An analysis of the cases of teenagers dying in taverns in South Africa: Some Biblical and African considerations

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Abstract

According to the Holy Scriptures, parents must care, teach, and guide their children to lead a Godly life. Comparably, the African traditional religion expects parents to do so too. On the morning of 26 June 2022, South Africa woke up to the harrowing news of the death of twenty-one young people in a tavern in East London, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Later, the number of deaths rose to twenty-two. Young people, the youngest being thirteen years old, lost their lives on this fateful day. First, this research seeks to reflect on the lessons the country should learn from this unfortunate ordeal so that such incidents do not occur again. Secondly, this research draws wisdom from the Christian teachings on parenting and African indigenous knowledge system that has anchored African communities for millennia. The research seeks to draw lessons from the teaching of the Bible and African indigenous knowledge system, exploring a Setswana proverb, *Ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa,* meaning a child is a food around which we all gather, implying that a child's upbringing is a communal responsibility. This research also argues that the Enyobeni Tavern incident reflects that Black African families, communities, and the Church's societal role have changed over the years and how these changes harm their social fabric. The research uses a literature review as a research method to formulate the data and conclusion of the study. The research concludes that, with the change in Black African family structure and communities, some biblical and African considerations drawn from the proverb *Ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa* are relevant to mitigate various social challenges Black African communities face in South Africa.

Keywords: Ngwana sejo, Enyobeni Tavern, Scenery Park, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Introduction

In the early hours of 26 June 2022, South Africa woke up to shocking reports of the death of twenty-one young people in a tavern (a popular name in the rural and township areas for a pub) in East London, Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Later, the number of deceased increased to twenty-two. More shocking to the nation was to hear that the bodies of young people as young as thirteen and seventeen were among the deceased. The total number of bodies found inside the tavern included eight girls and twelve boys. This death occurred at what was intended to be

a post-examination celebration party. It has been reported that the tavern in question could only cater for a few hundred patrons. However, on this fateful day, the tavern was filled with thousands of young people of KuseNyibiba Scenery Park, primarily underage, school-going teenagers. Sicetsha (2022), the media, and many South Africans have speculated on the cause of these deaths and have asked if this was due to gunshots, stampedes, or even mass poisoning; however, the cause of death remains unconfirmed at this stage. The Enyobeni deaths in Scenery Park left the nation shocked, mainly because there was no confirmed information regarding the cause of death, and the young age of the deceased. In his eulogy during the symbolic mass funeral held in memory of the deceased, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated: "These children should not have died. Their deaths could have been prevented had the law been adhered to" (Centra, 2022). This research seeks to explore what lessons can be learnt from the Enyobeni incident, especially concerning Black African families and communities. What wisdom can be drawn from a Setswana proverb *Ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa*, meaning a child is a food around which we all gather? This proverb implies that the upbringing of a child is a communal responsibility. Christianity also teaches the importance of the active role parents should take in the upbringing of their children, which this research will also explore. Setswana or Tswana are a Bantu-speaking ethnic group of African people who reside in the southern part of Africa. This ethnic group is the native people of Botswana who spread to the Northwest province of South Africa, where most of the Tswana live (Kinuthia, 2020).

Ngwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa – An African understanding of child-rearing

Africans are naturally communal. A community for Africans is embedded in their culture as a people. Columbus (2014: 209) elaborates on this African communal living, stating that, for African people, community refers to the awareness that identifies an individual not as an isolated ego but as an entity whose being and survival are consequent upon its union with other human beings within an identified locality and the very roots of African Life, culture and value systems in Southern Africa in particular exist in the philosophy of Ubuntu but they have also been partially influenced by specifically the Judaeo- Christian tradition (Nicolaides, 2022). In traditional Africa, for instance, a person is known and identified by and through his/her community. Individual lives move from and revolve around the community. Columbus (2014: 209) further elaborates on this practice. Etta *et al.* (2016: 304) explain that Africans emphasise community life and communalism as a living principle of which the primary ideology is community identity. Their aim is to produce and present an individual as a community and a bearer of culture. Etta *et al.* (2016: 304) state another importance of communalism:

> Consensus is found through dialogues, such that, in a meeting where political decisions are taken, everybody has to participate and to speak. In the words of Julius Nyerere it means we talk until we agree. Such characteristic has also been noted by Nyasani as quoted by Kimmerle, that 'we' of the living members of the community are part of a flow of life that is passing through them from the past to the future.

Africans had and, in some African countries and rural communities, still have farmlands where communal ownership and relationships guarantee the prosperity of a town. In the African sense, this concomitantly guarantees the prosperity of the individual. When a job needs to be done, the entire community turns out with supplies and music, and they sing and dance their way to the

successful conclusion of each. Columbus (2014: 210) further elaborates on how Africans understand the community as vital; community protects an individual's life. Even in modern settings where individuals leave their primary communities for cities in search of work and a better life, their extended families and villages continue to exert tremendous influence over them. People frequently return to their villages and hometowns to join members to celebrate important cultural events (Imi, 2014: 148). Reupert et al. (2022) call this African communality a 'safety net' for African communities. The community must be viewed as an inherent social structure for the African creed. This leads to the African understanding that it takes an entire village to raise a child, according to the Setswana proverb n*gwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa.* Masango (2006: 938) explains:

> It is a common saying among Africans, that it takes the whole village to raise a child. The statement captures good values, ethics, and spiritual development of a person – it is holistically taken. This type of process forces one to internalise African values as a way of life. In other words, in an African community a person is expected to be in relation with other people. That is why an adult is allowed to discipline any child who is out of step. It is part of shaping values, ethics, and spiritual life of a child. In the African village one is not allowed to live life alone like an island.

Mokhutso (2022: 13) notes that, in the spirit of *Ubuntu*, African people believe that it takes an entire village to raise a child. A child is born into a community that is responsible for raising and nurturing the child. Mohamed (1996: 58) reflects on some of the benefits of belonging to a community. Mentoring is one of the experiences of being part of a community of elders and neighbours, a part of the village; it is a shared experience among individuals bound by the community to one another. Mokhutso (2022: 13) further notes that everyone participates, especially the older children, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and even cousins in this process of a village raising a child. It is not unusual for African children to stay with their grandparents, aunts, or uncles for extended periods of time. Even neighbours and friends get involved. Africans learn about their character, talents, and weaknesses within a group or when interacting with others, whether at home, school, work, or in areas where they live. Etta *et al.* (2016: 307, 308) add that an understanding of family goes beyond family:

> In the traditional African society, the family includes not only husband, wife, and children but also grandparents, uncles, aunts, and others who may have their own children. In this sense, a number of kindred living with their wives and children come together as one large family. This is because all the members of this family can trace their common descent, and share a common living place or house-group; they enjoy some consciousness of their identity and a sense of solidarity. This extended family system in fact is the bed-rock of the communal humanism of the African world view. It is humanistic because it stresses the brotherly love which holds everybody together and demands everyone to be his brother's keeper. It discourages the dehumanisation, exploitation and domination of each other, but always seeks to better the living condition of overall ramification and, in all circumstances.

Reupert *et al.* (2022: 2) elaborate on what this means, namely that it takes the village (many people) to provide a safe, healthy environment for children, where children are given the security

they need to develop and flourish, and to realise their hopes and dreams. This village includes parents, siblings, extended family members, neighbours, teachers, professionals, community members, and policymakers. For Africans, this is how children should be raised; it is not only the responsibility of the parents, but all members of the community have a role to play in the upbringing, safety, and total well-being of all children.

A Christian understanding of child-rearing

Ellison and Sherkat (1993: 313) have noted a dominant trend among sociologists, which attest to the fact that religious communities and belief systems help shape a variety of positive attributes and behaviours in family life. Sociologists hail the religious family set up as a powerful institution in instilling positive values in children, such as obedience and respect from children for the authority of their parents. Petro et al. (2017: 114) further highlights that research does confirm that religion has a growing influence on parenting. Vorster (2008: 466, 467) also says it is within the confines of marriage, a God-ordained institution whose purpose, among others, is primarily for mutual help and guidance, as well as raising children if the couple can, and also chooses to do so. Therefore, according to Christianity, parenting is a role given to parents by God and is not taken lightly. Stibbs (no date: 207) further elaborates on this point when saying:

> Parents, therefore, who are given children by God have a consequent stewardship of far-reaching importance. By the right discharge of this responsibility they can be used to mould and determine the man or woman that is to be. 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it' (Proverbs 22: 6). Children need, as the Scriptures indicate, 'training in righteousness' including necessary, detailed and practical 'teaching' 'reproof' and 'correction'. It is for such training that the Scriptures are particularly 'profitable' because 'inspired by God' (see 2 Timothy 3: 16).

Paul in Ephesians 6: 1 - 9 teaches about the importance of a harmonious relationship between Christian parents and their children and vouches that this is the teachings of the Lord when saying in verse 4 "…bring them up in training, and instruction of the Lord" (New International Version). Vorster (2008: 468) argues that children should be loved, cared for, and taught Christian principles because they bear the same image and have the same human dignity. Again, it is generally understood within the Christian faith that children are gifts from God, as recorded in Psalm 127:3 "Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him" (New Living Translation). The human dignity of children is also founded on their creation in the image of God. This idea is central to anthropology in biblical faith.

The central goal for Christian parents should be to guide their children to a saving faith in Jesus Christ and to set them on a path to adulthood, bringing them to the full measure of his glory (Ephesians 4:13). Parenting is a critically important calling and any children are indeed a gift and blessing from the Creator (Psalm 127:3-5). Parents are required to "Nurture them (children) in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). It should be noted that this biblical teaching does not only appear in the New Testament, but the entire Bible is consistent in this teaching in texts such as Proverbs (22: 6) "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" and as well as Deuteronomy 6: 6 - 7 "And these words that I command you

today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (New International Version). Within this context, this article argues that the Enyobeni teenage deaths call for both Christians and black Africans to relook at their values regarding parenting.

A dramatic change in Black African families

Reupert *et al.* (2022: 2) highlight a change in the family set-up, stating that, in many countries nowadays, the village is dissipated and fragmented, and individuals are increasingly isolated and not eager to ask for, or provide help to others. Family breakdowns, economic pressures, long working hours, and increased mobility have all made families feel less connected to extended family members and others around them. This is, unfortunately, the current situation regarding Black African families.

In their research, Holborn and Eddy (2011: 1) found that family structure is fractured in South Africa, and more so in Black African families. Some of the factors that have affected the family structure are orphans and child-headed households, due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has hit many families. South Africa has experienced a growth in the number of single-parent households: in 2008, only 35% of the children lived with their biological parents; 40% were living with their mother, and 2.8% with their father, leaving 22.6% of children living with neither of their biological parents. This situation has obviously worsened over the years.

In 2007, 44% of all urban parents were single. Of the African urban parents, 52% were single; of the Coloured parents, 30% were single; of the Indian parents, 7% were single, and of the White parents, 24% were single. The other factor that contributes to a change in family structure is absent fathers, most of whom are absent because of death, but a substantial number are those living fathers, and these have always had adverse effects on the lives of children who grow up without fathers. Another factor is the legacy of apartheid and the migratory labour system, which has negatively affected Black families where men had to leave their families in rural areas to live and work in urban areas where there were job opportunities. Lastly, Holborn and Eddy (2011: 5, 6) mention poverty as another factor that has changed Black African families. They (2011: 7, 8) further argue that broken families also break the youth. Broken families affect not only the self, but also all household members. For some reason, a broken family also affects the community it reside in.

It can be argued that even a society, whose prosperity and development depend on healthy families, is affected. Holborn and Eddy (2011: 9) further elaborate on how broken families affect society, stating that another challenge with dysfunctional or broken families is education. There is a strong link between educational success and a stable family set-up. Furthermore, lack of education leads to unemployment and, in South Africa, the Black African youth are the most affected. In addition, Holborn and Eddy (2011: 9) mention that unemployment often leads to risky sexual behaviour, including unprotected sexual intercourse and multiple sexual partners. As a result, this leads typically to teenage parenthood and a rise in HIV/AIDS infections. Holborn and Eddy (2011: 11,12) add that this often leads to an increase in violence and crime, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, and self-perceptions. This means that a broken family leads to a broken

society. The Enyobeni Tavern incident reflects the brokenness within Black African families and communities as well as a decline in teaching within the Christian cycles of the key values of Christian parenting.

A change in Black African communities

It is not a secret that Black African communities have come a long way and the most significant impact is apartheid and the colonial system. Mokhutso (2022: 5) argues that, during the apartheid government, Black townships were developed to promote the interests of the White minority at the expense of the Black majority. Townships were deliberately engineered as squatter areas for the Black working class outside well-developed urban areas which were the preserve of the White minority.

Mokhutso (2022: 5) adds that the entire non-White urban population was forced to live in townships through the enforcement of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and other pieces of town planning legislation that determined the strict separation of race groups: "Each race group should have its consolidated residential area. Each residential group area should be separated by a strong physical 'buffer' such as a river or ridge or a buffer such as an industrial or commercial area." Mokhutso (2022: 5) argues that the apartheid government has always deliberately marginalised and dehumanised the lives of the Black majority citizens of this country. Etta *et al.* (2016: 311, 312) note that globalisation also plays a massive role in changing the Black African family set-up. This research focuses on five changes resulting from globalisation. First, globalisation is defined as integrating national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology. It brought employment opportunities, education, international trade, openness, and tolerance of different racial and ethnic groups and paved the way for product division among nations. This means that each nation should concentrate on producing what it has when participating in international trade. As much as globalisation brought changes that contributed positively to distinct parts of the world, including Africa, negative contributions also tempered with how African people lived their lives. Etta *et al.*'s (2016: 312) main point is that individual and individualism became the order of the day, and the emphasis on community became severely affected.

In South Africa, twenty-seven years into democracy, significant improvements such as the building of schools, clinics, hospitals, RDP free houses for the poor and needy, and access to water and electricity have been made in townships and South African society. Most of the townships in South Africa still experience poverty, crime, abuse of alcohol and drugs, domestic violence, violence, and a high crime rate. All of these are experienced in Black African communities. Mokhutso (2022: 11) refers to the challenges faced by Black African townships as a "disfigured African identity", due to the legacy of slavery and the apartheid government. A sad reality is that the situation has worsened since 1994.

Post-democratic South African government

Post-1994, the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), introduced many opportunities as well as some harmful contributions such as corruption, crime, and unemployment in the country. Since the dawn of democracy, many ANC leaders have been arrested on corruption

charges. There has also been an increase in politically motivated killings. Corruption has negatively affected service delivery, especially in the rural areas and townships where there is a lack or no service delivery.

> Corruption at essential levels, such as that of the president, contributes to the decline of society's morals and perceptions of corruption. The nature of corruption in the public sector is among individual government officials, business owners/businesses and the ruling party. Government officials, who are also from the ruling party, facilitate favours for business owners; business owners perform favours for the ruling party or pay the individual public official (Ntoyanto, 2019: 431).

The fact is that corruption is an enemy of progress, as it interferes with the progress of other projects in the country. Projects that are supposed to make the lives of communities easy are put on hold as monies disappear, or companies that do not have experience and the necessary expertise provide low-quality projects. Or, in some cases, people with all the necessary expertise and who can deliver quality work are not appointed, but those who are politically affiliated are given tenders. Essential projects are not completed because somebody used all the allocated money. These corruption challenges have been so extensive that the Zondo Commission was appointed to investigate corruption in South Africa. Mokhutso (2022: 19-20) notes that corruption issues in leadership and scarce job opportunities have influenced the high crime statistics and hindered getting people out of poverty.

Discussion

Enyobeni Tavern case exposed the government

The Enyobeni Tavern deaths exposed several issues that the government could have averted. Among other issues, the Enyobeni Tavern deaths show a lack of law enforcement by the laws that legislate liquor licensing. The Enyobeni Tavern structure was not in line with the liquor board's requirements. Dayimani (2022) sheds some light on the structural issues of the Enyobeni Tavern, stating that the building was illegally built because, according to the Buffalo City Metro, they are not aware of the approval of building plans for the tavern structure according to the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977. Dayimani (2022) notes that, according to the local municipality, Buffalo City Metro, the tavern's structure did not meet the safety regulations and was built in a place zoned for a residential area. Dayimani (2022) also points out that the Enyobeni Tavern operated outside its trading hours. The challenge is that a new building cannot be hidden; the Enyobeni building was renovated in the open, and if there were Buffalo City Metro personnel, such an illegal building could have been detected.

The notion that the Enyobeni Tavern building was illegal speaks to personnel issues. Does the Buffalo City Metro have enough personnel to monitor such structures, and are they equipped with all the necessary resources to do their jobs adequately? It may be argued that, for teenagers as young as thirteen to seventeen years of age, it may not have been the first time that they went to this tavern; if it were not, how did they know that they would be welcomed and served alcohol? One wonders what prompted these teenagers to celebrate the end of the examination period in a tavern of all places? Furthermore, how could young teenagers celebrate with alcohol? This

reflects the paucity of recreational facilities or places of interest where these young people could have gone to celebrate. Jacob (2022) reports that the community youth leader and the parents of Scenery Park shared the following:

> There are no facilities for young people, there is no library, there are no proper sports fields. We have nothing. This is part of the reason young people here are into alcohol and drug abuse. We would like to have an art centre, a library and sports fields. The activities young people should be involved in require a commitment from government. There are non-existent recreational facilities here. This is a post-apartheid township. So, it cannot be that we have a township that has very few to non-existent recreational and economic activities that benefit young people. Substance abuse should not even be an option for the youth.

The government is supposed to have provided these amenities for communities such as Scenery Park in East London. The fact is that not one party can be solely blamed for the catastrophe at Enyobeni Tavern; the government must also be blamed. This reflects that there was no other place where young people could go and enjoy themselves, or this reflects the kind of relationship South Africans have with alcohol and how that has started affecting not only the adults but also the young people.

It should be noted that, if the government officials such as the Buffalo City Metro inspectors, the police, etc. could have noted that underage children were being served alcohol in this tavern, steps would have been taken earlier to prevent the death of these young people. It can be argued that the visibility and effectiveness of law enforcement could have stopped the deaths at Enyobeni Tavern. More recreational facilities, where young people can meet with their peers and enjoy themselves, could have been places where they could have chosen to go and celebrate the end of the examination period instead of going to a tavern, which often is the only recreational facility available in most of the townships and rural areas of South Africa. It seems that the South African government is repeatedly more reactionary than proactive, which speaks to a lack of planning. The Enyobeni Tavern deaths are due to a government that does not have a plan for its people. There is no plan for reducing crime, fighting alcohol abuse, gender-based violence, etc. When the outcome of lack of planning arises, everybody is shocked, including the government.

The prophetic role of the Church in society

Resane (2017: 2), reflecting on the role of the Church in society, argues that during the apartheid era, the Church's voice was thunderous and precise regarding the injustices suffered by the black majority at the time. Men and women of the cloth, such as Beyers Naude, Peter Storey, Desmond Tutu, Frank Chikane, Stanley Mogoba, Itumeleng Mosala, Allan Boesak and others were strong and powerful voices of the Church in South Africa. The Church took its prophetic role very seriously then. However, Resane (2017: 1) notes with concern that post-1994, there's been a noticeable silence on social ills by the Church. The dawn of democracy is partly due to the fearlessness and active role the Church took during the reign of apartheid in South Africa.

The death of 22 teenagers at Enyobeni tavern reflects, among other areas, how the Church has somewhat neglected its prophetic role. It is the role of the Church to call out the government,

especially when it comes to lack of service delivery, and in enforcing the laws that are supposed to uphold the dignity of God's people. It is the understanding of the Christian faith that all human beings are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26, 27). Therefore all human beings deserve to receive all the necessary services to uphold their human dignity as beings created in the image of God. The Enyobeni death of teenagers does not only speak to a broken family structure and black African communities. This incident also speaks of the lack of service delivery in Scenery Park. Again, why would a tavern be built within a residential area? What values does such an establishment bring to society? This article has highlighted the responsibility parents, community and the government should take for the death of the 22 teenagers at Enyobeni tavern, the biggest question is, where was the Church when all these things were happening? because according to Forster (2012: 78) the Church has a paramount role to play in society, hence saying:

> Christians have a God-given responsibility to engage any power, whether an individual or an institution, that acts contrary to the principles of the Kingdom of God and the Gospel of Christ. Every believer is to be a prophet, listening for the will of God in society and living to see that will enacted…

The Enyobeni teenage deaths affirm the argument Resane (2017: 6) makes about the South African Church that the pulpit has lost its beauty. It is on this point Bentley (2013: 6) argues that if the Church's voice is not prophetic enough, then the Church needs to show the change that it professes. To stand on the sidelines of society and shout the will of God at the state and society will not suffice in a constitutional and secular democracy. Psalm 18:30 teaches us *"…he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him [and thus his Church]"* so let the church play its part.

The Enyobeni Tavern death case is a display of societal brokenness

Jibiliza and Khumalo (2021:. 2) define brokenness as the pain caused by what a person has experienced in the past and which has devastated them. They further say it is a sense of darkness in one's life. This research argues that this is currently the state of many communities in South Africa due to crime, corruption, lack of service delivery, unemployment etc., especially within black African communities. The teenage deaths at Enyobeni tavern are a reflection of this brokenness. Masango (2006: 940) acknowledges that the African community is indeed breaking down, resulting in abuse and violence. African people need to examine and analyse the social structure of their communities by tracing the blockages or brokenness that occurred, especially abuse and violence.

The main event that led to the overcrowding at Enyobeni Tavern in East London was a group of school-going teenagers who wanted to celebrate what they call 'pen is down' or the end of the examination period. It is said that the youngest was as young as thirteen years old. It has been noted that the tavern could only accommodate a few hundred patrons; however, on 26 June, it accommodated thousands of young people. A few questions come to mind following the reports regarding this horrendous incident. First, because this tavern operates within a residential area, what did the community say when they saw young people flocking to this tavern? Is the sight of young people filling this tavern something the community was used to? The bottom line is that what was happening at Enyobeni Tavern happened on the faces of Scenery Park residents. The reports about Enyobeni Tavern mention that the young people died in the early hours of Sunday

morning, 26 June; where were the community's older people and security when young people filled Enyobeni Tavern? In most townships of South Africa, taverns are close to residential areas; most often, they are situated within residential areas, in some cases even closer to schools and places of worship. It is, therefore, correct to assume that residents around the tavern witnessed what was happening at Enyobeni Tavern but did not raise the alarm. The community negated their role of caring for the young ones. In the growing number of human trafficking cases within Black African communities, it is evident that the notion of being your brother's keeper is slowly dying. Ntwasa (2022) argues that the Enyobeni tragedy is not necessarily an expression of the youth of Scenery Park; instead, he argues that the Enyobeni tragedy is not necessarily the result of uncontrolled children who do not get enough hidings at home, but rather that unhealthy social norms kill any youth bracket in South Africa.

Lastly, in South Africa, only eighteen-year-olds are allowed to enter a place that sells liquor. What did the other eighteen and older patrons say when they saw these teenagers filling the Enyobeni Tavern? It is not fair to blame parents alone or the residents of Scenery Park on this matter, which is not what this research seeks to do. However, whatever happened that night and in the early hours of Sunday 26 June, signals that the community, according to African understanding, must play a role in the upbringing of all young people. The Enyobeni Tavern deaths highlight that Black African communities have neglected this vital philosophy.

One can also assume that, on that night, the tavern was not full of young teenagers only, but some older patrons too, who did nothing to alert the relevant officials of what was happening in that tavern. This leads to what Mbele (2008: 53) shares that the conventional wisdom in African communities presents the elder as a wise, dignified, and influential figure who keeps the culture alive and guides the young. Masango (2006: 941) further states that, in African communities, elders are expected to live a good life that will eventually influence others to develop their spiritual personality and thus become good citizens, good neighbours, and fellow relatives. Hence, in African communities, elders are not called by their first names, looked in the eye when talking to them, or addressed when wearing a cap or hat, etc. Because of their age and life experiences, they deserve honour and respect. What about the security officials, the owner, the management of that tavern, and the waiters who served beverages. All these people were responsible for sounding the alarm, and none of them did. The alarm was not loud enough. This means that the notion of a village raising a child is fading or has faded away among Black African communities; hence, the experiences of Enyobeni Tavern. Those expected to pursue the notion that it takes a village to raise a child should be the elders.

The Bible also teaches that "Where there is no counsel of families the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). A community where the elders don't take their rightful place as bestowed upon them by African Indigenous knowledge system, and Christian teachings, the Enyobeni case shows that the village will break down even further. Again, it is evident that a silent Church contributes to a broken society. Paul in Romans 13:1 say "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God had established" The nature of God is that of a loving, caring and faithful father. The question is, does the current government reflects those qualities? Or is the ruling government inward-looking not considerate to the plight of God's people in South Africa? The death of teenagers in Scenery park exhibits the damage caused when the Church of God remains silent

amidst the government, forgetting that God has afforded them an opportunity to govern and take that role seriously. Proverbs 17:6 teaches us that "Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children." Also 3 John 1:4 states "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Thus our churches must guide the youth to walk in the truth. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 also states "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Just as parents and caregivers, our churches must also guide the youth as beacons of the Lord's message and take a stand against ineffective government. In Psalm 32:7 it is clear that "You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance" and this should also be the states role in caring for its youth. After all the church is the Lord's representative on earth "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:3), so the question is what are churches doing in this regard?

The Enyobeni case as a call to revisit our African indigenous knowledge system

The Setswana proverb n*gwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa* is a reminder that raising a child is not easy. That is more so because the family structure has changed, and there is a rise in the number of single parents, due to the present societal factors. Due to economic opportunities, there is a migration to urban areas, where people migrate to other provinces, thereby staying far from their immediate and extended family members. It is even worse in this modern era where the family structure is broken. Single-family households, by choice or life circumstances, and child-headed households are on the rise in South Africa. Therefore, the Enyobeni Tavern deaths indicate that, in Black African families, there is a need to return to and draw lessons from the African knowledge system where devastating cases such as what happened at Enyobeni Tavern were unheard of.

Individualism has opened so many loopholes that are killing Black African families. The Enyobeni Tavern deaths are one of the loopholes that have scared the country for life. Ngara (2007, p. 17) argues that one deep wisdom has not been given a fair trial; instead, it has been found guilty because of Westernisation which taught Africans that their way of life was backward, evil, and primitive. African ways of knowing constitute invaluable aspects of African heritage that harmonise Africa's past broken story of development with its modern realities of globalisation. Kourie and Kretzschmar (2000: 96) conclude that these challenges help us dig deep into African wisdom and spirituality. They also help us re-examine our problems and meet the challenges that face us in South Africa.

The Enyobeni Tavern is a reminder that society is lost without a stable village

The Setswana proverb n*gwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa* is a stern warning that children who live without a village are doomed. The Enyobeni Tavern deaths indicate that the family structure within Black African families is broken. The village's responsibility is to nurture, mentor, and guide children with good values. However, for these teenagers, the only place that made sense to them and the only choice of celebration was to indulge in alcohol. Masango (2006: 940) acknowledges that African communities are changing:

> I need to share that the world has changed and continues to change in such a way that it challenges the above concept of Ubuntu. For example, we are experiencing violence and abuse within African communities. As African people face these challenges of women and child abuse, they were forced to re-examine where the concept of Ubuntu broke down. In other words, they need to analyses the way they are raising their children in these modern times. In today's society, the question they need to ask is, is the village failing or has it collapsed in its African structure of caring and nurturing children? They also need to dig deep into their African concept of spirituality, checking whether it is helpful in building the nation to its original way of living and respecting each other as they did before.

Steyn *et al.* (2010:173,174) acknowledge that South African society faces many challenges such as distress and uncertainty, the post-1994 social transition, economic uncertainty, constant electrical blackouts, violent crime, poverty, unemployment, and racism. Steyn *et al.* (2010: 174) view this as fundamental because adolescents who grow up in such environments view their future and their emerging identities as influenced by their societal, political, and economic contexts. Steyn *et al.* (2010: 174) further note that circumstances in South Africa could have a significant negative impact on adolescents' future expectations. Therefore, the Church as well cannot afford to fold her arms and not take its rightful missional and pastoral role in society.

Conclusion

The Enyobeni Tavern deaths should not only be shocking, but be something that exposes areas that, as a country, have been overlooked, and for such incidents teach us to do better. In addition, the Enyobeni case reflects that our society or village is broken. South Africa cannot ignore that much work needs to be done regarding family structure. Ignoring this will result in many more Enyobeni cases. The Enyobeni case draws from the wisdom of the African knowledge system, which has kept the forebears going for many years. Among those is the truth learned from the Setswana proverb n*gwana sejo o a tlhakanelwa.* If the Church and the village or community had taken their role seriously, none of what happened in Scenery Park, East London, could have occurred. van Wyk (2017: 3) argues that South Africa needs not a reformation of creeds but deeds. The rise in drug dealing in rural areas and townships and human trafficking in South Africa should be a solemn reminder that as a people, we need each other, and the Church should teach her members not only to know the Gospel of Jesus Christ but to live it out in all sectors of society. This research posits that a strong, stable, healthy Church and villages resuscitation is a matter of extreme urgency if society is to be spared further heartbreaks such as that discussed in this study.

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