

**CULTURAL VALUES AND THE FAMILY
BEYOND YEAR 2000**

PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND REALITY

by

Dr. Jacob Kofi Hevi

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my Professor
Professor Leander Petzoldt

Abstract

Culture is dynamic. But in cultural groups certain elements of culture such as values relating to the family are held as indispensable to the survival of the society. It is therefore obvious that religious, political and other interest groups or organisations and institutions regard any change in attitude toward the cultural values of the family as crisis threatening the survival of the society. So these groups plan and effect interventions to arrest the perceived crisis or even restore what they regard as past traditional values, while others regard the changes as needed development of modernity.

This study is to investigate the perceived crisis of cultural values relating to the family in the Austrian society in general, and the Tyrolese community of Götzens in particular, to determine whether the values are actually undergoing changes in the sense of taking forms radically different from what held in the past or simply adjusting to the contemporary reality of socio - cultural development towards cultural pluralism or multicultural society accelerated by such scientific developments as multimedia highway and politico - economic factors..

The thesis of this study is that the process of development of cultural values relating to the family in the target society is simply the dynamic nature of culture through fission and fusion which can be termed spiral involution (inter - participative development), namely, not in clear - cut stages, but interparticipating stages, each stage (past or present) participating in the other as impulse for further development.

Therefore the respective proposition of this study is dialogical - value - system concordance. Since the past participates in the present and vice versa, rather than trying to restore past forms by all means there is need for conscious

intervention in the cultural process through dialogue among all groups concerned to promote the optimally acceptable socio - cultural order in the particular historical point of time.

Preface

Dialogue implies two persons or group of persons exchanging their viewpoints about a matter in order to arrive at a conclusion acceptable to both parties to the dialogue. This presumes the parties have appropriate knowledge of the matter being discussed. In order to understand the other's point of view one needs be clear about one's own point of view and that of the other. This demands that each side should have enough knowledge of the other's view as basis for the start of the dialogue.

It is for this reason that I deem it important for Africans to know about the culture of Europeans as basis for dialogue about their relationship as well as to have good basis for reciprocal respect and understanding. This is important because often one may not be aware of certain things about oneself until another person points them out.

This study is therefore part of this cultural dialogue between European culture and African intellectual analysis and interpretation. In spite of foreseen difficulties my experience of cross-cultural studies has been stimulating and has offered me a wealth of research experience. It is my hope that more such studies will be made about several aspects of cultural phenomena as gradual phasing out of prejudices and promoting understanding among different cultural groups. In other words this study of European culture by an African will make Europeans aware of certain elements of their culture which they observe in other cultural groups. For instance the fact that many still hold on to traditional values of family cohesion, the bond between generations of family members, dead and living, love for children, rearing of children at home and other elements which persist through generations and stages of European socio - cultural development, are worth ethnological investigation as common cultural heritage of humankind.

This awareness of common cultural heritage will hopefully stimulate genuine striving towards mutual respect for and enrichment of respective cultural life of peoples.

To be faithful to this aim, right from the start I decided to make this investigation multiculturally as representative as possible. On account of limited time and resources at my disposal as well as limiting circumstances I realised I had to be selective as far as the available sources are concerned. However I took up the challenge to base this investigation on diverse documentary and other written evidence of the development of cultural values in relation to the family among various peoples of the world from the beginnings up to the present moment.

Then as sort of a localised empirical crosscheck of the conclusions drawn from the general history I decided to undertake an empirical investigation in the Austrian society in general, and in the Tyrolese community of Götzens in particular.

This study is therefore a modest contribution to the debate on the universality of cardinal cultural values as basis of the universality of human rights founded on the dignity of the human person, a stake in the struggle for justice and peace.

This book is recommended to all interested in Values and the Family anywhere in the world: Politicians, Pastors, Scientists, Teachers, national and international organisations as well as actual family members and concerned individuals.

Dr. Jacob Kofi Hevi

Innsbruck, 15th. August 2002

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