



AACC-CETA

**Young People's Resource Pack on
*Faith, Fertility & The Future***

A Contextual Bible Study Manual on

Sustainable Population Growth for Quality Life in Africa



Young People's Resource Pack on Faith, Fertility & The Future.
***A Contextual Bible Study Manual on Sustainable Population
Growth for Quality Life in Africa***

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Foreword

Population growth can provide opportunities for a society's sustainable development. If, however, the population growth rate exceeds the capacity of available resources and means to meet the demands of a growing population, it poses serious consequences for the well-being of society, undermines human dignity, and decelerates the realisation of sustainable development. Today, Africa stands at a defining crossroads. For too long, our continent has been described in terms of its youthful population. The continent's population continues to grow rapidly, which many laud as a major resource pool for the continent's sustainable development. Despite this, many African countries, especially those with rapid population growth rates, are unable to maintain acceptable standards of living for the majority of their citizens.

Governments across the board struggle to meet such basic needs as education, health, housing and food. All of which are requisite for the growth, development and flourishing of their citizenry. This is a challenge to the continent's sustainable development agenda that can no longer be ignored. As a people, we can no longer boast in numbers when most suffer destitution, undernourishment and unemployment. Too many of our young people long to leave their home countries in search of better opportunities elsewhere. Even at the risk of death, exploitation or modern slavery, greatly undermining our dignity.

This reality is not only a development challenge but also a theological and moral concern for the Church in Africa. Procreation is a matter

of faith. People's decisions concerning the nature and size of families they establish tend to be rooted in their theology. As people of faith in Africa, we are called to draw from the deep wells of our biblical and cultural heritage, which remind us of the sacred responsibility entrusted to families and communities. Scripture calls us to responsible stewardship of life, to nurture children in dignity and to reproductive choices that align with the will of God for humanity and the whole of creation. At the family level, this requires informed, prayerful and responsible decisions about fertility in order to ensure that our family sizes are sustainable and allow for their members to experience quality life.

This Resource Pack on Faith, Fertility & the Future is meant to facilitate our progress towards this goal. Developed by young people for young people, it equips the Church with contextual, faith-rooted tools for engaging in critical conversations on family life, planning and population growth. Its three parts speak directly to the realities that young people face today: the wisdom needed in preparing for families and making informed choices on reproductive health and family sizes to establish; the Christian responsibility of caring for families through parenting, mentorship, and legacy building; and the compassion required to address sensitive issues such as childlessness. Each section opens space for honest reflection, biblical grounding and practical engagement.

The Contextual Bible Studies in this resource pack are relevant education and advocacy tools for empowering peer groups, families

and communities to shape Africa's demographic future with wisdom, justice and hope.

I, therefore, commend this resource to all our member churches and partners. May it inspire our youth to take their rightful place as agents of transformation. May families and communities be guided to embrace life-giving choices on family

size and health that honour God, strengthen society and secure a sustainable future for our beloved continent, Africa.

Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki
AACC General Secretary

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Introduction

Brian Muyunga

Population growth is not merely a numerical phenomenon but a matter of human welfare and sustainable development. Rapid population growth can have profound implications for quality of life and environmental sustainability. The dynamics of Africa's population are both unique and consequential, shaping not only the continent's development trajectory but also global demographics in the 21st century. Africa's population has tripled since the mid-20th century, growing from around 230 million in 1950 to over 1.4 billion in 2022. Historical trends show that Africa's population growth rose from 0.1% prior to 1900 to 1.2% between 1900 and 1950, and over 3% by the 1980s and 1990s. Today, the continent records an average fertility rate of 4.7 children per woman, although this varies from about 2.5 in Southern Africa to over 5.5 in Central and West Africa¹. These demographic shifts are characterised not only by rapid growth but also by a youthful age structure (more than 70% of Africans are under the age of 35²). While this presents opportunities for innovation and economic transformation, it also creates a high dependency ratio due to fewer working-age adults supporting a much larger non-working population.

Several factors explain Africa's demographic changes. Improvements in public health have reduced infant mortality and extended life expectancy, leading to population growth even as fertility remains high. High fertility contributes to large family sizes, which can strain households, limiting children's access to food, education and

health care. At the national level, governments face challenges in meeting demand for schools, hospitals, jobs and infrastructure.³ The result is often rising unemployment, persistent poverty, increasing social insecurity and environmental degradation, all of which demand urgent responses. From a theological perspective, population dynamics cannot be separated from Christian ethics of care and stewardship. In the creation mandate, God instructed humanity to "be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28, NRSV). Yet this call to fruitfulness was also a call to responsible stewardship of creation. Scripture warns that failing to provide for one's household is a denial of the faith: "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8, NIV). Unchecked population growth without corresponding care and responsibility can result in children being neglected, left in poverty or drawn into destructive lifestyles. Thus, population, migration, urbanisation, ageing and household structures are matters of faith and discipleship.

If left unaddressed, unsustainable population growth threatens the social, economic and ecological well-being of current and future generations, negatively impacting the church's pursuit of abundant life for all. Churches and all people of faith who care about the quality of life lived by people in Africa must play a proactive role in promoting sustainable population growth as they respond to the divine call to stewardship.

¹ Concept note

² African Union Commission. (2021). Agenda 2063: First ten-year implementation report. AUC.

³ Bloom, D. E., Kuhn, M., & Prettnner, K. (2017). Africa's prospects for enjoying a demographic dividend. *Journal of Demographic Economics*, 83(1), 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/dem.2016.19>

Promoting sustainable population growth directly contributes to achieving the aspirations of the Africa we want. This can be done by fostering healthier families, empowering women and reducing multidimensional poverty.

Historically, the AACC has been a prophetic voice in advancing Africa's sustainable development. Recognising the role of family and population health in sustainable development, the AACC has, for decades, remained intentional in empowering churches in Africa to promote family and population health as a key component of their faithful witness to the gospel of Christ. Despite these efforts, many Christian circles across Africa remain hesitant to engage openly about issues of population growth and family planning. This reluctance is often rooted in limited theological expertise on the subject, as well as the scarcity of faith-based resources that integrate biblical teachings with scientific evidence on reproductive health.⁴ As a result, population dynamics are frequently framed as purely secular or medical matters, leaving church leaders uncertain about how to respond in ways consistent with their faith. This gap highlights the urgent need for contextual theological resources, such as Contextual Bible Study (CBS) manuals, that empower church leaders and youth to approach population challenges as both a spiritual and developmental concern.

In response to these gaps, this *Young People's Resource Pack on Faith, Fertility & The Future* emerges as a vital tool to equip churches and youth groups, networks and movements with practical, faith-sensitive resources for engaging in conversations on population growth and family planning. Developed by members of the AACC's All Africa Youth Network, the resource pack offers seven contextual Bible Study guides to enable young people and church leaders to reflect critically on issues of fertility, sustainable

population growth and responsible parenthood with grounding in both Christian and African ethics. The resource pack offers the churches in Africa a concrete pathway to overcoming hesitation towards transformative engagements on population growth, hence meaningfully contributing to Africa's future.

Youth as Authors and Target Beneficiaries of the Resource Pack

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) has long recognised the critical role of young people in shaping Africa's present and future. With more than 70% of Africa's population under the age of 35, the continent's demographic landscape is defined by youth. Against this backdrop, the AACC supports the All Africa Youth Congress on the theme, '*Africa: My Home. My Future*,' which aims to inspire and empower African youth to positively transform Africa's narrative and champion the continent's sustainable development. To develop and protect our home and our future, that is Africa, we must ensure that our population growth is sustainable. This should be aimed at safeguarding against the depletion of its resources and capacity to support our wellbeing both in the present and in the future. This resource pack on Faith, Fertility and The Future is one of the products of AACC's youth agency under the *Africa: My Home. My Future* campaign. It is intended to facilitate intergenerational engagement on matters of fertility, family planning and responsible parenthood.

The manual is designed to serve as both an educational and mobilisation tool. The contextual Bible Studies incorporated are for us to create safe spaces where young people can apply Scripture to engage with demographic realities and discern practical solutions to unsustainable population growth.

⁴ Phiri, I. A., & Werner, D. (Eds.). (2013). Handbook of theological education in Africa. Wipf and Stock.

Understanding the ‘Contextual Bible Study’ Concept and Methodology

This whole section and the following sessions on ‘Requirements for Conducting a Successful Contextual Bible Study’ and the Process of Facilitating a Contextual Bible Study are excerpts from the **Young People’s Resource Pack on Faith, Love & Life**, developed concurrently with this very manual.

Contextual Bible Study simply refers to a participatory way of reading biblical passages. It offers room for the dynamic interaction between the text and the readers” contemporary contexts. It is a group-based and action-oriented method of Bible Study where everyone engages with the biblical text in a way that resonates with their realities. We appreciate and celebrate the South African Professor, Gerald O. West, and the Ujamaa Centre at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for

their critical role in developing and advancing the Contextual Bible Study (CBS) methodology. Through their innovative approach, CBS has become an essential resource that bridges faith and action. Thanks to CBS, communities can now read the Bible in ways that affirm dignity, confront oppression and inspire collective transformation.

Through Contextual Bible Study, one can create and facilitate safe spaces for conversations on any subject. It has also helped to equip individuals and groups of people to engage in evidence-based advocacy and activism. The CBS also helps to create awareness on numerous issues of concern, which inspire the transformation of mindset, behaviour and structures. This ultimately promotes people’s general health and well-being.

Requirements for Conducting a Successful Contextual Bible Study

Conducting a successful Contextual Bible Study requires five key things.

1. Leadership

The CBS leader is the person or people who organise others and put together everything needed for the CBS to take place. These are also responsible for identifying or aiding in the identification of contextual issues that a CBS should address. In their role, their leaders also identify the relevant biblical text to study,

examine the text(s) ahead of time, develop questions and activities necessary for engaging with the text, facilitate the Bible study, and finally, document the process and outcomes of the CBS. The role of facilitators is not to impose their beliefs, assumptions, positions or knowledge on others, but rather to inspire those involved in the study to express themselves in a way that might ultimately bring transformation.

Anyone can facilitate a CBS. The CBS leaders must have clear goals and targets that they want to achieve through the CBS.

2. A community/Group of People

CBS is group-based and participatory, and thus should happen between at least two individuals—the more the better. The group size should be just big or small enough for every participant to actively engage in the process. It is important that CBS leaders and participants use their experiences and facts to engage on the matters at hand.

3. Safe Space for the Study

A safe space refers to an environment where people feel free to participate without fear of intimidation or harm, whether physical, spiritual or psychosocial. To create such a space, participants must be assured of mutual respect and safety from being misrepresented. The space hosting the CBS can be physical, such as a church premise, in a workshop, during a family Bible Study meeting, or even online, depending on one's setting.

4. Study Materials to Guide Engagements

These include the Bible or biblical texts under study and any other sources of knowledge and information that the group might need for a fruitful conversation, such as policy briefs, etc. Depending on the setup, different stationery might be needed, as may be determined by the CBS leader/s.

5. Time

Time is an essential resource for a CBS. The CBS can last between 30 and 120 minutes, depending on the scope being covered. Facilitators must be sensitive to the amount of time available for the group to engage when setting targets and coming up with the CBS approach, questions and activities. For instance, a group with only 30 minutes can choose to use only one or two questions. For a different group that can afford 120 minutes, they can have an hour of discussions, 30 minutes of group discussions and use the last 30 minutes for sharing feedback and experiences.

Process of Facilitating a Contextual Bible Study

The process of facilitating a CBS has three stages: before, during and post-Bible Study meetings. These are described below.

Stage 1: Pre-Bible Study Meeting

This is the time prior to the group/community convening to engage in the CBS. It involves identifying the context, the relevant passage

to study, and the needs, after which the CBS guide is prepared.

During this stage, the CBS facilitators should take time to identify the real-life situations that the CBS seeks to address. This should be followed by identifying a relevant biblical text that can aid in transformative engagement on the issue. Identifying relevant texts and

facilitating successful Contextual Bible Studies requires a dependence on God's providence and the help of the Holy Spirit. The facilitator should therefore spend ample time in prayer during this stage.

This stage also requires knowing the people who will be participating in the study. Such information as age group, gender, number, religious affiliations, and cultural identities, among others, should be gathered. The venue for hosting the CBS, the time and duration of the CBS should also be decided. All necessary communication targeting participants, such as invitations to the CBS, among others, must be done on time during this stage.

Preparing the CBS Guide

The facilitator(s) should read the chosen Bible passage repetitively until they are familiar with its narrative. Thereafter, they should develop questions that prompt critical engagement with the passage in light of contextual realities. The questions can be in the following three categories.

- 1. Questions in the text**—focusing on the characters, themes, words, phrases, flow of events, among other things.
- 2. Questions that link the text with the current context**—inviting participants to share experiences similar to what is reflected in the text, comparing what is in the text with the contemporary context or lived experiences, among others.
- 3. Action-oriented questions**—questions that inspire needed actions and changes to effect the desired change in individuals, church, family or community. This category of questions prompts participants to come up with realistic plans of action to address specific issues.

Stage 2: Bible Study Meeting

During this stage, the group meets for the Bible Study and the facilitators should be ready to offer the needed leadership and, above all, share and learn from the whole group and process.

The stage involves the following aspects.

Helping participants settle and build/strengthen trust and assurance of safety

The session should begin with prayer and any other activities that need to be done to help participants settle, build trust and establish that the space is safe enough for them to engage freely and honestly.

Introducing and reading the text

The facilitator announces the text and invites participants to engage in a participatory reading of the passage. Different people can read the text in portions, one after another.

The text should be read repetitively (at least three times) to ensure that the participants get familiar with the narrative.

Facilitating interactions and engagements on the text

Thereafter, the facilitators invite people to engage with the text by using the guidelines, questions or activities they prepared in stage 1. While doing this, the facilitator should be flexible enough to allow the conversation to flow as naturally as possible. The facilitator should also be open to the possibility of people bringing up new questions or issues. Sometimes the group's interactions may actually influence the

facilitator into changing the flow or framing of the questions. However, even as facilitators give room for all these and more possibilities, they must be careful to ensure that the conversation and engagements remain relevant to the goal of the study. Whenever the group seems to go off, they are expected to bring them back on course in a very respectful manner.

It is very important that the facilitator ensures active participation of all members of the group, including those who may seem quiet and reserved. One can do this by gently inviting them by name to contribute. If the group is large, participants can be organised into smaller discussion groups.

The group should be organised in such a way that participants engage respectfully, even when the conversations get heated. The facilitator should ensure that people listen to each other and speak with grace and compassion.

Stage 3. Post Bible Study Meeting

After the meeting, it is important that all necessary communications are made. These include compiling a report, sending out appreciation messages and conducting follow-ups.

The Process of Developing this Contextual Bible Study Manual

The tool was developed by youth leaders from the AACC members alongside the Resource Pack on Faith, Love & Life over a series of webinars held in May, June and July 2025. The process featured intergenerational consultations on how to develop Contextual Bible Study manuals for use by youth and church leaders in promoting SRHR and SPG-related initiatives for quality life in Africa.

Structure of the Manual

This resource pack has three sections. The first is titled ***Multiplying with Wisdom: Preparing for your family, Family planning and Demystifying Contraceptive Use.*** It is made up of three Contextual Bible Studies, which focus mainly on preparing and planning for families.

The second section is titled ***Caring for Christian Families.*** It consists of three Contextual Bible Studies which aid discussions on matters related to parenting roles and duties, mentorship, legacy creation, sustainability in families, among others.

The last section is on ***Childlessness and Reproductive Science.*** It has only one CBS, which facilitates discussions on matters infertility and the use of assisted reproductive science.

Section 1

Multiplying with Wisdom

Demystifying Contraceptive Use

Rev. Mary Mwangi

Biblical Text: Luke 14:28- 33

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples."

Brief discussion

In Luke 14:28–33, Jesus uses two parables: a builder who must first calculate the cost before building a tower and a king who must evaluate his army's strength before going to war. Counting the cost means making wise decisions, taking responsibility for one's choices and living with foresight.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

In the African context, this principle applies to everyday realities. A market trader carefully budgets to ensure her family has food. A student considers how his decisions today affect his future. A mother weighs the timing of children against her health and her family's well-being. Just as discipleship calls for intentionality, so too does family life. When contraceptives are freed from myths and fears, they become tools of responsible stewardship, ensuring families are cared for, health is preserved and futures are sustained. This is not a rejection of faith but an act of wisdom that aligns with God's will for abundant life (John 10:10). In preparation for the CBS, take a moment to reflect on the following scenarios.

In a vibrant Kenyan market located in Kangemi, along Waiyaki Way, Wanjiru, a young mother of two, sits behind her attractive display of tomatoes, meticulously tallying her day's earnings. Every shilling counts. She has to account for transport, school fees and meals for her family. Yet, a deeper concern weighs on her, *"What if I get pregnant again?"* She wonders. Whispers from neighbors warn that contraceptives cause

illnesses and are unfit for married women. But Wanjiru knows an unplanned child could force her to pull her children from school or shutter her stall, unraveling her family's stability.

In a bustling secondary school in Mombasa, Baraka, a determined student, dreams of being the first in his family to reach university. Peer pressure swirls around him, laced with myths about contraceptives being shameful or dangerous. He thinks of his cousin, whose unplanned pregnancy derailed her education. Baraka asks himself, "Am I ready for this battle?" His ambition hinges on wise choices, balancing dreams against the risks of unprepared responsibilities.

In rural Meru, Mama Kendi tends her maize field, her body weary from years of labour and four closely spaced births. Her harvests dwindle and her health falters. At church, some claim family planning defies God's will. However, Mama Kendi sees the toll of unchecked births on her body, her children and her land. She longs for rest between pregnancies to nurture her family and fields with strength.

These stories of Wanjiru's market calculations, Baraka's schoolyard resolve and Mama Kendi's rural toil mirror the wisdom of Luke 14:28–33. Here, Jesus calls for counting the cost, like a builder planning a tower or a king preparing for battle. For them, contraceptives are not a rejection of faith but tools of stewardship. By spacing births, Wanjiru safeguards her children's education, Baraka protects his future and Mama Kendi preserves her health and harvest. Each scenario reflects deliberate, faithful choices, aligning with God's desire for abundant life. In these choices, it is clear that foresight and responsibility strengthen families and communities against the burdens of unplanned futures.

Discussion Questions

1. Narrate the parables in Luke 14:28–33 in your own words.
2. Who are the main characters in the parables and what traits do they display?
3. What lessons do we learn from the builder and the king about preparation and foresight?
4. What are some common myths about contraceptives in your community? How do they compare with the truth?
5. How does "counting the cost" in discipleship relate to responsible family planning and reproductive health?
6. What role can the church play in demystifying contraceptives and promoting wise stewardship of health and family life?
7. What cultural or religious barriers prevent families from making informed decisions about reproduction?
8. As young people, what actions can we take to promote truth, responsibility and care in matters of reproductive health?

Re-visiting the Divine Charge to Fill the Earth

Grace Gwanella Cangy

Biblical Text: Genesis 1:28 (NIV)

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground".

Brief discussion

In this Bible verse, God charges humanity with the responsibility to be fruitful and multiply in number. It is worth noting with concern that many have often detached the call to be fruitful from the call to increase in number. For this reason, they have prioritised giving birth to as many children as possible without minding the quality of the life afforded to the offspring. Others, on the other hand, have interpreted "be fruitful" as a synonym for "increase in number." Both approaches to this scripture are faulty. This is because, since being fruitful means being productive, productivity encompasses various aspects of life beyond childbearing. There are, for example, virtues and qualities exhibited by one's lifestyle, one's role in his/her family, church and community, or even one's civic duties as a citizen of a given country. When we are told to be fruitful and increase in size, we are called to be holistically productive and caring enough to multiply our numbers in such a way that our holistic productivity is sustained. It is on this basis that we can then duly fill and subdue the earth. In other words, if our increase in number is accompanied by reduced standards of living, moral decay and unsustainable pressure on the

earth, then we end up as enemies of nature and are soon met by its wrath.

We must also understand that to "rule over" and have dominance over creation is not an invitation to ownership but rather a call to responsibly steward all of God's creation. We ought to preserve it in ways that maintain its capacity to reveal God's glory and power.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

Africa is experiencing a rapid population growth rate, which has led to tension between multiplication and sustainability. As our numbers continue increasing unsustainably, the pressure exerted by population growth on the resources available for our well-being and survival also increases. Consequently, resources face the risk of depletion. Many African governments are not able to provide quality public services to their populace.

We must then figure out how our children and those yet to be born will attain and lead a life of good enough quality that ensures their productivity. Even as we care for the quality of life, we must ensure that we do not multiply in a way that ravages the earth on which humanity thrives. We must remember that even as we multiply, it isn't a race to sire offspring without a plan but a covenant to nurture life in harmony with nature; to ensure that our cities grow thoughtfully, reflecting the goodness of our Creator in every person's life.

Discussion Questions

1. When and how is this scripture often used or applied in your community?
2. How has the way this scripture is often applied affected:
 - a. *human population in your community?*
 - b. *humanity's interactions with nature around your community?*
3. Identify ways through which young people today can be fruitful, increase in number, rule the earth and subdue it in ways that do not ravage it.
4. What is the role of family planning in ensuring that human beings can be fruitful, increase in number, rule the earth and subdue it in ways that do not ravage it?
5. Which steps will you take to ensure that your offspring are holistically productive and their lives reflect the goodness of God?

Notes

[illegible]

The Importance of Preparing and Planning for a Family

Frank M. Mbilinyi

Biblical Text: 1 Timothy 5:7-8

“Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Brief discussion

In the above Scripture, Paul addresses the tendency of Christians to abandon vulnerable members of their families and neglect their role of providing adequate care to members of their households. In the city of Ephesus, where the text is set, one of the most neglected groups of family members was widows. Equating the act of not providing for one's relatives, especially members of one's own household, with a denial of the faith, underscores the central role of adequately caring for one's close relatives. This is especially important for the believer as he/she serves the mission of Christ and his Church.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

Providing for relatives means catering to their basic needs of life and ensuring their access to all the services required for them to grow, develop

and lead productive lives. Such services include health care, education, among others. 1 Timothy 5:8 reminds us that providing for one's family is not just a social duty, but a moral obligation and spiritual mandate. It is very heartbreaking to see the rising levels of abandonment and neglect of family members in several African communities today. There are millions of children on the streets and in children's homes who their parents abandoned due to an inability to care for their children financially.

There are millions of people today who, after giving birth to children, do not care about their survival. Some have left the children with their grandparents and relatives, with very little to no support. Others are really trying, but because their family sizes far outmatch their earnings, they live under severe stress and pressure, often unable to provide adequate care and support to their households.

To ensure that we do not fail on our social, spiritual and moral obligation to provide for our families, we need to be cautious about the size of the families we establish. It is critical that we plan for our families and have the number of children we can care for. We will be wise to ensure that our households are of a manageable size based on our means and resources.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Paul equates the act of not providing for one's relatives, especially members of their own household, with denying the faith, even being worse than a non-believer?
2. Identify the kinds of people who are commonly neglected by their relatives in your community.
3. (a) Which factors make family members fail to provide for members of their households within your community?

(b) What can you do (as an individual or as a youth group) to address these factors?
4. Read Genesis 1:28, then read 1st Timothy 5:7-8.
5. Do this again.
6. Find a piece of paper and write the word of God in Genesis 1:28 and then 1 Timothy 5:7-8 as a single text.
7. Read what you have written down three times.
8. What do you understand from what you have read as instructed?
9. Write a 10-minute biblical reflection on the text you have written down in Qn. 8 above, highlighting the role of modern family planning services in the establishment of manageable family sizes.
10. Share your biblical reflection during a family prayer meeting or youth fellowship, a discussion group at school or any team consisting of your peers.

Physical Assignment

Section 2

Caring for Christian families

Mentorship and legacy creation in a Christian Family

Pastor Victoire Wamunyu

Biblical Text: Proverbs 13:22 (NIV)

A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

Brief discussion

Proverbs 13:22 contrasts two life trajectories: one of intentional legacy-building and another of short-sighted accumulation. The “good person” is not merely financially generous but spiritually and morally invested in future generations. The “inheritance” includes wisdom, values, mentorship and sustainable resources. In contrast, the “sinner” accumulates wealth without purpose or accountability. This verse invites us to reflect on how Christian families can cultivate lasting legacies through responsible stewardship of resources and mentorship.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

In contemporary Africa, passing down wealth and resources is increasingly becoming a challenge due to a number of factors. One such factor is the overwhelming pressure on parents and elders to meet the needs of their unsustainable family sizes. Even land inherited from previous generations is sometimes sold to pay school fees.

Putting material inheritance aside, many parents find little or no time to build loving relationships with their children for the purposes of mentorship, spiritual formation and the cultivation of good morals. This raises the question: Would this be different if parents were intentional at establishing families whose sizes are manageable, allowing them to provide care, mentorship and resources with ease, and thereby save and build lasting legacies?

Discussion Questions

1. What does “inheritance” mean in your cultural and spiritual context?
2. How is material legacy managed among children in your community whose parents have passed on?
3. What practical steps can families take to ensure their legacy is sustainable and Christ-centred?
4. How can the concept of family planning help families build lasting wealth for their coming generations?

Family Planning for Quality Family Life

Mr. Morapelo Lebohang Ramoleko

Biblical Text: Psalm 127:3-5 (Holy Bible)

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies.

Brief discussion

Long ago, arrows were a primary weapon used in wars and battles in Africa, serving as both a means of attack and defence, as well as for hunting. What was very important in the use of arrows on the battlefield was the quality of the arrow. Because of this, users took great care that their arrows were well-crafted and constantly maintained. If one had a blunt arrow that couldn't help fell the enemy, they would be greatly disadvantaged when confronted with a situation where their survival depended on the effectiveness of their weapon.

Similarly, the kind of children one has (in terms of their values, skills, abilities, quality of life and gifts) determines more greatly whether they will afford him any future security than their number.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

The support children can provide their parents depends largely on the resources, upbringing and development opportunities they receive from birth to adulthood. Lack of proper guidance, education or resources may prevent children from meeting their parents' expectations. In some communities, this has led to tragic

consequences, including children prioritising inheritance over their parents' welfare. This underscores the need for holistic family planning and responsible parenting, ensuring children are nurtured with skills, values and resources to thrive.

Discussion Questions

1. What words or phrases stand out for you in this text?
2. What does the phrase "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth" suggest about the role of children in a family?
3. How is the phrase, "Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them..." usually interpreted in your community in relation to family size?
4. Which of those interpretations need to be transformed in order to cultivate a culture of establishing sustainable families in your country?
5. What can you do to ensure that these interpretations are transformed?
6. What can we do to balance the biblical celebration of children with the need for responsible family planning, as:
 - youth leaders?
 - church leaders?
 - individuals?

Parental Duties and Social Protection

Mavis Naa Korley Aryee

Biblical Text: 1 Timothy 5:8 (NIV)

Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Brief discussion

The text from Paul's letter to Timothy in Ephesus acknowledges the crucial responsibility of caring for our families (both nuclear and extended), with an emphasis on our households. It sheds light on the Christian's mandate to provide for his/her relatives everything necessary for their development to the point that they become an asset to their family and community. The text is an instruction to the churches. It highlights the urgency of focusing on this primary vocation, through which we can establish sustainable legacies for society.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

Today, the text in Paul's letter to Timothy remains relevant in discussions about Social Protection, parental responsibility, mentorship and legacy creation, and sustainability. It asserts that care for children, young people and even the elderly, who are more vulnerable, begins at the family level. Weak social structures and the shirking of parental responsibilities have resulted in many vices and liabilities. These include increased theft, immorality, mental health challenges, child marriages, streetism, among others.

Most children and young people have been deprived of basic rights like education and meaningful mentorship. They have unmet psychological and emotional needs, causing

them to stray from the right path. These result from the growing neglect of one's relatives, which, ultimately, is a neglect of one's faith. Some of these children have been exposed to harsh conditions and risky behaviours to make ends meet. Consequently, their potential is never fully realised and their life purposes go unfulfilled. In the long run, the input necessary for reaping the dividends of Africa's youthful demographic is diminished, subjecting our youth, instead, to cycles of poverty, among other challenges.

Discussion Questions

1. What words or phrases stand out for you in the text?
2. Why do you think there is an emphasis on our households in the text?
3. What are the factors preventing Christians from adequately providing for members of their households?
4. How can the church intensify advocacy to create responsible individuals who provide for their families?
5. Can you mention some policies that exist to support the welfare of children and young people in your country?
6. How should these policies be enforced?
7. If you had the chance to make any change in the operation of African family systems, what would that be?

Section 3

Childlessness and Reproductive Science

Childlessness and Reproductive Science

Ruth Kilango

Biblical Text: Genesis 30:1-7

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" Then she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees, and even I may have children through her." So she gave him her maid, Bilhah, as a wife; and Jacob went in to her and Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son"; therefore, she called his name Dan. Rachel's maid, Bilhah, conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. (RSV)

Brief discussion

This passage offers a profound lens through which to examine the emotional and ethical terrain of assisted reproductive science. Rachel's painful cry, "Give me children, or I die!" captures the deep pain of infertility, a condition that still carries stigma and spiritual weight in many

societies. Her desperation leads her to a solution that mirrors modern surrogacy. She offers her servant Bilhah to bear children on her behalf. Jacob's response, "Am I in the place of God?" acknowledges the divine mystery behind fertility.

Contemporary Issues the Text Addresses

In today's context, Rachel's act resonates with the use of reproductive technologies and surrogates to fulfil the longing for parenthood. While today's methods involve medical interventions like IVF, artificial insemination and gestational surrogacy, the biblical narrative reveals that the desire to overcome infertility through third-party involvement is not new. Rachel's strategy reflects a proto-surrogacy model, where another woman's body is used to carry and deliver a child for someone else. Though lacking the scientific advancement of modern reproductive medicine, the theological and emotional dynamics are strikingly similar: longing for a child, navigating social pressure and seeking solutions beyond one's own body.

In this light, the Bible does not reject assisted reproductive science; it anticipates it. It shows

that the human desire to overcome infertility is ancient and that solutions involving others have always been part of the story. Modern assisted reproductive technologies such as IVF, surrogacy and egg donation offer hope to many, while also raising complex ethical questions.

Notes

[illegible]

Discussion Questions

1. What title would you give this story?
2. What emotions do you see in Rachel's cry, "Give me children, or I die"?
3. How is Bilhah's body used in this story and what ethical concerns arise from this?
4. What parallels do you see between this story and modern practices of assisted reproduction?
5. In your community, how are women affected by infertility and societal pressure?
6. How can faith communities balance the use of reproductive technologies with respect for the dignity and agency of all individuals involved?

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The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 200 million Christians across the African continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Indigenous churches in Africa, and a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. As an ecumenical body, AACC is a fellowship of over 215 members comprising of Churches, National Christian Councils (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions, and other Christian organizations in 43 African countries.

"The Contextual Bible Studies in this resource pack are relevant education and advocacy tools for empowering peer groups, families and communities to shape Africa's demographic future with wisdom, justice and hope."

Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, AACC General Secretary

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