many times will go completely against what the Bible teaches. An example of this would be a client who comes to them because they are having an affair and they feel guilty about it and want to end it and confess the affair to their spouse. Secular counseling depends upon human reason and research to answer life questions about people, problems, and solutions. Secular counseling assumes that there is no final answer or meaning to life. It does not address the spirit or the soul at all. Many people after counseling with a secular counselor come away with the feeling that they did not learn anything about their situation that they already did not know. This is because secular counselors rarely give advice that is active and requires action on the part of the client. Usually they just "listen" and "parrot back" to the client what the client is saying. So people become frustrated because they did not come there to have someone just "listen. The problem is their knowledge of scripture is usually very limited, and other than saying they belong to a church, most of their counseling is secular with an occasional Bible verse thrown in for good measure. They, are instead trying to integrate Scripture and secular psychology to help people. Interestingly enough, psychology is a "new science" that has only been on the scene for about years, while theology and the Bible have been around for thousands of years. So actually psychology grew out of theology, not vice versa. Many of the personality theories that secular counselors are taught are very similar to what Jesus taught, but they give it a different name and do not give Jesus any of the credit. Authentic Biblical Counseling is based on the teachings of the Bible and a belief in God as our creator. It is based on the fact that we have the humility to know that God created us, and not the other way around. Since He created us, then He, above all others, should best understand how we think, how we operate, and how we work. Thus, He knows how to fix us. God can solve any problem that you could bring to Him. ALL dysfunctional problems that individuals and families face are the result of someone, at some point committing some sin that has resulted in turmoil, and suffering and destruction for many. Greed, lust, pride, adultery, stealing, lying, cheating, incest, sexual sins, arrogance, selfishness, murder, etc. And if we do He lays out the consequences of those sins. The Bible provides real answers for real people with real problems. God is the "source of wisdom" for every problem known to man. If you leave Him out of the equation and try to solve issues on your own, you will fail. A biblical counselor will work with you comprehensively. They will help you to identify the "root cause" of your problems, and show you the biblical prescription to solve them. They will help you to know God better, socially to love others more effectively, and self-consciously to apply and to understand who you are in Christ. Your biblical counselor will help you rationally to renew your relationship with Christ with the result that you will know the "mind of Christ" in all matters and be able to apply that to your life, others and yourself, so that you will have an eternal perspective on life, rather than a "no hope" secular one. Man is the creation; God is the Creator. Man cannot compete with God, on any level, for understanding how the life and the universe He created out of nothingness works. God does not think like us. In 1 Corinthians 3: Not only does God NOT think like us, but His ideas about how things operate often diametrically oppose ours. There are many reasons for this i. So, in the end there are only two clear choices from which to counsel people: This is also of profound significance! All secular approaches to human problems have something in common: Secular counseling puts a "band aid" on the wound which

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temporarily covers it up. While Biblical counseling goes right to the "infection of the wound" and cleanses it, heals it, and erases it completely. Which would you prefer? A temporary fix that will come back or a permanent healing that will never surface again? So biblical counseling goes to the "root" of the problem not the "symptom" of the problems. And the "root" of the problem really means the "heart of the matter. The heart is wicked and deceitful, who can understand it? When someone becomes a Child of God, they are a "new person. While we alone cannot change another person, God, can change another person or circumstance. Many times He does this in ways we could never have anticipated, that are far better than what we thought should happen. Secular counseling depends on biochemistry, genetics, and family of origin issues. And while these do factor in, they are not our destiny. Besides WHO gave you your biochemistry, your genes, or the family that you were born into? Was it not God? A genuine understanding of what is wrong in our hearts and in the hearts of those we are dealing with is the true solution and healing. Some secular counselors will tell you that you are your "own God" and that as long as you love everyone and no one gets hurt, then there are many sins you can get away with. However, as you will find, sin has a circular life cycle. ALL sin, eventually leads to destruction and death. It never leads to healing and life. This requires a belief in God as our creator, and an understanding that we are the "created" and thus we are not capable of knowing what is the best for us without His guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit operating on our behalf and in our lives. If you are in need of biblical counseling please do not hesitate to contact Patricia Jones M. We accept PayPal and all other major credit or debit cards. Once you hit the PayPal button it will allow you to pay with PayPal or another major credit or debit card. No PayPal account is required.

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### Chapter 7 : TOWARDS A PASTORAL APPROACH TO CULTURE ( )

*Traditional African approaches in the light of natural values, and of modern secular attitude. If we are going to speak of traditional African concepts and customs regarding marriage and the family, a few clarifications are called for.*

God himself is the author of marriage. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity,[88] some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love. And this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: This experience makes itself felt in the relationships between man and woman. Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation. This disorder can manifest itself more or less acutely, and can be more or less overcome according to the circumstances of cultures, eras, and individuals, but it does seem to have a universal character. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them. The punishments consequent upon sin, "pain in childbearing" and toil "in the sweat of your brow,"[] also embody remedies that limit the damaging effects of sin. In the Old Testament the polygamy of patriarchs and kings is not yet explicitly rejected. God himself has determined it "what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder. However, Jesus has not placed on spouses a burden impossible to bear, or too heavy - heavier than the Law of Moses. It is by following Christ, renouncing themselves, and taking up their crosses that spouses will be able to "receive" the original meaning of marriage and live it with the help of Christ. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath[] which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church. Since it signifies and communicates grace, marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the New Covenant. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it. It is he who gives them meaning and grants them the grace which is indispensable for living them out in conformity with his will. Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. The most excellent good is something even better than what is admitted to be good. In the Eastern liturgies the minister of this sacrament which is called "Crowning" is the priest or bishop who, after receiving the mutual consent of the spouses, successively crowns the bridegroom and the bride as a sign of the marriage covenant. In the epiclesis of this sacrament the spouses receive the Holy Spirit as the communion of love of Christ and the Church. Several reasons converge to explain this requirement: It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church; - Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial order, and creates rights and duties in the Church between the spouses and towards their children; - Since marriage is a state of life in the Church, certainty about it is necessary hence the obligation to have witnesses ; - The public character of the consent protects the "I do" once given and helps the spouses remain faithful to it. The example and teaching given by parents and families remain the special form of this preparation. The role of pastors and of the Christian community as the "family of God" is indispensable for the transmission of the human and Christian values of marriage and family,[] and much more so in our era when many young people experience broken homes which no longer sufficiently assure this initiation: It is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise, so that, having learned the value of chastity, they

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will be able at a suitable age to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon a marriage of their own. It requires particular attention on the part of couples and their pastors. A case of marriage with disparity of cult between a Catholic and a nonbaptized person requires even greater circumspection. But the difficulties of mixed marriages must not be underestimated. They arise from the fact that the separation of Christians has not yet been overcome. The spouses risk experiencing the tragedy of Christian disunity even in the heart of their own home. Disparity of cult can further aggravate these difficulties. Differences about faith and the very notion of marriage, but also different religious mentalities, can become sources of tension in marriage, especially as regards the education of children. The temptation to religious indifference can then arise. The Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom. By this grace they "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb: How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels, and ratified by the Father? How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together. This is the consequence of the gift of themselves which they make to each other. Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement "until further notice. Through the sacrament of Matrimony the spouses are enabled to represent this fidelity and witness to it. Through the sacrament, the indissolubility of marriage receives a new and deeper meaning. In such cases the Church permits the physical separation of the couple and their living apart. The spouses do not cease to be husband and wife before God and so are not free to contract a new union. In this difficult situation, the best solution would be, if possible, reconciliation. The Christian community is called to help these persons live out their situation in a Christian manner and in fidelity to their marriage bond which remains indissoluble. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery"[] the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice. The Church is nothing other than "the family of God. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation. Many remain without a human family often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the "domestic churches," and of the great family which is the Church must be open to all of them. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" Eph 5: By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament cf. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life cf. Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has joined together; the refusal of

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fertility turns married life away from its "supreme gift," the child GS 50 1. They are not separated from the Church, but they cannot receive Eucharistic communion. They will lead Christian lives especially by educating their children in the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called "the domestic church," a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity. Creating the human race in his own image. God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out. The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift. The integrity of the person The chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech. The alternative is clear: Man gains such dignity when, ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward to his goal by freely choosing what is good and, by his diligence and skill, effectively secures for himself the means suited to this end. One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life. It is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort. Under its influence, chastity appears as a school of the gift of the person. Self-mastery is ordered to the gift of self. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends,[] who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.

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### Chapter 8 : After Cardinal Farrell's marriage prep remarks, some Catholics ask for clarity

*A pastoral approach focused on the evangelization of culture and on the inculturation of the faith implies competence in two areas: in the field of theology and in the field of pastoral work.*

The first is that the context of this article is sub-Saharan Africa. Within that context, I use "traditional" in the sense of what was customary up to the time of independence, i. There are two further important points to be borne in mind: I think it can help clarity of exposition if we approach our subject from three angles. In the second place we can contrast these African attitudes with the sexual or marital and family "mores" that prevail in the western world. Finally we can devote some consideration to factors that are currently undermining the stability of the African family. Augustine - the bonum proles or offspring, the bonum fidei or unity, and the bonum sacramenti or indissolubility - we can immediately state that the first - the sense of children as a good: It is in this light that one should consider the phenomenon of polygamy which is of course the main point where traditional African marriage has most frequently departed from the norm of the natural law. This can be seen, for instance, in the fact that the taking of a second wife is so often the simple consequence of the barrenness of the first. Polygamy not only violates the divine design that marriage should be a communion of life between just one man and one woman who then become two in one flesh Gen. Although polygamy still has its defenders, the majority of Africans readily understand that the Christian and natural norm of monogamous marriage is essential for upholding the dignity of woman. Given the rapid cultural changes operating in Africa, it seems likely that, within a decade or two, polygamy as a pastoral problem will be replaced by western style divorce and remarriage. In traditional African society, men guarded the home and the cattle, or went to war. The women worked, caring for the house, the crops, the children. It could be remarked in passing that the tradition of women being much more industrious than men has accelerated the current process of equalization between the sexes, since the African woman in the modern working situation will generally outdo the man. Just as polygamy has been fairly frequent in traditional African society, divorce has been extremely rare. An important point of difference between polygamy and divorce is not to be overlooked. In polygamy the first wife is not rejected or put away; the marriage bond is not considered broken. What is violated is unity, but not indissolubility. One might say that, in African tradition, the indissolubility of marriage is conditioned to its fruitfulness. Practically speaking, the birth of a child marked the "consummation" of the marriage. Once a child has been born the marriage is indissoluble. As one African put it to me, "Children became a real external sign of this indissoluble unity. And if he choose to consider his marriage null and send her back to her family, society - and the woman herself - would agree. This African tradition, then, is unacceptable from a Christian standpoint. Yet it is interesting to note it as a sign of something which we will examine in the second part of our study: All of this undoubtedly implies a "test" approach to marriage. Yet, to my mind, it would not be accurate to interpret this African approach as showing a "trial marriage" mentality in the sense in which trial marriage is spoken of in western countries. The simple underlying fact is that for the African approaching marriage, children are more important than "compatibility. But this is not an adequate analysis either. This gradualness is simply a consequence of family and clan involvement in the match-making process. African marriages come into being as a result not of a single ceremony, but of many ceremonies with an inter-family significance. But personal consent has always remained the critical moment and factor. Formal betrothal of a couple often takes place in the presence of both families. After betrothal, once the couple actually exchange marital consent and this exchange may be signified by the simple fact of their having marital relations, then their marriage is traditionally considered to be sealed. The African countries are being barraged concretely by western ideas on sex, marriage and the family. Many factors would seem to guarantee the eventual acceptance of these ideas - western prestige, western know-how, western technology, western methods of diffusion - and yet this is an area where traditional ideas and values are deeply rooted, stand in sharp contrast to western ways, and will not easily be

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supplanted. This is not to say that they are not in danger; they are, as we shall see in our final section. Sacred Realities A first major point of contrast is the African conviction that sex and marriage are sacred realities. Traditional African sexual morality derived from the sense of the sacredness of the procreative function. Sex was a taboo matter; hence to "play" with sex was held to merit a curse. Africans coming to Europe are quite sincere in their scandalized reaction at the public "love" making that has become common among couples. Even husband and wife, within an African home, are reserved in their behavior before their children. The public expression of any type of sexual familiarity is repugnant to the African sense. Virginity was held in high esteem. In some tribes, for instance, her mother might be given a cow as a tribute to her successful upbringing of the girl. In such a case, the fact other virginity would be a matter of public knowledge, and would earn her special respect from her in-laws. As against this, a girl known to be loose could hope, at best, to be married to an old man, as helper of his first wife. To be married to an old man was a grave disgrace for her and her family, before the rest of the tribe. Some people would no doubt criticize virtue "based on social pressure" just on social pressure? What should they then say in criticism of societies that tend to admire vice, and allow or exercise social pressure to bring about corruption in individuals, especially in the young? Within marriage itself, it was an accepted norm that there must be periodic abstinence; for instance during weaning periods, or for specifically religious motives e. My intention here is to bring out some of the positive values that underlie traditional African approaches to marriage. I am not trying to paint an idealized picture of a pagan culture. Lest anyone think so, I should add that sexual sins have been as common in traditional Africa as in other societies. But it is also true that the African retained and retains a keen sense of sin, especially in an area considered to be as sacred as sex. It is in fact this native African sense of sin derived from his sense of sacred realities that so predisposes the African towards Christianity. The powerful attraction that Christianity has for him lies precisely in its being - and being presented as - a religion of salvation, of liberation from sin. We cannot pass on without mentioning something important connected with the taboo system which was largely centered around sexual matters and. The sexual permissiveness that has spread through the West in the past 20 or 30 years is beginning to make serious inroads into African societies. African thinkers in growing numbers are becoming sharply critical of the West and of course they often identify Christianity with the West for having destroyed the taboo system and left nothing but a moral vacuum in its place. In some cases their criticism may be no more than opportunism at work. In other cases it is undoubtedly quite sincere. Christian pastors and teachers are often not sensitive enough to the confusion underlying this criticism and to the harm it can do. And as a result they are not clear and firm enough in helping people distinguish between Christianity as a force that has sought to replace the taboos with a higher and purer and stronger morality, and modern western paganism as a force that seeks to replace the taboos - and, a fortiori, Christian and natural moral principles - with a non-morality. Further, if Christian pastors and missionaries themselves preach or reflect a permissive morality or fail to criticize it ; they will repel precisely those Africans who possess a keener sense of their own traditions and who are therefore most prepared to appreciate how Christian principles, properly taught and properly applied to a culture, can save, purify and uplift the best values of that culture cf. Children - a Blessing A second major African characteristic is the deep and universal conviction that children are a blessing. In total contrast to the West, both personal and social attitudes favor having children. Lack of children is considered a misfortune, or even a sign of a curse. The desire for children has always been the main motive inspiring the African to marry. It would be inadequate to interpret this as placing the procreational or biological aspect of marriage above the aspect of personal fulfillment. A truer analysis is that personal fulfillment for the African is achieved very principally in having offspring - through which one expresses and perpetuates oneself. Children have always been regarded as a prolongation of self and therefore in some way a fulfillment of immortality. As one African put it to me, "A man who had no child would consider himself dead and finished. His life has come to an end: It would mean a choice not to express oneself; therefore a lack of personality and of personal fulfillment; a choice to remain within an expressionless self-enclosure. Even today an African who sees a couple that does not want children will say that they are barren, i. In consequence, most

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Africans cannot even understand the idea of contraception. It makes no sense to them. Community Dimension

The community dimension of marriage is another main feature of African society. In Africa a marriage is never just an affair between two individuals. It is also an alliance between two families. And in a certain sense whole villages or clans are involved. The clan has always had an important say - frequently too important a say - in the acceptance of a marriage partner, precisely because marriage involves the welcoming of a new member into the clan. Africans at times will even say that it is not two individuals but two clans that marry. The effect of western ideas is to reduce this social emphasis in favor of more personalistic concepts. Yet many educated Africans remain sensitive to the possibility that a new emphasis on personal values in marriage - mutual love, personal choice, a desire for self-fulfillment, etc. They are also beginning to realize that many western approaches are not so much personalistic as individualistic. The rejection of the broader social commitment that Africans have always connected with marriage covers a hidden and excessive self-concern that can lead in time to a refusal to face up to the demands involved in the mini-society which is the nuclear marriage itself, and to a subsequent collapse of the marriage. A successful marriage always has a social aspect. Africans often ask with surprise: It is interesting to consider how this family or clan involvement can affect the personal freedom of one or both of the spouses. Family pressure could certainly inspire such reverential fear in a person that he or she consents to the marriage. If the fear inspired is grave then it may be possible to show that the consent lacked a minimum of freedom and the marriage is therefore null. The marriage, however, would be valid if the person concerned, despite the fear, decided in fact to accept the marriage and so gives true personal marital consent. This was probably the case with many European arranged marriages of the past and with the great majority of traditional arranged African marriages. Yet the fact is that many of these marriages "worked," and so the spouse or the spouses may, in the end, have remained grateful for pressure which had helped them to find a solid marriage and home. There is another way in which family involvement has had an important effect on personal freedom in African marriage. If a marital crisis arose - a serious situation or quarrel between the spouses that threatened the marriage with collapse - the families would intervene in an effort to save the marriage.

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## Chapter 9 : Biblical-Counseling-vs-Secular-Counseling

*African educated elites are mistaken to assume to know more about sexuality than the illiterate masses or traditional villagers, given the fact that age-appropriate sex education that is not only limited to religiosity.*

The idea of writing a letter on the need to pay greater pastoral attention to Traditional Religions emerged in the course of the last Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue November. It was felt that since Traditional Religions are present in different forms not only in Africa, but also in Asia, the Americas, Oceania, it would be useful to call the attention of the Episcopal Conferences of these continents to the importance of pastoral attention to the Traditional Religions and the usefulness of an exchange of reflections and experiences in this field. What is meant by Traditional Religions? By Traditional Religions we mean those religions which, unlike the world religions that have spread into many countries and cultures, have remained in their original socio-cultural environment. There is no agreement on a single name to be used when referring to these religions. Nowadays, even a term such as animism is no longer commonly acceptable. Elements of the Traditional Religions. There is also a belief in other beings which are above humankind but are less than the Supreme Being. They may be called spirits and some experts on the Traditional Religions sometimes call them "deities" or "gods", with a small "d" or "g". Deceased adult relatives, i. Cult or worship in Traditional Religions is directed generally to the spirits and the ancestors and sometimes to God. It takes the form of prayer especially in the family, worship at shrines and communal sacrifices. Fear of the evil spirits or ancestors motivates many acts of worship. The moral code is regarded as that which has been handed down by past generations and sanctioned by the spirits and the ancestors, and occasionally by God. Traditional Religions do not generally lay claim to revealed books. Nor are they articulated in theoretical statements of a theological or philosophical nature. The riches of their contents, and their many values, are more often found in their celebrations, stories and proverbs, and conveyed through attitudes, customs and codes of conduct. It is rare that a traditional religion traces itself back to a founder. Some Major Values in Traditional Religions. In many traditional societies there is a strong sense of the sacred. Religion permeates life to such an extent that it is often difficult to distinguish between strictly religious elements and local custom. Authority is not seen as something secular but is regarded as a sacred trust. People of Traditional Religions show great attention to the earth. They respect life and celebrate its important stages: There is a strong sense of the family, which includes love of children, respect for the elders, a community link with the ancestors. There is an obvious love of ritual. Shadows in Traditional Religions. Traditional religions also have their negative elements. Examples can be given: Traditional Religions in a Period of Change. Traditional Religions have in the past formed one piece with the cultures of the people who practised them. Among these peoples the same word was often used for religion, custom and culture. These forces and values held their societies together. The meeting with Christianity, other religions and also with western culture, and especially with modern science and technology and urbanisation, has affected these societies and their Traditional Religions. Nevertheless the influence of Traditional Religions remains strong, particularly at moments of crisis. Traditional Religions constitute the religious context in which a good number of people live or have lived. Many recent converts to Christianity come from a background of traditional religions. This is true not only in those Churches where the Gospel has been preached only within the last century or so, but also in some countries where the Church has been established for many centuries. Many of these converts live in cultures and contexts influenced by these religions. This is proved by the fact that at some important moments in their lives such as sickness, danger, marriage, birth of a child, funeral of a relative they tend to have recourse to practices of their traditional religions or to prayer houses, healing homes, witch-craft, "prophets" or fortune-tellers. It is to be noted that in Latin America the descendants of the people brought over as slaves from Africa in the 16th and 17th centuries have not lost everything of the religion and culture of their ancestors. The Holy Father encouraged them in his speeches to them at the shrine of St. Also worthy of mention are the two more recent encounters the Holy

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Father had with the Amerindians and the Afro-Americans in Santo Domingo on 12 October, All this is a clear indication that the herald of the Gospel should pay great attention to the traditional religions and the cultures which go along with them. Christianity should aim at influencing the whole of life and producing integrated persons, rather than have people live parallel lives, at different levels. The encounter of Gospel and culture, including its religious element, will involve a careful sifting out, a discernment, which is not always easy. Inculturation for Better Proclamation. The Church respects the religions and cultures of peoples, and, in its encounter with them, wishes to preserve everything that is noble, true and good in their religions and cultures. To the extent that Traditional Religions are better understood, Christianity will be more suitably proclaimed. Elements of both a religion and the culture influenced by it can enrich catechesis and liturgy, and therein attain their fulfilment. Necessary is an in-depth study in order to discover those elements Christianity can adopt or adapt, ennoble and purify, and those which must be rejected LG 13 , with constant attention to the danger of syncretism. With those who wish to become Christians, and those who have already converted from Traditional Religion, dialogue must be understood in the broadest possible sense, namely as the pastoral approach to traditional Religion in order to present the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the most appropriate manner so that the Church may have deeper roots among that people. In this regard, during the recent encounter in Santo Domingo, the Holy Father delivered an address to the Afro-American representatives in which he said: Dialogue should be understood here according to its different forms cf. Dialogue and Proclamation Particularly important in the context of Traditional Religions will be the "dialogue of life" and the "dialogue of action", or collaboration in the field of integral human development. There remains some difficulty with regard to this dialogue. In some cases there are secret elements to these religions, and open contact is not desired. In other cases the lack of structures makes organised dialogue more difficult. Nor should one overlook the ambiguity of this dialogue. To indiscriminating persons it can sometimes seem as if a stamp of approval is being given to these religions. Yet in all cases respect and openness are needed. Dialogue with the adherents of Traditional Religions is an expression of charity which knows no boundaries. Vatican II recommends in-depth theological investigation with a view to a profound Evangelization AG The pastoral attention to Traditional Religions which this letter seeks to encourage is a step in the direction of this in-depth theological reflection. In the study of Traditional Religions and cultures and in the reflection on how Christianity can ensure the desired pastoral approach, some key doctrinal points must be kept in mind, namely: All this provides the necessary framework within which the riches of the Traditional Religions can attain their fulfilment. It is important to guarantee the unity of the Catholic faith throughout the entire world, even if the manner of expressing that faith can vary from one people and culture to another. Since this investigation and the subsequent pastoral action are truly important for the apostolate of the Church, and bearing in mind the delicate nature of the undertaking, the major responsibility in this field pertains to the Episcopal Conferences of each country or region. As has already been done in such a praiseworthy manner by several Episcopal Conferences, it would be opportune for each Episcopal Conference to appoint a small group of competent and skilled people eager to undertake this research in close co-operation with the Episcopal Conference and, through it, with the competent Dicasteries of the Holy See. Ecumenical collaboration in this field is to be encouraged. Likewise, it would be advisable to promote the study and knowledge of Traditional Religions as part of the formation programme in seminaries, ecclesiastical institutes, and religious houses of study. In conclusion, I would like to stress the readiness of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to sustain, encourage and co-operate with future endeavours geared towards a better knowledge of suitable pastoral approach. At the same time the PCID is ready to act as a clearing-house for the exchange of knowledge and information among the Episcopal Conferences if they would send us, when available, information on studies already carried out or in progress, relevant publications, names of experts, and anything else that could contribute to fruitful co-operation.