

The Family: The Nucleus of Transformative Education and Leadership

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Abstract: *The family is a classical theme that has dates back to the time of creation. It not only defines a society at a certain level of civilization, but also profoundly determines the destiny of every individual. The family represents a reunion of age, but also a potential conflict between generations. Traditional society imposes to the individual the creation of a family as a way of integrating into the community and personal fulfillment. The contemporary family is faced with a mirage of hurdles: mistrust, divorce, single parenting, child-headed families, poverty, displacement, despair and homosexuality among others. In response to these hurdles, the Pope has convened an extra-ordinary synod of the family from 5th to 19th October, 2014 on the theme “The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization”. He is inviting agents of evangelization, the civil society and especially Institutions of Higher Learning to participate in the discussion on this very important topic for transformative humanization today.*

*The family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbour. The family which has the primary duty of imparting education needs help of the whole community. This paper explores John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation: *Familiaris Contortio* in education and the family under the sub-sections of: the nature of education in the family; the relationship between the family and education; threats to family’s role in education, conclusion and recommendations. The paper adopted an intensive review of existing literature on the topic by renowned Church Scholars and educationists on the subject matter as its methodology. Although the role of the relationship between the family and education is vast, the paper focused on higher education at Catholic universities only for purposes of exhaustiveness.*

Key Words: *Family, Church, Education; Matrimony, Sacrament, Leadership, Transformative leadership*

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I. Introduction

The simplest form of all living creature, according to Trese (2003), is the cell. Interestingly, in planning the human race, God did not propagate mankind in a similar fashion as the cell. Instead, (Gen 1: 26-28), God chose to make man, male and female and to give them power, in partnership with himself to produce new human life. To do so, God bestowed upon mankind the power of procreation within the context of the family after matrimony.

The family is a classical theme that dates back to the time of creation. It not only defines a society at a certain level of civilization (Durant, N/D), but also profoundly determines the destiny of every individual. Literature follows the path of the human from the family in which he is born to the family which he creates for himself, thus establishing his own social status. As an institution, the family gives stability to a society, and this is why it is protected by written and unwritten laws. Both the Church and state assume the responsibility of regulating the relations between individuals in the family, especially in key moments. (Trif & Tausan, 2008).

Globalization issues have given rise to the “educational emergency” phenomenon which has brought to the surface the “issue of truth” and the “issue of God”. This paper argues that challenges of education and cultures cannot be tackled by simply using new technologies, new manuals, new supports or a change in work methods or programs. Rather, the society needs true families to supply the much needed authentic teachers; persons who, above all are convinced of our human capacity to advance along the path of truth while keeping their gaze fixed on Christ, whose face radiates the Truth which ethically enlightens. The quest is on but with uncertainty as the basic social unit, the family is at risk.

Research has long documented a strong relationship between family background factors, such as income and parents’ educational levels, and student achievement. Studies have also shown that parents can play an important role in supporting their children’s academic achievement. But what is the role of the family in promoting education for transformative leadership within institutions of higher learning? This paper examines the nature of education in the family, relationship between family and education, threats to the role of the family in education, conclusion and recommendations. The paper does not attempt to be a comprehensive review of the

broad literature on education in the family, but rather is an exploration of the sampling of some current findings from the field that appear to impinge on motivation.

The family – this historic form of human community – has an elementary social nucleus obtained through marriage and then through close biological, economic and spiritual relations. For complete success in creating a family we need intelligence, understanding, as well as continuous effort to shape our personalities through an act of will, education and moral strength. Both men and women have to become ultimately the creators of their own image, leading towards harmony, physical and spiritual beauty, honesty and most of all, trust. Marriage, which creates the family, has in the beginning the unknown, because of the good and bad habits young people have. With a little effort, they can change some of the bad habits, or remove and replace them when there is decision, true love and desire to create a family. Only like this both he and she become liked, useful and respected. In the beginning, the family means respect for the truth on both sides, because only like that people can live a beautiful life and die a peaceful death. A proverb says “a lie has short legs”, it cannot go too far without being discovered by the truth, shaming the one who abused it. (Trif & Tausan, 2008).

Definition of Key Terms

Education is an organized program of teaching the minds of the children in God's truth, inspiring their wills to respond to this truth, and training their whole person for a peaceful and happy life here on earth as the prelude of that eternal life for which they were made (Hardon, 2014).

Etymology: The term *family* comes from the Latin word *famulus*, which means house slave, but it has changed its meaning in time. The family represents a group whose members are related by blood or marriage.

Family comprises a group of persons who are related by marriage or blood and who typically include a father, mother, and children. A Christian family is one in which the parents are united in a lifelong commitment, as husband and wife, and whose children are being nurtured in the true Christian faith.

Matrimony is the sacrament by which baptized man and baptized woman bind themselves for life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to discharge their duties (Trese, 2003).

Sacrament is an outward sign that confers an inner grace (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Transformative leadership seeks to be of service, encourages and inspires respects and reflects, prays and acts on Jesus Christ's teachings (D'Souza, 2001).

The Family as a Nucleus

God is the genesis of the Family hence the family is God's own idea. In many contexts, the family has been perceived as God's provision for the lonely and the deserted. Therefore, the family becomes God's mercy to mankind right from creation time: “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him”, (Gen 2:18). Thus God created a perfect co-worker for the task he had given Adam. Just as Adam, each one of us has been created for a divine mission ordained by God Himself. Such tasks include education and place the family at the core of all the tasks performed by man. In order to attain the accomplishment of this divine task, we also need the support of others and we find them in family relationship. God realized deficiency in Adam and promptly met it in Eve. In Eve, Adam found the “bone of his bones and the flesh of his flesh.” He also found a partner – Part (owner).

God demands that a man who cannot take care of his family cannot be a leader in the church, (1Tim3:5). In this sense, the family is therefore the building block of the Church. This implies that insofar as the family is a "small- scale Church," the Christian family is called upon, like the "large- scale Church," to be a sign of unity for the world and to exercise its prophetic role by bearing witness to the Kingdom and peace of Christ, towards which the whole world is journeying. If this role is carried out well in the family, then the direly needed peace education can be easily taught in the mainstream education. In so doing, the educational goal of fostering coexistence will have been realized. In the end, education as an instrument of peace will have been revitalized. According to John Paul II (1981), Christian families can do this through their educational activity, that is, by presenting to their children a model of life based on the values of truth, freedom, justice and love-both through active and responsible involvement in the authentically human growth of society and its institutions, and by supporting in various ways the associations specifically devoted to international issues.

The Family is regarded as a Church, (John Paul, 1981). It is also in the family that some if not all the activities must begin. One such activity is education. This implies that the Church's educative role emanates from the family setting. According to Majawa (2011), naturally, a human couple is in the position and has the right to educate their children. This is so because, as Thomas Aquinas puts it, the couple represents in their diversity and complementarity, male and female, a complete humanity. This humanity is equal in nature and dignity, but differing in the quality of this nature such as that what either of them possesses compensates more

for the lack of it in the other. In this perspective, the family is still regarded as the nucleus from which all educational activities spring.

The family finds in the plan of God the Creator and Redeemer not only its identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it can and should do. The role that God calls the family to perform in history derives from what the family is; its role represents the dynamic and existential development of what it is. Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: family, become what you. The family must educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God. Indeed, the family that is open to transcendent values, that serves its brothers and sisters with joy, that fulfills its duties with generous fidelity, and is aware of its daily sharing in the mystery of the glorious Cross of Christ, becomes the primary and most excellent seed-bed of vocations to a life of consecration to the Kingdom of God.

John Paul II: Familiaris Contortio

The circumstances in which children are raised and the involvement of their parents in their early education play a role in shaping academic mindset and motivation. Culturally sensitive parent involvement programs that focus on ways to create a stimulating home environment and motivate children to achieve can make a difference. For example, parents can help foster motivation by praising effort, persistence, and mastery of subjects rather than general achievement or intelligence and talent. Reading and talking to children, celebrating their learning with them, and providing opportunities for creative exploration can also encourage factors associated with motivation. Moreover, parents can foster motivation by helping children see academic achievement as a realistic part of their identity, setting realistic but high standards and expectations, and starting all these strategies as early as possible. (CEP, 2012).

All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family “a school of deeper humanity”, (John Paul II, 1981). This happens where there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, the aged; where there is mutual service every day; when there is a sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows. By means of love, respect and obedience towards their parents, children offer their specific and irreplaceable contribution to the construction of an authentically human and Christian family. They will be aided in this if parents exercise their unrenounceable authority as a true and proper “ministry,” that is, as a service to the human and Christian well-being of their children, and in particular as a service aimed at helping them acquire a truly responsible freedom, and if parents maintain a living awareness of the “gift” they continually receive from their children.

Acceptance, love, esteem, many-sided and united material, emotional, educational and spiritual concern for every child that comes into this world should always constitute a distinctive, essential characteristic of all Christians, especially, in the family (John Paul II, 1981). This view posits that children from Christian families are able to grow and develop both in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man at the same time. Such children offer their own precious contribution to building up the family community and even to the sanctification of their parents.

In his Apostolic Exhortation: *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II propagates that the task of giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God's creative activity. By begetting in love and for love a new person who has within himself or herself the vocation to growth and development, parents take on the task of helping that person effectively to live a fully human life. As the Second Vatican Council recalled, by conferring life on their children, parents have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. This means that parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and others that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children. In essence, this noble role positions the family as the first school of the desired social virtues which every society needs. Therefore, (Majawa, 2011), the right and duty of parents to give education is an essential one that is connected with the transmission of human life. This makes this divine role unique, original and primary with regard to the educational role of others. Worth noting is the fact that the parents’ role in educating their children is irreplaceable and inalienable, hence incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.

The most basic element in educative duty of the parents to their children is parental love. First and foremost, it is important that love is the genesis of the establishment of a family. As a unit founded in love, the family should share love to all its members and the wider society. Bearing in mind that the family is founded by God, love is one of its strong characteristics. Authors have considered parental love so basic that it qualifies the educational role of parents, is parental love, which finds fulfillment in the task of education as it completes and perfects its service of life. Other than being a source, parental love is also the animating principle and therefore the norm inspiring and guiding all concrete educational activity. It does so by enriching educational activities

with values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruit of love.

Transformative Education and Leadership

There is widespread recognition that education is the key to the well-being of any society and that transforming universities and university management systems is critical to sustained growth and success. Yet despite the many advances in information and communication technologies, truly world-class universities remain a relative rarity. Part of the reason for this resides in the nature and form of organizational structures that are no longer appropriate in the information age. According to Khine and Saleh (2009), the frontier of human productive capacity today is the power of extended collaboration, the ability to work across global and technological boundaries, and the ability to create and nurture learning organizations.

The growing consensus among educators and policy-makers is that the current process of education must change dramatically (Basham, 2010). A different approach is needed to prepare today's leaders to meet tomorrow's challenges. According to Rodriguez (1999), the new structure should enhance preparation, allowing for innovation and futuristic thinking in a collaborative setting. Education has been viewed as an escape route from poverty, an antidote to intolerance born of ignorance, a primary source of national prosperity, and the foundation of democracy (Gous, 2003). Scientific and technological advances have intensified in the past two decades and for the first time in human history created a truly global community.

There are several leadership models. D'Souza (2001) asserts that no one style of leadership serves best for all situations and that the best model is the one that is most appropriate in a given situation. This implies that leadership should strive to meet the genuine needs and expectations of the group by executing specified roles and duties. In this sense therefore, leadership becomes a highly situational hence the multiplicity of its models affirms its dependence on the whim of the situation. The result is leadership models that change from group to group and from time to time while yearning to realize transformation hence transformative leadership.

According to Basham (2010), transformational leadership is the current focus of concepts relating to organizational leadership. These concepts are based on vision statements that provide the directional path for the organization. In addition, the vision statement should be supplemented with a mission statement that energizes and inspires all members of the organization as they pursue obtainable organizational objectives. The vision and mission statements establish the long term goals of the organization and are the basis for the organization's strategy and identification of methods for implementation of the strategy. Transformational leaders who develop and communicate a vision and a sense of strategy are those who "find clear and workable ways to overcome obstacles, are concerned about the qualities of the services their organization provide, and inspire other members to do likewise" (Gous, 2003, p.14). Transformational leaders encourage development and change.

The transformational leader may be needed in the scholarly community (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, (2003). This is due to universities' attempt to adapt to the economic and organizational shifts in their environment. The last two decades declining support for higher education from its traditional sources of funding emphasizes this point. As a result, major short term goals have been established, and day-to-day focus has shifted to an environment of institution marketing or business development, and the focus is not on students. For example, Kenyatta University in Kenya has established income generating projects such as the West Coast tourist hotel at the Coast, and morgue services in Nairobi some of which may compete with the attention given to students.

The Nature of Family Education

According to Majawa (2011), true education is a quality, wholistic, value and skill oriented education for all, in the dynamic rhythm of life, defined by early Christian great educators (Church Fathers), based on divine wisdom and cosmotheandrian experience leading to generation and advancement of informative, formative and transformative knowledge, to a fulfilled prophetic (praxiotic) experience of an individual and community for the highest common good in Church and society.

Family education is ingrained in the idea of prophetic spirituality. Prophetic spirituality is transformative by its very nature and thus should cause one's perspective of education to be transformed. This is a spiritual phenomenon as Carlson (1998) describes it. He maintains that:

Education is, in the fullest sense, a spiritual experience. It changes the way we experience our being in the world, it reconnects us to the cosmos and it transforms us in ways that affect our everyday relations with others and makes it possible for us to struggle and grow. (p. 197)

Experience teaches that the Church Fathers reveal the doctrinal and spiritual riches only to those who make effort of entering into their depths through continuous and regular familiarity with them (Braun, 1990). Therefore, family members through transformative leadership should be rooted in family education in order to get acquainted with the vital values to be both enlightened and reliable; and offer cultural, spiritual and apostolic richness, through their writings, that makes them great teachers of the society, yesterday and today.

Family education is informed by the Church Teachings which have transmitted what was received from Jesus Christ. Parents have been taught by the Church and should in turn teach their children what they learned from her. Therefore, all families should perpetuate what they found in the Church, they should keep it after learning it, and teach it as what they learnt from their fathers that should be transmitted to their children". As a result, family education is very informative in its nature (Majawa, 2011). In the Christian mindset, the Church Fathers have always been linked to tradition and are considered to be closer to the sources in their purity. The same is true of parents in relation to their children.

Perhaps it is important to point out that the Tradition to which the family members are witnesses is a living tradition that demonstrates unity in variety and continuity in progress. In this perspective therefore, to follow the living tradition of the Church Fathers is not to hang onto the past as such but to adhere to the line of faith with an enthusiastic source of security and freedom while maintaining a constant fidelity toward that which is foundational: the essential, enduring and unchanging fidelity. According to Braum (1990), the Church Fathers are in every sense witnesses and guarantors of an authentic Catholic tradition hence their authority has been very great and will always remain so. This has been so because as theologians, the Church Fathers did not rely only on the intellectual resources of reason only. Mostly, they also made use of religious resources gained through their affective existential knowledge, anchored in intimate union with Christ, nourished by prayer and sustained by grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The intimacy with Christ makes family education the true education that comes to mankind from the creator, Truth.

The Role of the Family in Fostering Transformative Education and Leadership

According to Majawa (2011), true and wholistic education (patristic education) endeavours to impart and translate faithfully God's redemptive teaching and values into people's life so that they can maintain an authentic relationship with God, society and nature. Historical definitions of transformational leaders have depicted the leaders as heroes, with accompanying charismatic personalities expressing and promoting a mission of major organizational change.

While drawing from the patristic education's prophetic thought and action that is preservative transformative, leaders should try to keep alive certain elements of a tradition bequeathed to us from the past and revolutionary (Jackson & Pary, 2008). This can be seen in the attempt by patristic education to project a vision and inspire a praxis that fundamentally transforms the prevailing status in light of the best of the tradition and the flawed yet significant achievements of the present order. It can be asserted that in the event that all family members are trained and deeply rooted in the praxis of patristic education, there is likely to be an atmosphere of cultural acceptance. The family can be a very important catalyst in ensuring that this noble course is pursued by all its members. In so doing, the family will be fostering the much desired transformative leadership while sustaining and transmitting the praxis true education as well.

Educational leaders who embrace the notions of the prophetic spirituality can find some helpful connections in their efforts to be transformative in their positions of leadership. True Education is combative by nature and it "accents a supernatural and subversive joy, an oppositional perseverance, and patience" (West, 1988, p.43). If our spiritual selves seek the making of meaning for our lives then a leadership grounded in wholistic education combative spirituality cannot help but to be transformative. This kind of spiritual engagement compels the leader to craft a project that pursues ontological arguments regarding education, critiques the maintenance of hegemonic forms and rituals through the educational activities, as well as expends energy in the hermeneutic exercise of understanding the variety of religious and social terrains in which the family/school is located. The family can provide the educational administrators with the vital fabric for establishing and spreading such pursuit. For example, if an educational institution is seeking to promote unity in diversity, the administrators can reasonably rely on the families where they draw their learners to achieve this. This means that the transformative leader, grounded in Christian family will examine carefully the dissonance between what presently happens in our families and broader society that propagates the status quo and what could happen in educational institutions that would bring about marked change in the same institutions.

According to Majawa (2011), there is need to investigate with integrity the challenges and difficulties which deny the ethical, spiritual, moral and religious values in our contemporary society. Basham (2010) points out that transformational leadership is value driven and can reasonably be enriched by availing true education to educational leaders. In this manner, classical paideia will be sustained in all cultures from the family. Borrowing from family education, the educational administrator sets high standards and purposes for followers, engaging them through inspiration, exemplary practice, collaboration, and trust. Since transformation leadership aims at responding to change quickly and at bringing out the best in people, such leadership is change-oriented and central to the development and survival of organizations in times of environmental turmoil, when it is necessary to make strategic changes to deal with both major threats and opportunities. It derives its power from shared principles, norms, and values: already established at the family level.

Family education can be likened to the epicenter of the church's documents of magisterium which inform the first qualities and roles attributed to the Church Fathers. In most cases, the Church Fathers are believed to have laid the first basic structures of the Church, together with doctrinal and pastoral positions that remain valid for all times. This very fact reveals the posterity of family education. Therefore, any educational administrator who is deeply rooted in family education is most likely to immortalize the very nature of his/her paraxis as an educational leader. Okumbe (2008) says that the impact of the policy on quality education will also be addressed both with regard to the provision of resources and spiritual nourishment.

Transformational leadership is a leadership of change – change within leaders themselves, within their subordinates, and within the organization of which they are a part.

According to Basham (2010), transformational leadership draws from deeply held personal value systems. Transformational leaders bring followers together to pursue collective ambitions by expressing and disseminating their personal standards. Quality and excellence are a major preoccupation of true education. In a society that is experiencing value-wastage, it is only reasonable that the family actively engage its members in recourse to sacred scripture. This may imply that the family, on behalf of the Church Fathers, becomes the primary and essential commentator on the sacred scripture.

By its very nature, family education is deeply rooted in ethics. According to St Jerome (347-420), education should educate the heart, soul, conscience, conviction and the life of an individual in the light of God's Divine Wisdom. He equated this to the permanence or immortality of education. St Jerome's educational ethics are built on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom; Understanding; Counsel; Knowledge; Courage and Fortitude, Piety and Fear of God (Isaiah 11: 2). Looking at the contemporary society, one can concur with Majawa (2011) that most contemporary education systems are training the mind at the expense of the heart and soul. The product is the overtly intellectual giants but otherwise moral dwarfs. This accounts for the lethal and extensive cases of perpetual social evils such as corruption, gay marriages, cloning exercises, drunkenness and abortions among others.

Through its naturalness and supernaturalness, the family restores equilibrium in education and society at large. This notion was fostered by St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who posited that it is vital to strike a state of equilibrium, balance between the interior and the exterior. St Augustine called these the ingredients for true existence. In this ideology, educational administrators should be made aware of their role as divine instruments by presenting transformative ideas, examples and behaviours, that is, mentoring or role modeling (Majawa, 2014). The family can be a very lucrative avenue for reminding the educators about their required collaboration with God (Supernaturalness) and nature (Naturalness) in helping learners to be responsible in life. This can go a long way in ensuring the much desired societal transformation.

It is in the family where the young should be encouraged to partake of hard thinking and value their own intellectual powers. According to St Augustine, all learners should become critical thinkers. Such level of optimism and positive self drive can only be nurtured at school if instilled in the young mind of the child at home. As he entered into Rome, St Augustine's life would begin an awesome transformation from someone living outside of the faith to someone who would become one of its most prominent teachers. For Augustine, the gift of education was one not to be taken for granted. He professed that truth and goodness exist only in God. It is both eternal and unchanging. Augustine loved wisdom. It is a gift from God. There must exist within education a love of learning.

II. Conclusion

The role of the family in education is an ocean. This paper has attempted to demonstrate that the family is indispensability in the provision of transformative education. In this pursuit, the paper has concluded that the family is the most important source of education, hence the nucleus for true transformation and leadership. This implies that there is no real education without the family.

III. Recommendations

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, through the School of Graduate Studies, should establish the Family and Marriage department. This will propagate education on the Family and help to strengthen and recover the otherwise drowning divine institution.

All institutions of higher learning should foster and integrate family values into their formal curriculum content as a way of sustaining the desirable values that the society is fast losing.

All educational practitioners should propagate for the importance of the family unit in the pursuit of knowledge and skills in order to link family values and educational values

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