



Responsible citizenship is more than a government label! : Faith-based values in the domestic domain

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Doi: <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.10330>

Abstract

Citizenship entails a relationship that is more than a label for individuals' rights and duties. Responsible citizenship means acting responsibly towards peace, justice, human rights, good values, and social justice. Social justice connects with the idea of creating a society that is based on responsible citizenship and recognises the dignity of every human being. However, it seems that families face innumerable challenges when it comes to social justice. The world has come to see families as units where violence occurs. In South Africa, a devastated face for families is the issue of gender-based violence. South Africa has the highest rate of gender-based violence in the world. Domestic and sexual violence has marked the post-1994 democratic era. Women and children are abused and murdered and most of the perpetrators are the fathers in the homes. These challenges can be weighed against the plan God has for families. God intended families to be the building blocks of homes, the church and society, and the first avenue where children can learn about Christ's love, forgiveness, compassion, and about faith-based values. Children are a gift from God and Christian parents are obligated to teach them about him and about faith-based values. Christian families can play a significant role in their children's spiritual development and their Christian worldview. Family is the prime envoy of socialisation that God created in the very beginning, and the church should be an ideal model for family life. Faith-based values in this context refer to religious, biblical, and Christian values. This paper explores this matter by means of a literature review of journal articles and books to explore the perspectives and views of other scholars in this field.

Keywords: responsible citizenship; faith-based values; domestic domain; family; father; mother; role players

Background

South Africa is a country with a diverse population where the present government is striving to promote equality among all South African citizens. However, inequality still remains a dilemma in post-1994 South Africa, despite the fact that it is an important element in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa (McConnachie, Skelton & McConnachie, 2017:13; Steyn, Alkan, Tupan & Oeyen, 2007:123). Equality means treating every person equally and fairly, and not discriminating unfairly against anyone on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, culture, language, or birth. This is still a great challenge for government. Although the motto of the country is: IKE:/XARRA//KE, which means "diverse people unite", equality does not necessarily mean uniformity. Along the same vein, the government is calling people to generate a natural sense of national pride and belonging (McConnachie et al., 2017; Steyn et al., 2007:23), but it does not pay enough attention to the morality crisis in the country, let alone the essence and necessity of values. The decline in societal and human values is a serious and global concern and very challenging for families in the context of South Africa (Freeks, 2007:vi). Families of South Africa pursue values that elevate moral behaviour for example



integrity, truth, self-respect, commitment, loyalty, honesty, self-confidence, kindness, fairness, and many more, a good work ethic and that can help develop families' full potential (Trevathan & Goff, 201:35-38).

Introduction and problem statement

When viewed from the perspective of a Christian domestic domain, responsible citizenship starts with instilling faith-based values. This requires that the fathers and mothers are the key role players in their families and that God is the centre of the family. It is not necessarily based on governmental values. The family is the prime envoy of socialisation that God created in the very beginning (Yi, 2019:149). However, it seems that the South African government is presenting the family with innumerable challenges. Women and children are abused and murdered and most of the perpetrators are the fathers in the homes. These fathers are not fulfilling their fatherly role in the socialisation process. South Africa has the highest rate of violence against women in the world, and many of these senseless and widespread acts of violence against women and children are caused by poverty (Graaff & Heinecken, 2017:622; Strebel et al., 2006:517-518). Gender-based violence (GBV) is a social ill that includes a wide variety of abuses, for example molestation, domestic violence, sexual threats, exploitation, torture, humiliation, attempted rape, involuntary prostitution, incest, assaults, and many more (Thomas et al., 2013:519). Gender-based violence is a true reality in the context of South Africa, and it spurs on the rampant spread of HIV and AIDS (De Lange et al., 2012:501). Thousands of young mothers suffer unacceptable levels of violence at the hands of their partners or husbands, and almost 54 000 of rape cases have been reported to the police since 2006 (Strebel et al., 2006:517). Almost 40% of men beat their partners (Strebel et al., 2006:519). It is apparent in South Africa that violence against women and children is a growing phenomenon, and these harmful events are devastating when weighed against God's plan for families which is a sacred duty to rear women and children in love and righteousness, provide in their spiritual needs, and to teach them to serve one another.

This paper highlights the moral dilemma facing families and the need for faith-based values to address this problem. Our present society is in a moral state, and it seems that families and educational institutions encounter challenges and have to deal with extensive behavioural problems (Sekhalelo, 2021:1; Freeks, 2015:1). Statistics show that there has been a drastic decrease in values, ethics, morals, standards, good behaviour and character in schools, institutions, and families since 2008. Families are confronted with crisis after crisis (Sekhalelo, 2021:3-5; Bayaga & Jaysveree, 2011:199-200, see also Freeks, 2015:4-6; Freeks, 2011:1-4). Behavioural problems among young children in schools are evident and are increasing globally (Gagnon et al., 2021:1-2; Martineli et al., 2018:1-3; Freeks, 2018:128-129; Mc Carthy, 2016:1-2; Carstens, 2014:9-11). The violence children experience often happens in the classroom, so even some schools are unsafe for children (Gagnon et al., 2021:1). On the other end, most teachers feel disempowered since the abolition of corporal punishment to apply and implement a discipline strategy to manage a secure and safe environment that could streamline training and learning for children (Mahlangu et al., 2021:2). Mental health problems, family conflicts within the family, gender violence, drug trafficking, criminal behaviour, and alcohol use and abuse by parents are all risk factors for the family (Martineli et al., 2018:1). It is not surprising that the world sees families such as abused, broken, divorced and fractured families as units where violence occurs.

Men are central to the social ill of violence in family homes (Khan, 2018:7). Therefore, masculinity is implicated in the pervasive domestic and sexual violence that marks South Africa's post-1994 democratic era, although the paternalistic African society allowed male dominance since a very long time ago (Van den Berg et al., 2013:111-112). Some abusive men use their relationship with their children mainly to dominate and intimidate their wives (Silverstein, 1996:9). These men abuse their female partners and children and are not fulfilling their father's role in the socialisation process. When it comes to intervention, men who have



recently become abusive may be more compliant with intervention strategies than men for whom the pattern of abuse has become an embedded behavioural cycle.

Related social problems facing families and young children in South Africa and across the world include father absence (Freeks, 2021), crime and violence (Carstens & Zwecker, 2013:2), poverty, inequality, racism and discrimination (Kotze, 2021; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996), disciplinary problems, lack of respect and bullying (De Vos & Kirsten, 2015:1-2), academic dishonesty and examination fraud (Koscielniak & Bojanowska, 2019:1; StatsSA, 2015:11, 25), moral crises, moral degeneration and the lack of moral values in schools and homes (Afdal & Afdal, 2019:105-106; Freeks, 2015:1-2), drugs and promiscuous sex (Freeks, 2015:1-2; Oladepo & Fayemi, 2011:8), alcohol use and abuse and teenage pregnancies (Georgiades et al., 2013:1479; Winstanley et al., 2012:310), gender-based violence (GBV) (Freeks, 2021; Van den Berg et al., 2013:111-112), and many more. Many young people are exposed to excessive levels of risky sexual behaviours, and studies have shown that such teenagers indulge in sex with multiple partners, often leading to HIV infection and AIDS (Oladepo & Fayemi, 2011:2). Given the above-mentioned problems, parents are seeking solutions to help curb these dilemmas.

Although families are the world's primeval and most fundamental form of relationship, they are still vulnerable to crises, failure, and broken relationships (Freeks, 2018:154). Globally there are seemingly endless issues and challenging times involving families such as for example inter-alia, separation, or divorce, parenting issues, pressure at work and school, unemployment, financial problems, death of a family member, domestic violence, drug- and alcohol abuse, etc.

Aim of the paper

The main goal of this paper is to ascertain how fathers and mothers as key role players in their families can instill faith-based values as part of responsible citizenship. Parents should be in partnership and collaborate for the progress, benefit, and well-being of the family. They also compliment each other for the success of the family, especially when faith-based values are instilled.

What is responsible citizenship in the context of this paper?

Responsible citizenship denotes that people obey the laws of the country and contribute in every possible way to making South Africa a country where people can live together in peace and harmony (Schoeman, 2006:139). Responsible citizenship is also a concern regarding the welfare of the South African people and is therefore more than a label (Freeks, 2008:19).

According to Giroux (1995:7), the concept *citizenship* can be defined as a historical agreement between the state and the individual, and citizenship deals with the political framework and the integration of the individual. Also, citizenship is the engagement of citizens in the institutions of law and co-management of public affairs.

Citizens are not only responsible in terms of the laws of the country, they, should also participate actively in political life because it is about the quality and destiny of their lives (Koopman, 2015:427). The word *responsible* means "answerable" – the people or citizens are answerable to the laws of the country (Van der Ross, 1959:1). This is akin to fathers and mothers who are answerable to their families, but above all to God, however, there are innumerable families who are atheists, and do not believe that they are answerable to God.

With reference to responsibilities, the Minister of Department of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, outlined 12 responsibilities in terms of the youth on the 23rd of March 2011 in the form of the Bill of Responsibilities (McConnachie et al., 2017:13; Steyn et al., 2007:123;



Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). This Bill corresponds with the rights found in the Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution. For the purpose of this paper, it is crucial to highlight some of these responsibilities. They include:

- *Ensuring the right to human dignity.* The right to human dignity is the responsibility to treat people with respect, dignity, and reverence, to be kind, compassionate and sensitive to all human beings.
- *Ensuring the right to family or parental care.* This means the right to honour and respect parents, to be kind and loyal to family and to recognise that love means long-term commitment and the responsibility to establish strong and loving families.
- *Ensuring the right to education.* This means attending school, learning, and working hard. It implies the responsibility to respect teachers and fellow learners and adhere to the rules and the code of conduct of the specific institution.
- *Ensuring the right to live in a safe environment.* This means the right to promote sustainable development and the conservation and preservation of the natural environment. It also means to protect animal and plant life, to prevent pollution, to not litter and to ensure that homes, schools, streets, and public places are kept neat and tidy. Pertaining to climate change, people are obliged not to waste scarce resources like water and electricity.
- *Ensuring the right to citizenship.* The right to citizenship expects that people will be good and loyal South African citizens. It also means obeying the laws of the country, ensuring that others do well, and contributing in every possible way to making South Africa a great country, etc.

The values entrenched in the Constitution of South Africa

With these discussed responsibilities comes the Constitutional values. The Constitution of South Africa focuses on ten values referred to as the Manifesto on values (SA Human Rights Commission, 2018:123; De Klerk & Rens, 2003:353-354). The values are derived originating at the Constitution and the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; SA Human Rights Commission, 2018:123). These values are the rule of law, respect, democracy, social justice, equity, equality, non-racism, non-sexism, ubuntu (human dignity), an open society, reconciliation, and accountability (responsibility) (Rens, 2005:2-3). Although these constitutional values are essential and relevant to the greater political sphere of South Africa, they do not address the morality crisis that families are facing in the South African context. Numerous researchers and scholars in South Africa have done research on values, education on values and character-building programmes for schools and higher institutions. Much of this research shows that values taught in families are more valuable and this should carry more weight than constitutional values (cf. Abdool, 2005; Rens, 2005; Freeks, 2007; Challens, 2008; Lephalletse, 2008; Llale, 2003).

It was significant, yet strange, when the President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, indicated in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) on the 10th of February 2022 at Cape Town Hall, that South Africa has the best constitution in the whole world. The paradox lies in the fact that the country has one of the most progressive constitutions, but factors such as gender-based violence (GBV), the high crime rate, the high divorce rate, other problems in families, and immorality, to name a few, are at the order of the day. The country is in desperate need of values, especially faith-based values, and of God. This will help develop schools without the devastating social ills of bullying, violence, drugs, and so on, and honest and fair



institutions such as colleges and universities, better and God-fearing communities, value-driven families, and a better society for all. The purpose of all this is twofold. Firstly, Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, is enthroned as Lord and Messiah in any believer's life. It is crucial to understand that God is glorified in families who worship, obey, love, honour and follow his laws, commandments, and precepts according to the Holy Bible. God's love and care for people should always be proclaimed for the sake of the lost, families included (Freeks, 2020:188). Secondly, the church should focus on biblical training and equipping believers for marriage and children. Ministering to families and the entire community is imperative. This responsibility of the church is vital and should be each believer's focus throughout their lives (Ferreira, 2020:184). It is imperative to spiritually guide families in both the prophetic and pastoral roles of a minister.

Value driven

Why the need for values? Values are a proclamation of a sound truth beyond and less ephemeral than our physical lives (Rens, 2005:12). Values provide ideals and can be seen even as *standards and cherished beliefs for wrong or right* and, as such, deliver as indicators that impact a person's decisions in life for a sustained duration of time (Van der Walt, 2008:2-3; Davies, 2001:1). Values associate with beliefs, which in turn ascertain one's attitudes and behaviours. Values can give life meaning and they hold a spiritual or religious component if they are meant to give meaning or direction or help a person make sense of his or her life, especially in trying times. Therefore, one cannot talk of values without referring to moral development and morality, and children cannot make moral judgements and quality decisions if they are not mature enough (Bayaga & Jaysveree, 2011:199). Moral crises occur due to a lack of values in children. Children are increasingly failing to live and maintain positive values (Bayaga & Jaysveree, 2011:208). Here, the role and responsibility of parents are crucial in the home context.

The Holy Bible gives us an understandable elucidation of the origin of values (De Klerk & Rens, 2003:355). God rules his creation along the fundamentals inherent in values and these spiritual laws are valid and binding for all created beings, and so much more for the father and mother in the domestic domain. Values are interconnected in a value system; a system that, in Christian terms, holds the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. It holds that faith springs from the belief in the Trinity of God (Nimmo, 2007:43-44; Vorster, 2004:87).

In addition, values can be better comprehended as part of a worldview. This emphasises that one's choice(s) can either be good or bad; can have positive or negative ramifications that either brighten a person's life or darken it (Van der Walt, 2008:1-3; De Klerk & Rens, 2003:356). These values do not exist in and of themselves; they have a meaning that is firmly founded in God's plans for life (Van der Walt, 2010:45). A worldview touch base on an extensive structure of fundamental beliefs about things, and values are activated by this framework (Van der Walt, 2008:13-21). Keep in mind that Christians must shape and test their worldview against the Holy Bible. This Christian worldview can, I believe, be crucial in bringing about change, especially in society and the family. The Holy Bible often refers to such change as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which engenders aspects (or fruits) such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; all biblical values (see Galatians 5:22, Phillipians 4:8).

Values ascertain actions and behaviours

Values ascertain the actions and behaviours of individuals and, also attitudes, and actions and attitudes form our thoughts and hearts (De Klerk & Rens, 2003:37). It forms who we are as persons, and how we live every day, along with how we see and serve others (Green, 2004:108). People are sensitive to and shaped by events, their environment, society and constantly construct values on the basis of these influences (Rhodes & Roux, 2004:25).



Values (or virtues) can also be described as *convictions* that people embrace and prioritise to shape their lives (Green, 2004:108 & Rhodes & Roux, 2004:25).

Values direct lives

Freeks (2011:75) alludes to the fact that values, for example character strengths and faith, are directives, especially when a person need to make a choice. A particular category of values will shape every choice that a person has to make. An example of this would be a student who has to choose to either obey the directives of a lecturer in a lecture room or not. This situation emphasises particular values, like values related to authority and moral values. Both the father and mother should include direction, strategy, and authority in instilling values to influence their children positively in life.

Values ensure significance and function

According to De Klerk (2004:3); Carl and De Klerk (2001:22) and Kok (1999:2), values offer significance to life and help us solve and face life issues. These issues often come from circumstances relating to people or from relationships with others. Conflict is sometimes inevitable, and decisions have to be made to solve challenges. Thus, values play an important role in decision making in the context of the family where the father and mother should play a leading role and serve as examples. Values are not only meaningful in the sense described above, values, also play a major part in reaching goals and in how we experience things on both a verbal and non-verbal level. They inform our perspectives and even contribute to our concept of what it means to be human. Human values generally shape a *value system* that presents as a direction for good conduct. It offers benchmarks contra the one that can evaluate events, objects, people, and other facets of reality. Thus, values shape an inward framework on the grounds of which people make choices.

Faith-based values

Instilling faith-based values in the domestic context

What is faith-based values (also called Christian or religious values)? Van der Walt (1999:330) alleged firstly that faith-based values are core values, and they form a huge part of man because they replicate God's image. Secondly, such values are in relationship with God. Faith-based values are also described as a *feeling* of being influenced by or of being in communication with something sacred or holy (Lepholletse, 2008:27). Furthermore, faith-based values constitute to a way of living and apply to all walks of life (Van der Walt, 2010:215-219; Freeks & Lotter, 2009:530). They ensure stability, love, and order (Van der Walt, 2010:215-219) and provide the components for the intrinsic conservation of a healthy society. Thus, it is the art of life that keeps the environment friendly, free, and safe, allowing earth's inhabitants to work and live together in peace and harmony (Freeks, 2007:vi). Faith-based values have an evident impact on the person's worldview and life view, which integrates the person's view of faith (or religion) (Hattingh, 1991:148; Bagarette, 1995:46). Faith-based values are also connected with the individual and his/her attitude towards life and view of life (Van der Walt, 2010:45; Van der Walt, 2008:2; Abdool, 2005:10; Bagarette, 1995:47).

Additionally, faith-based values play an essential part in intergroup and interpersonal relationships (Beckmann & Nieuwenhuis, 2004:58). It is key to instruct children in these faith-based values (Vorster, 2008:475-475), and it is significant for people's personal lives such as family, marriage, education, professional life and business (Van der Walt, 2008:2).

Faith-based values can be applied in the context of the family and society. Examples of such values are adoration, trust, devotion, certainty, obedience, respect, surrender, justice, duty, peace, patience, discipline, kindness, generosity, gentleness, diligence, faith, worship,



faithfulness, integrity, honesty, forgiveness, purity, prayer, obedience, caring, non-violence, salvation, respect, sanctification, and many more (Van der Walt, 2010; Van der Walt, 2008; Vorster, 2008; Vorster, 2007; Freeks, 2007; Abdool, 2005; Rens, 2005; Hattingh, 1991; Bagarette, 1995).

Fathers and mothers as key role players when instilling faith-based values

A father and mother collaborate and cooperate for the sake of their children to help realise God's greater plan for the family and for society (Freek, 2021:137; Brandewie, 2020:71). Promoting values in the home domain is extremely important for growth and success of children (Haines et al., 2007:349). Fathers and mothers should know that they are the ideal people to instil faith-based values in their children. Both of them can play an appreciably larger role in instilling faith-based values and can act as moral mentors to shape the poor values of their children (Brandewie, 2020:71). They should strive and work towards ensuring that good values become part of their children's behavioural pattern. It is just natural that any parent (father, mother or both) will desire to see a change in behaviour and attitude concerning the lives of their children (Huffman et al., 2017:192). The more children grow up in a family with strong faith-based values, the less their involvement will be in violent or dangerous behaviours, for example bullying at school. Bullying is an immense challenge for educators to manage in and outside the classroom (Jones & Augustine, 2015:73). The father and mother are responsible and accountable to see that faith-based values that relate especially to their children's faith, trust, forgiveness, peace, devotion, surrender, and many more are inculcated in the domestic domain (Freek, 2021:143).

The adoption of these values can make a huge contribution to their children's spiritual lives. The same applies to moral values such as integrity, honesty, forgiveness, and choices. Moreover, fathers and mothers are obligated to establish faith-based values because they have a special chance to make an extrinsic contribution in their children's lives (Freek, 2011:2-7). These faith-based values are in reality the excessive preferences in life and cannot and should not be ignored. Fathers and mothers can have a major positive effect on their family or a major negative effect. Therefore, it is vital for the father and mother to see that their children live honest lives, have integrity in all their dealings, and have forgiving and loving hearts.

Deductions

Given the above discussion, the following deductions follow:

- Faith-based values are vital in the family context and for the progress of children at home, school, and in society.
- Faith-based values can have a positive impact on children, especially in terms of their achievements at school level.
- The roles and responsibility of parents with regard to faith-based values are of utmost importance in terms of the morality crisis children are currently facing in the South African context.
- It is not only families who need faith-based values, but also the broader society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made from this paper:



- Faith-based values should be instilled in all families in the South African context in an effort to curb the morality crisis among young children.
- Moral values within the greater framework of faith-based values are more important for families than the constitutional values promoted by the government.
- The church should take the responsibility of training sessions such as workshops, family activities or roadshows with the aim to train, equip and empower families in terms of faith-based values and their significance.

Conclusion

Faith-based values are indispensable in the lives of families. Such values can inculcate a positive attitude in both parents and children. When there is faith in a family this can and does change into stress management skills that support human resiliency and raise life satisfaction levels. Faith-based values help family members face the stressors existing in daily life. God should be a presence in the spiritual lives of families. If values, and especially faith-based values, make life worthwhile, then it is worth striving for. Therefore, the final conclusion is that fathers and mothers are ideally key role players when it comes to instilling faith-based values as the representatives (ambassadors) of God on earth. It is also important that a religious way of life is continually passed down between generations and that solid faith-based values keep having a significant positive impact on individuals and groups in families and thus in society.

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