

A Moral Discourse on Parents as the Primary Agents of Non-Formal Education in Kenya

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1. Introduction

In this article, we will discuss non-formal education by which human values are grasped and appropriated as a result of parents' role as the primordial facilitators of learning. We will look at the concept of non-formal education. This will be followed by looking at parents who are the vital players in impacting values non-formally. We will also look at the purposes of non-formal education. We will briefly discuss non-formal education in Kenya. We will further derive from the Bible some topics that implicitly point to non-formal education with a focus on parents and the values. We will also accord necessary attention to the church teaching that will help us chart our way forward. The principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity in the Social Doctrine of the Church are proposed as a way of strengthening non-formal education. In the end, we will give a conclusion.

2. The Concept of Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education refers to that which the learner acquires from the teacher or tutor implicitly. Non-formal education is understood as that type of education whose process is characterised by knowledge being "caught, not taught."¹ This kind of education can be said to be out of form. The word form means "performance according to established criteria."² It can be well understood by distinguishing it from other types of education namely, formal and informal education. Education that is formal is established and the emphasis is on following a structural way of learning. Formal education comprises of that which occurs through a structured program that is consciously and intentionally aimed at training of the mind and perfecting of skills using certain clear principles. This is done in preschool level, primary, secondary and the tertiary level, including university, college, or apprenticeship.

It is important we briefly look at the term education and then look at how education is non-formal. First, education can be looked at as a way of bringing to the surface what is already there. The origin of this understanding is the Latin term "educere" which means to lead from. The second meaning is also from Latin "educare" which implies to rare or bring up. "When people speak of 'raising a child,' they mean by this that they are instilling certain skills, certain values and certain behavior patterns in the youngster.

¹ Cf. Richard A. Schmuck, "Seeing How Teachers Fit In." In *Introduction to Education*, ed. Donald E. Orlosky, (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1982), 99. See also. Wycliff Ong'eta, "Indigenous Knowledge Perspective on Holistic Education and Sustainable Development" *Msingi Journal* 1 (2014):144-199.

² Webster's Pocket Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language: New Revised Edition (USA: Allied Publishing Group, inc., 2005) 99.

This implies making of the child something other than what he or she would have become if left to grow up naturally.”³

Non-formal education falls in the second understanding, inculcating certain values. It is arguably right that non-formal education is indispensable for inculcating human values right from childhood. This is solely because human values cannot be taught in principles, but can be caught in the context of daily and constant encounter with parents. As Paulo Freire observes, theoretical education without any impact on the actual problems, with irrelevant principles is merely verbalism.⁴ Contrariwise, formal education focuses on principles and theories, thus leaving the bigger part of teaching to the parents. “The school provides parents with a partial solution by offering instructions and supervision. But the total time spent in school from birth to age 18 constitutes only 10% of anyone’s life.”⁵ Inasmuch as there is emphasis on the need to have children well educated in the formal set up, precedence should be given to non-formal education for the purposes of inculcating values in the young.

Be that as it may, simply because the word education is attached to certain activities or institutions or people working with children, it does not guarantee that educating of children is taking place. Hence, parents as the first teachers of values like obedience, love, and integrity among many other human values learnt non-formally, ought to pay keen attention to the growth of their children. There is a “temptation to use (or abuse) ‘education’ to endorse not a particular set of social practices, but some particular ideal or set of values that we happen to favour.”⁶ Parents are therefore the first teachers because it squarely lies with them to teach and endeavor to seek the best education for their children.⁷

3. Parents as the Agents of Non-Formal Education

Plato, in the Dialogue Meno, places so much emphasis on the parents’ role in the raising of a child for the purposes of the society. He writes that,

But do you think he did not want other citizens to be good men and true, especially his own son? Can you seriously think he begrudged this to his son, deliberately not passing on his own virtue? Haven’t you heard that Themistocles taught his son, Cleophantus, to be a good horseman? He could stand upright on horseback and shoot javelins from there and do many other remarkable things – all skills his father had taught to him, all requiring good teachers. Haven’t you heard about this from your elders?⁸

Hence, Plato’s cements the argument that non-formal education is vital for a person’s existence. This is owing to the fact that an individual has better chances to successfully supplement what they learn through the formal education in order to succeed and achieve personal and communal goals in life.

³ Morris Van Cleve, “Establishing a Philosophical Point of View” in *Introduction to Education*, 63-64.

⁴ Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 36-37.

⁵ Donald E. Orlosky, “Setting the Stage for Teaching.” In *Introduction to Education*, 14.

⁶ John Wilson, *Key Issues in Education and Teaching* (London: Cassel, 2000), 5.

⁷ Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 2006), 39. Parents role in the learning of their children and family contribution of the same is indispensable. Wangari Maathai recounts the contribution of her mother in taking her to school having been left at home by her brother who was already in secondary school. “I suspect my mother consulted my uncle, who would have acted as my father’s representative as the head of the homestead. He must have agreed, because it was decided that indeed I should join my cousins at Ithethe primary school. Nonetheless, this was a big decision for my mother.”

⁸ Plato, “Meno, trans. J. Holbo & B. Waring, (2002)”, retrieved from <https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/joel.wallenberg/ContextsJoelGeoff/meno.pdf> [Accessed February 26, 2021],

Parents are the first agents in the family and other teachers only come after. “If parents don’t accompany their children and leave them alone, they do not end well. Parents need to be there, creating a good environment, giving them a firm ‘no’ at the right time and explaining why they are telling them ‘no’ or why they are saying ‘yes’. Parents need to follow and accompany their children.”⁹ Parents have cordial communication with their children within the family, other educators come second. “The right and duty of parents to educate their children is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children.”¹⁰

Noteworthy, what a child becomes in its adulthood is significantly determined by those who share in its day to day life. Joseph Kariuki, as a Catholic priest and as a moral theologian, confidently attributes his adult values to his parents.

Mtoto umleavyo ndivyo akuavyo. This Swahili proverb epitomizes the African life history of this author. It simply means a child grows up in the same way as he or she has been reared in the wider African context of the extended family. That is where one can truly say, ‘I am We.’ The life stories narrated by my grandfather Paul Ngochi wa Kanja by the fireside in the cold mornings of the highlands of the Mount Kenya region impressed my imaginative thought. The strict disciplinary code of my trust-filled and beloved late mother, Dominica Wanjiku wa Kamau, which were modeled, above all, on her authentic religious beliefs and deep ecclesial commitments, streamlined my childish thought patterns and behavior.¹¹

In addition, parents seek to transmit life and love alongside other social values that can only be grasped within the context of the family. These values include knowing what is worthwhile, conducting oneself in a morally upright way, having a creative imagination and enthusiasm, to love genuinely, and contentment in life. These values are foundational to other forms of learning and are well understood if only they are lived in the family. John Wilson asserts that “if we could do all or any of these things, we should at least have some idea of the enormous power that education has in principle.”¹² We will now look at the purpose of non-formal education as one among the other two forms of learning as mentioned earlier.

4. The Purpose of Non-Formal Education

Education should be transformational, both interiorly and exteriorly, of a character and the society by nurturing values. There is a need to increase awareness on the values in a person and in the society in general. This ensures that as children grow and learn, they observe and acquire the right practices and values in the society and as such lead a purposeful life. It is possible to use education as a tool to transform the society today by laying the right foundations. An educated person is able to discern the

⁹ Fernando Prado, *Pope Francis, The Strength of Vocation, Consecrated Life Today* (Quezon City, Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2018), 66.

¹⁰ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2004), No. 239.

¹¹ Joseph Kariuki Kamau, *Human Development as Integral Development: The Social Teaching of the Church in the Light of the Social Education and Ethics of Joseph Kantenich in an African Context* (Fribourg: Saint-Paul, 2014), vii.

¹² John Wilson, *Key Issues in Education and Teaching*, 13.

challenges of his or her time and courageously act in order to bring about change for better.¹³ Plato emphasises on values as the end product of non-formal education child. “We must remember further that we are speaking of the education, not of a trainer, or of the captain of a ship, but of a perfect citizen who knows how to rule and how to obey; and such education aims at virtue, and not at wealth or strength or mere cleverness.”¹⁴

Borrowing from Pope Francis we can say that education ought to affect the person in thinking, feeling and working. He says that “true education must keep balance among three human languages: that of the mind, that of the heart, and that of the hands.”¹⁵ Non-formal education falls in the category of the heart because it has to do with human values. Education illumines one’s thinking and enables people to feel, think, and behave in a manner that improves their personal satisfaction. As such, through education, people acquire skills, knowledge, values, beliefs, habits, and morals that they find sensible, hence enabling them to influence the society. Additionally, non-formal education should primarily “enable every individual to develop his unique qualities, to harness his potentialities and cultivate his individualities.”¹⁶ There is a continuing attempt to include parents in the education of their children in Kenya in order to make better citizens.

5. Non-Formal Education in Kenya

In Kenya education and the educated ones are held with respect. Education in its literal sense taken to mean structured learning or going through a school system. The impact of schools cannot be underplayed “Schools are societal institutions established to prepare young people for membership in a complex society.”¹⁷ In Kenya, this structured education was brought into being by the British colonial government, but not without its negative impact on the traditional learning which was more of apprenticeship and informal.

The colonial government imposed its education policies and practices on local communities thereby destroying in its wake the African traditional systems. The restrictive and discriminatory nature of the colonial education system was Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya reflected in the racially segregated schools for Europeans, Asians and Africans. Upward mobility was restricted for the Africans through the rigorous examination system. Commendable efforts were made by Christian missionaries to provide for African education but these were by far inadequate especially with regard to the education of girls. The colonial government neglected girls’ education as most of African

¹³ Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 32.

¹⁴ Plato, “*Laws*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (2008)”, retrieved from https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1750/1750-h/1750-h.htm#link2H_4_0004 [Accessed February 15, 2021],

¹⁵ Fernando Prado, *Pope Francis: The Strength of Vocation, Consecrated Life Today* (Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2018), 97.

¹⁶ Amanpreet Singh, *Implications of Existentialism in Education*, (June 2020) retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/implications-existentialism-education-amanpreet-singh#:~:text=Existentialists%20believe%20that%20each%20individual,potentialities%20and%20cultivate%20his%20individualities.> [Accessed February 26 2021]. See also, Van Cleve Morris, “Establishing a Philosophical Point of View” in *Introduction to Education*, 82. Other theories of education enumerated by Van Cleve Morris include, “Aristotolian (theory one) defines a person as a rational intellect. Essentialist (theory two) define a person as a psychic container. Pragmatists and experimentalists (theory three) defined people as problem solving organisms. Realists and behavior engineers (theory four) have defined us as a complicated.

¹⁷ Richard A. Schmuck, “Seeing How Teachers Fit In”, in *Introduction to Education*, 98.

Government schools that were set up such as Kagumo, Machakos and Kakamega catered for boys only.¹⁸

However, there are instances in which individuals with this type of education have failed to achieve the goals they set in life. Often times, it is either because the education they were taken through did not turn out to be what they expected or what is offered in the institutions is not what is necessary for life.¹⁹ In the recent past, there has been a great push to involve parents more in the education of their children. The Ministry of Education in Kenya, through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), sought to change the system of education from 8-4-4 to a new one by reforming the curriculum. The curriculum reform was guided by the vision, “Nurturing every learner’s potential”.²⁰ Thus, the new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was introduced in 2017, under the leadership of Dr. Fred Matiang’i as the Cabinet Secretary for education. The curriculum focuses on developing various competencies for learners, rather than focusing on the largely theoretical aspect of education.

The Competency-Based Curriculum purposes to involve parents in their children’s education, something which has been largely absent in the last two decades since the curriculum was changed. KICD notes that parents are the first educators of children, their trainers, and source of authority. As such, it is imperative that parents are engaged in their children’s education. With a focus on helping learners to acquire, nurture, and apply values in their everyday lives. Parents are urged to be part of their child’s growth by actively participating in school activities, nurturing their talents, providing the needed resources, and guiding the learners on the needed morals and values. Therefore, unlike the 8-4-4 system, CBC increases parental empowerment and engagement in the whole process of educating a child. Additionally, the curriculum is not limited to academic achievement only, but emphasizes on skills development and nurturing of values.²¹

Indubitably, the intention of including the parents in formal learning, through CBC, is to involve them in the raising of their children. It is a way of giving parents an opportunity to inculcate their own values in their children. This is a good attempt to promote non-formally learnt lessons from the parents. However, it is not without challenges. There are certain values and practices that affect non-formal education as we shall now see.

5.1 Factors Affecting Non-Formal Education in Kenya

There are various morally wanting practices that hinder awareness and even contribute to non-existence of non-formal education. One of them is constant participation in corrupt activities by the parents, right under the watch of their children. Corruption can be defined as the absence of such values as kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are learnt not in books but by observation of the practices.²² Paradoxically, while parents are supposed to be living as role models and

¹⁸ Davy K. Koech. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya* (1999), No. 1.1.5.

¹⁹ Ryan N.S. Topping, “Augustine on Liberal Education: Defender and Defensive” *Heythrop Journal* 51 (2010): 377-387.

²⁰ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. “*National Curriculum Policy* (Nairobi 2015)” retrieved from <https://kicd.ac.ke/curriculum-reform/curriculum-development-policy/> [Accessed November 17 2021].

²¹ Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. “*The Role of Parents in Competency-Based Curriculum* (2019)”, retrieved from <https://kicd.ac.ke/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SERIES-5-FParental-Roles.pdf> [Accessed November 17 2021].

²² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 239.

non-formal teachers of values, for utter negligence or unaware of the long-term impart parents engage in corruption even in formal education matters. Just to cite one example, in 2018, Education Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang said they have intelligence reports that some teachers are collaborating with parents to purchase purportedly leaked examination papers to aid students pass the forthcoming national examinations. Kipsang observed that most of the students who had their examinations cancelled last year had phones in schools with the knowledge of their parents and teachers.²³

In projecting such a scenario into the future, these children who have such teachers and parents are likely to imitate the behavior later in life. In the long run, these children are bound to engage in corrupt activities later in their lives deterring the progress of the society altogether. According to David K. Mbugua, engagement in corruption once makes a person susceptible to engaging in it even more frequently unable to resist. Furthermore, it spreads from a group to the whole. “Widespread corruption leads to moral decay, resulting in hopelessness and inaction.”²⁴

Unemployment is yet another problem linked to common social injustices in the society such as nepotism and tribalism as well as corruption discussed above.²⁵ This societal defect of unemployment is a perfect fuel for the persistent cycle of poverty. Faintly as it may be, poverty can be traced back to education in the failure to apply the principles acquired. On the one hand, “material poverty prohibits a family access to quality education.”²⁶ On the other hand, education without proper values and understanding is disastrous. Priority in an educated society should not be “profit and economic efficiency over fostering family life and human dignity.”²⁷ It is explicit that there is reciprocity between education and poverty and one of the antidotes to the problem is the incorporation of values that can only be non-formally caught and not taught merely in principles. Academic qualifications should be coupled with engraved values such as obedience and truthfulness. These are some of the basic values that are learnt non-formally and as taught in the Bible, the Church Tradition and in the magisterium as we shall discuss here below.

6. Biblical Foundation of Non-Formal Education

It is possible to trace non-formal education by focusing on parental role in guiding their children in the right values. In the Old Testament, teaching was done within the family by the parents. In the Book of Deuteronomy in chapter 11:19, it is clearly stated that learning ought to begin at homes. The Jews were to be the first teachers. They would teach their children in their houses according to the commands of the Lord. Learning to obey is very important. According to Harper’s Bible Commentary, Deuteronomy chapter 10 and 11 are all placed under the same title “incentives of obedience.”²⁸ The idea here was to

²³ Jemimah Mueni, “Teachers, Parents who Aid in Exam Cheating to lose Own Certificate” *Capital News*, (October 15, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2018/10/teachers-parents-who-aid-in-exam-cheating-to-lose-their-own-certificates/> [Accessed February 20 2021]

²⁴ David K. Mbugua, *Breaking the Chain of Corruption: A Moral Theological Analysis*, 16.

²⁵ Cf. Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir*, 100-101.

²⁶ Emmanuel Wabanhu, “Socio-Ethical Ways of Safeguarding Families in Africa in Light of Amoris Laetitia,” in *The Echo of Amoris Laetitia in Africa: Towards Living the Joy of Love experienced by Family* in the Church, 173.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁸ James L. Mays, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Jon D. Levenson, Wayne A. Meeks, Carol A. Newsom and David L. Petersen, (eds.) *Harper’s Bible Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), 221. See also, Marcus J. Borg, *Reading the*

inculcate in the child the value of obedience. Inversely, disobedience would imply sin, a resultant of pride or full of self. Marcus J. Borg refers to this pride as “hubris understood as self-centredness.”²⁹ Emphasis is laid on the obedience to the parents as well as keeping good relationship with the neighbours.

Consequently, this is what was expected to be the first thing to learn for any child. All other skills, arts and antics of life, were to be learnt later. This discipline inculcated by a parent is more lasting. “Teach a child and what you teach them will not be forgotten” (Prv 22:6). Noteworthy, the word, teach can be used interchangeably with train or to make the mind sober. “The training would involve the cultivation of sound judgment and prudence.”³⁰ This verse clearly delineates the duties of any parent – to prepare their children for their future by instilling proper judgment, prudence and the courage to face life. They ought to teach their children values that go beyond skills.

Similarly, in the New Testament, particularly in Luke chapter 2, the youthful Jesus is found by his parent mingling with elders in the temple and they took him back with them. It is clear that at twelve years, Jesus is a “son of the law”.³¹ “He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced (in) wisdom and age, and favour before God and man.” (Lk 2:51). The act of Mary and Joseph to know his source of knowledge, his where-about and the reprimand are quite in order as parents.³² In addition, Jesus, although feeling grown and responsible, follows them obediently.

Other values that Jesus learnt must have come non-formally from his father. “In the unrecorded preparatory years was the workshop. Jesus was a carpenter of Nazareth. It is impossible to exhaust the significance of the fact that for a great part of his life on earth the son of God toiled with his hands, doing a joiner’s work.”³³ To have learnt from his father, he must have also mastered other values that come with attributes of a carpenter such as diligence and as patience in preparing, shaping and building items. In addition, a normal carpenter would have learnt to treat those who came in search of his services with respect and honesty. These are values that can only be caught and not taught. The Holy family is central to the understanding the irreplaceable role of parents in guiding a child to God and to proper values that are foundational to any other form of education. Besides the Scripture, the wisdom of the Church on education is drawn from Tradition as we see here below.

7. The Church’s Tradition on Non-Formal Education

In the teachings of the church, non-formal education is inferred from the teachings of various revered teachers of sound Catholic Church doctrines. These include St. John Chrysostom (347-407), St. Augustine (354-430) and St. Thomas of Aquinas. These three are only cited for the purpose of emphasising the role of the parents and their duty to guide their children in values. We focus on their

Bible Again for the First Time, New York: HarperCollin Publishers, 2001, 79. Disobedience would imply sinning. “Sin – the human problem – is thus *Hubris* understood as self-centredness.”

²⁹ Marcus J. Borg, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, 79

³⁰ W.E Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (ed.) F.F. Bruce, Vol. 4 (Machigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1981), 44.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 26

³² James L. Mays, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Jon D. Levenson, Wayne A. Meeks, Carol A. Newsom and David L. Petersen, *Harper’s Bible Commentary*, 1018.

³³ James S. Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 29.

writings on parenting and emphasis on human values. Values can only be caught non-formally through observation. These include knowledge of God and the endeavor to attain the truth.

7.1 St John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom, in regards to training of the children non-formally says it is the work of the parents. He observes that parents, due to their ambitions for their children, are able to guide their children in other types of education even hiring trainers to educate their children in various matters. However, they forget to pay attention to their soul and to safeguard the content of the soul. “Now everyone exerts all effort to teach their children craft, sciences, and rhetoric, and no one takes time to adorn their souls. I will not cease to appease you, ask and beg that you take care to order your children before all other important matters.”³⁴

According to St John Chrysostom, the nurturing and safe-guarding of the souls is important for two reasons. First, it endures all through the life of a person irrespective of external changes of the environment and the experiences of a person. He argues that even in suffering of the body, a well-disposed soul can endure and hence the person can lead a consistently virtuous life amidst suffering. Secondly, the soul is the home to virtues. In the soul reside the virtues that serve as a guard in turbulent time. He differentiates the mind and the soul, in as far as virtues are concerned. The mind may be suffering but that does not necessarily mean that the soul is equally affected.³⁵ It follows then that the raising of children, the soul, as a safe haven for virtues, ought to be accorded the right content for that child to be prepared for its sake and the good of others.

7.2 St. Augustine

St. Augustine of Hippo was born in Northern Africa. He is known to be a man with a great mind and a great heart. This accolade can be attributed to his teachers who include his father, his nurses and his schoolmasters. Above all, he learnt from St Monica, his mother, how to pursue knowledge of God, the supreme Truth. This shows that what a child is introduced to at the very tender age by those who raise that child, as St Chrysostom observed, endures all through life. St. Augustine had been influenced by varying teachings as mentioned above. When the wave of his troubled youthfulness was over, he fell back to what his mother had non-formally introduced to his tender soul. He retreated to the pursuit, not of pleasure, but of God.³⁶

This is the point of interest in St Augustine, that is, the primacy of knowledge of God because God is the Truth. This Truth supersedes any other form of knowledge. He writes, “Lord God of Truth, is whoever knows these things by that fact pleasing to you? No, unhappy is the man who knows all this, but does not know you; happy is he who knows you, even if he does not know such things.”³⁷ It follows then that proper education should lead the person to the Truth. In addition, God as the Truth and the highest value ought to be demonstrated by the parents’ way of living.

³⁴ Anna Saprykina, “St. John Chrysostom on the Family and the Upbringing of Children: A Mother’s Notes” *Orthodox Christianity*, retrieved from <https://orthochristian.com/127870.html> [Accessed November 19 2021]

³⁵ New Advent “*No One can Harm the Man who Does not Harm Himself*” retrieved from <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1902.htm> [Accessed November 17 2021]

³⁶ S.J. Curtis & M.E.A Boulwood, *A Short History of Educational Ideas* (London: University Tutorial Press Ltd, 1953) 72.

³⁷ St. Augustine, *The Confessions of St Augustine*, trans. John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 117. See also, Marcus J. Borg, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, 217.

7.3 St Thomas Aquinas

In the Medieval times, during the time of St. Thomas, structured education gained fame especially the university and the method of university teaching.³⁸ During this time, scholasticism became popular. Even then, the education that was more popular was not without the propagation of faith in God as the highest of all values. Education hence can be referred to as a cultivation of what St. Thomas Aquinas calls virtues and especially the intellectual virtues. These include wisdom, science and understanding.³⁹ All these have to do with the truth which is also the basic value as we have pointed out in discussing St Augustine. It is important to emphasize that “education is the re-direction of individual life, from finite attachment to active love and devotion and, to God the creator in a personal way. [...] religious study, therefore, is an exposition of what is true, excellent and Just.”⁴⁰

Education is meant to foster transformation of an individual and of the society in thinking, working and values. Well educated person finds it easier to volunteer and offer community services as a way of giving back to the community while also implementing what they learn. This increases the chances of securing employment if the person has the right attitude towards serving. Thus, in this case, education does not only become a means to earn a living, but a way to serve God and the humanity through one’s profession. According to Thomas of Aquinas, through virtues, man returns to God.⁴¹ We will now look at some of the magisterium which is the official teaching authority of the Church.

8. The Church Magisterium on Non-Formal Education

To begin this section on the teaching of the magisterium is the Pope’s office, which is the highest teaching office in the Church. The late Pope Francis, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, discusses education of children. He argues that “the family is the first school of human values, where we learn the wise use of freedom,” thus the great need to create an environment in the family where learning can occur.⁴² According to the Pope: “What is most important is the ability to lovingly help them (children) grow in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy.”⁴³

Seemingly, an instantaneous and erroneous thought is that the call to educate children is synonymous to taking them to prestigious schools.⁴⁴ It is indisputable that it is not only the duties and rights of parents to take their children to formal school, but also to morally inspire them non-formally. There is a chasm between education in the schools and education in the family. There is a need to develop a closer bond between the values proposed by the school and those proposed by the parents within the family.⁴⁵ For

³⁸ S.J. Curtis & M.E.A Boulwood, *A Short History of Educational Ideas* (London: University Tutorial Press Ltd, 1953) 94.

³⁹ Peter Kreet, *A Summa of the Summa: The Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Theologica Edited and Explained for Beginners* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 449-450.

⁴⁰ Davy K. Koech. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya* (1999), No. 6.4.1.

⁴¹ John A. Gallagher, *Time Past, Time Future, An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology*, (New york: Paulist Press 1963), 22.

⁴² Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of Love Amoris Laetitia* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016), 274.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 260.

⁴⁴ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2004), No. 238. “By exercising its mission to educate, the family contributes to the common good and constitutes the first school of social virtue, which all societies need.”

⁴⁵ Congregation For Catholic Education, “*Educating Together in Catholic Schools: a Shared Mission between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful* (Rome: September 2007)” retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_2007_0908_educare-insieme_en.html [Accessed February 12 2021] No. 48.

this reason, the church emphasizes on parents as collaborators with teachers and other educators in ensuring that their children are well-educated.⁴⁶ Non-formal education calls for parents' roles in ensuring education of children. Pope Francis in, *Amoris Laetitia*, states that, "parents are also responsible for shaping the will of their children, fostering good habits and natural inclination to goodness."⁴⁷

Second in the teaching of the magisterium are the councils. Vatican II council took interest in family and the education of children for the betterment of the society. The council firmly argues that an educated child grows into a responsible person in various aspects including, morally, socially and economically.⁴⁸ The emphasis is to the parents who should ensure that their children have the right role models right from their homes. It is thus the work of the parents to ensure an integral growth of their children takes place in the family and in other educating programs and institutions.

The Vatican II Council in the Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* lays emphasis the role of the parents. Parents ought to consider the places they take their children for schooling as well as make a follow up the development of their children. They should also ensure they personally contribute to the development of values in the lives of their children. "The faithful to assist to their utmost in finding suitable methods of education and programs of study and in forming teachers who can give youth a true education. Through the associations of parents in particular they should further with their assistance all the work of the school but especially the moral education it must impart."⁴⁹ Because this article has singled out Kenya as an example, it is fitting that we look at what the Church teaching office says at a more local level. We will hence look at the African Synods on education.

8.1 African Synods on Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education, as earlier stated focuses on parents and their inculcation of values on their children. Similarly, the Church as a Herald seeks to make God known to all peoples as the ultimate truth and the goal of any intellectual enterprise.⁵⁰ Thus, institutions are founded in order to enhance this enterprise. According to the bishops, "schools are places of evangelization, inculturation and all-round education."⁵¹ This is equal to the fact that the church acknowledges the role of formal education. It holds with esteem the role played by established schools and other learning institution that offer formal education.

It has remained clear that the Catholic Church, as a herald of God's message, encourages education, and more so, Christian founded education even to a point of defending the right to teach when that freedom

⁴⁶ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2004), No. 240.

⁴⁷ Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *the Joy of Love Amoris Laetitia* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016), No. 264.

⁴⁸ Vatican II Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "Gaudium et Spes" (7 December 1965), no. 52.

⁴⁹ Vatican II Council, Declaration on Christian Education, "Gravissimum Educationis" (28 October 1965), no. 22.

⁵⁰ Synod of Bishops Special Assembly for Africa. *The Church in Africa and her Evangelising Mission Towards the Year 2000: You Shall Be My Witnesses (Acts 1:8), Lineamenta* (Meru: Kolbe Press 1993) No.26. See also George M. Regan, *New Trends in Moral Theology: A Survey of Fundamental Moral Themes*, (New York: Newman Press, 1966) 95. God is the "Supreme value".

⁵¹ Association of Members Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa Pastoral Department, *The African Synod Comes Home: A Simplified Text* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), 19.

is infringed.⁵² The sole intention is to keep human being in their natural state as rational being. There are various activities that are carried out by different groups, including religious congregations, parishes, and individual members among the Catholic faithful.⁵³ Notably, the focus is mostly on the formal and informal education. These two, as earlier mentioned are structured methods of learning that often take place in schools and other institutions. Nonetheless, these schools do not function in isolation from other societal structures such as the family, state and church.⁵⁴ Consequently, The Catholic Church has constantly extols and emphasises on the primacy of parents and family members, in the education moral formation of the children.⁵⁵

Non-formal education should be able to produce a person who is enlightened in human values in order to be an all-round person besides being an intellectual and skilled in various trades offered in other formal and informal education. The Catholic Church endeavors to promote an integral development of a child. Various methods are identified that bridges what is taught non-formally and what is taught formally in schools. In the family, by observing their parents, children learn non-formally. Hence, it is imperative that the adults in their lives uphold high moral standards and practice what they teach them in their families. This can be done by integrating regular teachings on Christian ethics in churches and in individual groups such as Small Christian Communities that keep Christian faith and values fanned in the family in Africa Today.⁵⁶

9. Recommendations for Strengthening Non-Formal Education

This discussion on Non-formal education focuses on two major issues, the parents and then the values parents inculcate. Parents are the major protagonist and socialising agents. It is undisputed that all individuals involved in the education process, including teachers, parents, and educational institutions are socializing agents, but parents take precedence.⁵⁷ Fundamentally, parent's should impact specific aspirations, morals, and values to the children primarily within the family. "This recognition of the family to which we all belong must be extended further – beyond tribe, community, nation, or continent – to embrace the whole humanity."⁵⁸

⁵² Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa 2004), 426.

⁵³ Cf. Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on *The Church in Africa, Africae Munus*, 74-75.

⁵⁴ Cf. C.A. Jansen, F.J. Pretorius & E.J. van Niekerk, "Education and the Role of the Church in Africa: Three Relevant Aspect" *Bulletin For Christian Scholarship* 74, 1 &2, (2009), retrieved from <file:///C:/Users/This%20Pc/Downloads/117-Article%20Text-315-1-10-20120726.pdf> [Accessed January 20 2021] 68. See also, David K. Mbugua, *Breaking the Chain of Corruption: A Moral Theological Analysis* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2020), 70. "Education has two major purposes: cognitive-academic development and moral formation. Cognitive academic development enhances children and youth's knowledge and intellectual skills while moral formation helps shape their attitude and behaviours, reflected in values."

⁵⁵ James M. Frabutt, Holter, A. C., Ronald J. Nuzzi, Heidi Rocha, & Laura Cassel, "Pastors' Views of Parents and the Parental Role in Catholic Schools," *Catholic Education: Journal of Catholic Education* 14, 1, (2010), retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1669&context=ce> [Accessed February 3 2021].

⁵⁶ Cf. Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on *The church in Africa, Africae Munus*, 131. See also. Association of Members Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa Pastoral Department, *The African Synod Comes Home: A Simplified Text*, 25. Small Christian Communities has a role to play and discover, "what is bad and unacceptable in a believer in Christ and has to be put side. What is good, but contain some elements that need to be purified and replaced with Christian values."

⁵⁷ Cf. Namita P. Patil, "Role of education in social change" *International Educational E-Journal* 1, No. 2, (2012): 205-210. retrieved from <https://www.oijrj.org/ejournal/Jan-Feb-Mar2012IEEJ/38.pdf> [Accessed February 3 2021]

⁵⁸ Richard N. Rwiza, *Ethics of Human Rights: The African Contribution* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2010), 118-119.

Consequently, family context is a good place to start all forms of education and learning of the young. In this case, human values emulated by the learner in the course of living with the parents enhance learning in the schools and also proper socialization later as adults. Non-formal education provides a platform for parents to inculcate values in their children and thus prepare them to live with others in the society.⁵⁹ It is not always easy to ensure parent's role is recognized and enhanced. Therefore, in this article we suggest four practical actions, enshrined in two moral principles, namely the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of solidarity. This is in line with the Social Teaching of the Church.

a) **Autonomy of Parents in Raising Children should be Ensured**

Freedom is central to Pope Francis' teaching in his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* earlier discussed. Freedom is something experienced in a chain from the highest body to the lowest. According to the principle of subsidiarity "societies of a superior order must adopt attitude of help ("subsidium") – therefore of support, promotion, development – with respect to lower-order societies."⁶⁰ This principle clearly safeguards the autonomy of parents in teaching their children the values by which their families live. The government and other education bodies like the ministry of education serve as superior bodies and the parents are in the lower order. Even in the Competency-Bases Curriculum cited earlier, parents are required to play the roles as clearly stipulated by the Curriculum. There is so much time spent in the school as compared to time spent with the parents who are the main agents of non-formal education.

b) **Support should be Given to Parents in Raising Children**

In reference to the same principle of subsidiarity, it is the role of the church and the government, through those certified education authorities, to ensure that the parents as the first teachers are supported in their respective role as teachers in the non-formal education. Their input should be recognized and used for societal progress. Parental input is often dwarfed by the constant requirement to produce academic documents for one to secure employment.⁶¹ As such, parents are forced to subject their children to school programs that may not necessarily be beneficial in the end. Their role as teachers should be recognized and valued. "In order for the principle of subsidiarity to be put into practice there is a corresponding need for: respect and effective promotion of the human person and the family."⁶²

c) **Parents should Promote Equity Among Their Children**

Turning our attention to the parents, the principle of solidarity should apply in raising of children. This is purposed to face the problems of poverty and hopelessness caused by corruption as earlier identified in this discussion. The principle of solidarity, "Highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity."⁶³ There should be unity of purpose towards bettering the lives of all people. Non-formal education, as mentioned earlier ought to focus on raising children within the

⁵⁹ George M. Regan, *New Trends in Moral Theology: A Survey of Fundamental Moral Themes*, (New York: Newman Press, 1966) 95.

⁶⁰ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 2004), No. 186.

⁶¹ Wycliff Ong'eta, "Indigenous Knowledge Perspective on Holistic Education and Sustainable Development" *Msingi Journal* 1 (2014):144-199.

⁶² *Ibid.*, No. 187. See also. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of Love Amoris Laetitia*, No. 288. Pope Francis observes that the brokenness of marriages brings about "suffering and confusion" to the children and hence hinder their growth. He hence insists that pastors should support parents in this regard.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, No. 192.

family by firstly making them know God who is the Truth, as St. Augustine earlier discussed says.⁶⁴ These children, guided by their parent are able appropriate that Truth live with others with love, equity and respect for a better community.

d) Parents should Promote a Sense of Service to Others in their Children

Both poverty and prevalent corruption as discussed earlier can be averted by paying attention to the wellbeing of others before oneself. This means to have a soul, as St. John Chrysostom propagated earlier in our discussion – teaching the young soul to be empathetic with the needs of the other. The principle of solidarity advocates that a person, as a social being, ought to care about the neighbor. Authentic human solidarity is the “Solidarity that can take on the features of service and attention to those who live in poverty and need.”⁶⁵ In addition to this, when parents, non-formally transmit to their children the right human values, they do not limit what is taught to these children, instead, they teach them for others to enjoy the fruit of their upright upbringing. The principle of solidarity thus states that family should reach out to other families and to touch the lives of other families in order to form what Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* calls “family politics” whose intention is to transform the society.⁶⁶

10. Conclusion

We started by a brief introduction of the article and we discussed non-formal education in its description. We also contrasted non-formal education with other types of education. Unlike other types we saw that the very fact that it lacks structure and strict outline of teaching makes it non-formal. Non-formal education does not need structures because it is by observation and emulation of lived practices. It happens in unstructured settings, primarily in the family, and through daily interactions with people in the family through appropriation of parents’ examples.⁶⁷ We have considered the parents as the main agents and teachers in non-formal education. According to Pope Benedict XVI, they are “the first educators of the children in life and faith.”⁶⁸ They are arguably the best because they do it passionately and harbouring no intention to indoctrinate.

We have also discussed the purpose of non-formal education which is primarily to nurture the young minds in values. An intelligent and skilled person, devoid of human values can be said to act robotically. Subsequent to that, we have discussed the state of non-formal education in Kenya. The effort is there to make parent participate in formal education through Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). Yet, more need to be done in order to make the parents’ values-imprints more impactful. We further looked at some inferences in the Bible and in the teachings of the church in hope of strengthening our argument on non-formal education. Finally, we gave our way forward with recourse to two moral principles, namely the principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity. On the whole, it is our contention in this

⁶⁴ Ryan N.S. Topping, “Augustine on Liberal Education: Defender and Defensive” *Heythrop Journal* 51 (2010): 377-387.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 246.

⁶⁶ John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, The Christian Family in the Modern World, (2 November 1981) no. 44.

⁶⁷ Christopher McOustra, *Love in the Economy: Catholic Social Doctrine for the Individual* (Middlegreen: St Paul Publications, 1990), 74.

⁶⁸ Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal *On the Church in Africa, Africae Munus* (Benin: November 19, 2011), retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html, 74. [Accessed January 16 2021]

article that parents be accorded more room and more support as they impact their children non-formally. This will enhance better appropriation of values.

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