

Good morning. Warmest greetings to you all, from the United States. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of this conference, and I commend the organizers for putting it together.

Is there any doubt that as the family goes in Africa, so goes the continent as a whole? In other words, the family is without question the most important foundation of any society, and if we do not build up and preserve and strengthen the family, then our civilization is doomed. Put another way, this conference, and conferences like it, are THE hope of Africa. You are all to be congratulated and thanked for being here.

I am honored to be able to present the talk on the topic of sexuality. This topic can make some uncomfortable, but it is immensely important, as living our sexuality properly underlies all other aspects of the family and of society at large. I feel like I have been handed a very precious jewel, and I hope to be worthy of the topic...

I will share my thoughts with you in 6 parts:

- 1) Sex is a gift that is embedded in the very foundation of creation by the creator
- 2) Sex is a gift at the foundation of all human societies throughout history.
- 3) Sex is a gift that is utterly unique because it is the means chosen by God to create eternal souls.
- 4) At its most exalted, and least understood, aspect, sex is a gift that is meant to mirror the very essence of God.
- 5) Looking more closely at the nature and purpose of sexuality, we see that it is a gift with three inseparable parts.
- 6) Sex is a gift that will either bless or destroy our individual lives and society as a whole

Let's move on to point number one: **Sex is a gift that is embedded in the very foundation of creation.** This may seem a strange place to begin for some of you, but I can only share that for me it has had great significance. I do not know if in the science classes in Africa they teach the creation of the universe (called the Big Bang Theory) in the same way as in the United States, but the general idea is this: Before creation, the entire universe was packed into a tiny point of matter, and this tiny point exploded into the known universe. As atoms slowed down in their path of explosion, gravity became dominant and giant collections of atoms, or planets, began to form. On planet earth, a series of geological and weather conditions came about that allowed for the building blocks of life to appear in a kind of "primordial soup". Is that something like what you have been taught?

And the general idea in the Theory of Evolution is that there is no guiding force behind all this, other than natural forces driven by random chance. There is no one in charge, no direction, and therefore no meaning to it.

Well, let's grant the scientists all these ideas up to this point. Imagine with me that we are back on the primitive earth, and, as they tell us, there was a kind of primordial soup of lifeless elements – and flashes of lighting somehow zapped that stew into the building blocks of life, amino acids to be exact. According to the theory of Evolution, over millions of years these basic elements of life learned to duplicate themselves, and evolved into single cell organisms, then plants, insect, fish, and so on. My question is: When, and how, and why would one pile of atoms, amino acids or otherwise, "say" to the other, "Let's have sex"! It is utterly preposterous.

Of course early life forms did not differentiate into male and female and early reproduction was quite primitive. But the point remains -- Why would continuing any life form be seen as a good? How could those randomly created life forms even communicate with each other, or remember the pattern of their randomly created selves, or know how to reproduce them?

It leads us to confront a very interesting fact: We assume life is important, but why? In a universe of randomly colliding atoms, there is no such thing as meaning, no good, no bad, no just, no unjust, no life, no death. In other words, no matter what constellation of atoms could be thrown together, there is no consciousness, no communication, and no drive to continue. In a meaningless universe, there simply is no reason whatsoever to continue any species.

Unless. Unless. Procreation only has an explanation if we posit that there IS indeed an author of life, that there is a creator, and that this creator created life with a purpose, and that is why there is a universal drive to procreate. **So the procreative instinct is the physical expression of the call to life by the creator of the universe.** Many today would say the human sex drive is just a natural urge that needs to be satisfied. No, sex is not truly natural at all. In fact, sex makes no natural sense at all. Thus our first major conclusion: **Sex is not natural, it is supernatural.**

Alright. Let's move to consideration number two: **Sex is a gift at the foundation of all societies throughout history.**

Consider any human society on the planet now or in the past, and you will see similarities of structure. What is any large constellation of nations, such as Africa, based upon? Individual countries, of course. And what is each nation based on? Smaller regions, which in turn are based on individual towns and cities. And these cities or towns are based on neighborhoods. And the neighborhoods are grounded in whatfamilies. You may have extended families, but ultimately it comes down to the individual family unit. And at the basis of an individual family of mom, dad, and kids is what? The marriage of the man and woman. And what is fundamental to marriage? The sexual union of the spouses. It is what makes the relationship truly unique, and it is the sole means to engender children and build up any family -- it is, then, the definitive building block of all civilization.

So we did not invent sex, God did, as was shown in point one. And sex is not just a private, personal matter, as we may think of it in the short term. It is the structural foundation of marriage, the family, and society. Striking at this foundation is like striking at the deepest root of a tree.

Let us use this tree analogy to deepen and conclude this consideration....

Imagine a giant tree, a tree representing all of human existence. The branches represent the millions of ways humans express themselves in all of society. All the governments, cultural activities, artistic expression, throughout all of time, etc. And further down at the trunk would be the family units that always form the backbone of any social activity. Now let's skip to the unseen roots, under the ground. Imagine these roots as the unseen energy and life and purpose of the creator. Those divine roots have all the nourishment to feed the branches of all humanity -- They provide the sap of existence! And what is the sole link that brings the divine sap into the realm of created humanity? Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.

Think about that! The creator of the universe CHOSE to be DEPENDENT on sexual intercourse to bring new souls into existence. God chose to make sexual intercourse the only door through which his plans could enter the world. Without it, all the branches of the huge tree of humanity would wither away. We are then, in a real sense, co-creators. Confronting this astonishing fact should help us see why living out our sexuality properly is so important to the health of humanity.

What happens if you try to build even a small, simple structure on a weak foundation? It will collapse. What then if all of humanity, in its vast complexity, depends upon this foundation of human sexuality, and it is misused and corrupted?

Point number three: **Human Sexuality is a gift that is utterly unique because it is the means chosen by God to create eternal souls.**

This point makes it clear why human sexuality is so radically different from animal procreation.

After all, animals share this awesome procreative power, so we might think it really isn't such a big deal. Animals do share the power to generate life, but two essential distinctions: First, they do it by instinct only, and second, they do not generate human souls, which are eternal. So it is a very, very big difference – about as big as the difference between an animal's life span and.....eternity – that's pretty big.

This apparent "sameness" with the animals is an important point, because in today's society we do have a very animalistic view of sexuality. To say that because our physical actions may be similar to the physical actions of animals misses the point. The tongues of humans and tongues of many animals are basically similar in appearance and structure, but would it be correct to conclude that human communication is basically the same as animal communication? In other words, if we point to the similarity of external appearances and to some extent function, have we proven that the use of our tongues is just a lower animal instinct, as we might say about the sexual drive? No.

Humans use their tongues to sing, to pray, to express poetry, to discuss love, philosophy, and theology, and so on. So in truth, there is an almost infinite gap between God's intentions for an animal tongue and the human tongue. So too, there is an infinite gap between God's intentions for animal genitalia and human genitalia. Just as the physical human tongue is meant to add a whole new realm of expression and meaning to creation, so the physical human sexual act is meant to add a whole new realm of expression and meaning to creation.

Back to the main pointThe key to understanding the power of human sexuality is to see that it, and it alone, has the power to transform potential human life into eternal human life. We are not talking about just making more bodies to continue the species. We are talking about creating souls that never cease to exist. The only means for this is sexual intercourse. No wonder sex is so powerful, even though so many of us don't really understand the underlying reasons!

Now we reach the fourth point, which makes it even clearer why we are so attracted to sex, yet without understanding its deepest significance: **Sex is a gift that is meant to mirror the very essence of God.**

A seemingly mysterious principle of Christian teaching, namely that God is a Trinity, contains within it a truth that clarifies virtually every aspect of human life. This seed of Truth, properly contemplated and

applied, can sprout and yield abundant fruit in all spheres of life, including a better understanding of our sexual nature.

How?

The revolutionary concept is that God, who by definition exists independent of Creation, is a **community of persons** (referred to as the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This relational reality is what makes sense of the statement “God is Love.” Real love exists between persons. If God were not already a community of persons, then without creation He would either 1) only love himself (which destroys the definition of love), or 2) he would be dependent on creation to generate love (which destroys the definition of God because he would be a dependent being). A third alternative is to postulate that God is not love, but then we are saying the highest human good both by experience and by the testimony of all world religions, is not found in the Creator of all that is. Another impossibility!

Why is this important?

Because by understanding our origins, we better understand who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. We are created by a personal, loving, relational God, not an abstract force. When we hear that humans are “made in God’s image,” we might think, or have been taught, this means we have an eternal soul and self-awareness - attributes also shared by our Creator. But our similarity to God is actually NOT primarily based on these static attributes. God is not a static attribute! God is relational in his very essence. God, in fact, is a dynamic fireball of love, an ongoing personal relationship of giving within the three divine persons. The human person is patterned after this “gift of self” dynamic.

If you look closely at your own experience, you will see that your greatest happiness comes when you are serving someone beyond yourself. No amount of personal comfort, wealth, success, or fame can satisfy the human person. We are made to serve others. We are relational beings, just as God is.

What does this mean for our sexual destiny?

It clarifies what will bring us the greatest fulfillment in sexual experience, and why. Sexual intercourse is meant to be a re-enactment, a reflection, of the self-giving love found within the Holy Trinity. We are called to give ourselves to our spouse in total love, and to have it mirrored back to us – a divine dance of mutual self-giving. One could go so far as to argue that, apart perhaps from the mystical union in prayer, that authentic sexual intimacy is the nearest a human can come to the Divine.

This “gift of self” dynamic is the meaning of all human existence, this is why we were created, and God chose to stamp it in the very sexual differentiation and attraction between the sexes. There are of course many ways to love, and to show love, and many different kinds of love. What makes sexual love special is it is such a total and intimate giving of our whole selves, and it is the divine funnel through which eternal souls enter the created world. This makes sense, as authentic love is always fruitful. Just as the trinity is explained as the love between the Father and the Son giving rise to the Holy Spirit, so in authentic marital love we have the love between husband and wife giving rise to children.

Happiness is found in loving and being loved, we would all agree. And our search for happiness often centers around relationships, marriage, and sex. This is not a mistake – we are close to the truth! We can all see how sex has been misunderstood and misused, but it is still a profound sign of the meaning of life, which is love, and that love is divine.

In fact, sex is meant to point us to heaven, because it is an act of intense union with a person, but a temporary union that can only find final fulfillment in union with God. Obsession with sex is actually a frenzied longing for heaven – it is the atomic energy that was intended to shoot us towards heaven that has been turned earthward, embracing only the animal side of our nature, and thus leading instead to our destruction.

Let me end with a question: If God, who is the source of all love, is not part of our “love-making”, then are we making love at all?

Moving on to the fifth point: **Sex is a gift with 3 inseparable parts.**

Put simply, sex is a “package deal” from God. It is a gift given with intrinsic parts that are interconnected and made that way for our happiness, both in this life and the next. Again, God is interested in our happiness, including our sexual happiness. The three fundamental and interconnected aspects created to generate this fulfillment and lasting happiness are:

- 1) Sex is physically pleasurable
- 2) Sex is intended to express and nurture permanent, committed love between husband and wife. This committed love is necessary for strong families, as children obviously need and thrive on the permanent, committed love of a mother and father.
- 3) An essential component of sexual union is the power to create new lives

Condensing these three ideas into three words: pleasure, love, and fertility. Each one is essential, like a stool with three legs. Take away any one of the legs and it is not just less of a stool, it completely loses its function.

It can be helpful to look at their opposites: the opposite of pleasure is pain, the opposite of love is hatred, and the opposite of fertility is sterility. Note that we all agree that using sex for pain (as in the case of rape) or as a weapon of hatred and disunity (such as in infidelity, or using sex as a weapon of manipulation) would be an evil distortion, but currently we seem quite a bit more tolerant about making “liberated” sex sterile. In fact, it has become perhaps the most valued cornerstone of modern sexuality. When children are conceived, it is now often seen as a problem, a mistake, rather than a blessing and a reward.

When we pull the life-giving aspect away from this “package deal” and insist sex need not have such consequences, then the underlying need for committed, life-long love of a mother and father is gone. The result? A massive increase in sex before marriage, called fornication, and infidelity within marriage, called adultery, as well as pure suit of pleasure alone through masturbation, same-sex relationships, or pornography. All of this drastically undermines the meaning of marriage, so divorce and co-habitation increase, as does abortion and homosexuality.

The precious foundation we talked about earlier has been ruptured, so the whole edifice of human society begins to crumble.

All of these catastrophically harmful side effects are apparently justified in the pursuit of gaining the physical pleasure of sex. What is interesting is that for all the harm society endures in trying to “liberate” sexuality, even the physical pleasure has diminished and often proves elusive. It is a pact made with the Devil, and in the bargain, the very thing we were willing to sell our souls for has turned into dust.

Our culture is now in a desperate search for meaningful sex and for happiness between men and women. At a fundamental level, this is what I believe is happening: Two people who are committed to each other for life, who give of themselves to each other, and who are open to the gift of children, are generating real love in their love making. Love is expansive, life-giving, and ever young, so the sexual relationship is forever full of life and youthful excitement. In short, it never gets old, because it honors and includes God, who is eternal and the source of joy. In fact, as the couple grows older, their sexual satisfaction increases and deepens because it is based on real love.

On the other hand, if you mangle and pervert the gift by turning it into a vehicle for selfish gratification, then sex is only rated by the level of carnal pleasure. Pure physical pleasure grows stale quickly when it is disconnected from the source of love, from God. And when things become repetitive and meaningless, the natural desire is to try harder -- So we try books and videos on sexual pleasure, or new sexy clothes, new sex toys, new positions -- even new partners -- all in a futile effort to make physical pleasure more meaningful. It is a futile and pathetic search -- Physical pleasure is a wonderful aspect of the sexual gift, but if isolated, it putrefies.

Re-phrasing it once more: Focusing only on physical pleasure inevitably spirals our behavior downward into animal appetite. Focusing on committed love and the power of childbearing, on the other hand, inevitably raises our behavior upwards towards a life of unselfish service, which is our true destiny.

An analogy might prove helpful and sum up these considerations...

Suppose we are given a beautiful gift by our father – say it is a large diamond worth 50 million dollars (about 4 Billion Kenyan Shillings - in other words enough money for a lifetime). And the gift arrives wrapped in gorgeous, brightly colored wrapping paper, with many silk ribbons and a felt bow. Now suppose we are so attracted to the wrapping paper and ribbons that we forget about opening the box. No, we would rather feel the wrapping paper, or frame it and put in on display, and put the bow in our hair, and use the ribbons as decoration in our house, and so on. Further, we present this wrapping paper and bow to our friends as if we actually made it, as if it is our invention. We never even acknowledge our father who gave it to us, and we never open the box to find the diamond, and never really take the time to ask the purpose of the gift in the first place.

How would that father feel? How does our father God feel? Sad. Sad at our foolishness and blindness, sad at the tragic waste of that gift of a lifetime. sad that the gift did not inspire gratitude and joy in our hearts, lifting our eyes to the final gift that is truly forever - namely heaven. And further, we find that after the first few days or weeks of excitement over the wrapping paper, that we are running out of ways to use it for decoration or display. It's just the same old, same old. We start eyeing *other* people's wrapping paper.....”If I could just add that bow to my collection, or those ribbons, or those colors”....

Perhaps someone comes by and tells you that the wrapping paper was part of a much more lavish and valuable gift, a gift specially made by your father, and that it should have all been opened at the same time, and, rather obviously, a thank you card sent to your father. The typical reaction? “Why, who is this person (religious nut, no doubt, imposing his moral views on others), how dare he intrude on my own lifestyle – the wrapping paper is mine, no one else’s, it’s my private affair, and I can do with it what I want! Hmpf!”

Am I making this point clear? The gift of sexuality is meant to bless our entire married lives, but when we try to grab at just a part of it, we will be bitterly disappointed, and we undermine the stability and health of families and society.

One might complain to the Creator – why did You make the pleasure of sex so irresistible to so many? Of course it is our disordered passions that make it irresistible, but it is worth focusing for a time on the pleasure aspect, as that is such an obsession in modern times.

Put it this way: When a country has a special event to celebrate, say the inauguration of a king or election of a new president, they show its importance in many ways – from bands playing music, to speeches, fancy dinners, fireworks, parades, and so forth. It is the natural and just outward expression of an important event. God gave the physical pleasure to sex as a natural and just expression of a divinely ordained and cosmically important love dance between man and woman. In fact, orgasm is just the natural and just outward expression of an event with eternal consequences – the transfer or reception of human life, the highest form of life in the known universe, and which we saw includes eternal life. That deserves some pretty intense fireworks!

Nowadays we treat orgasm like some kind of plaything, with ever new ways of “having” one. We are lost. The pleasure of sex is not an accident -- it is intentional and proportionate. But not as the frosting on the cake of carnal delights for selfish indulgence. Orgasm is meant to be part of a sacred and ecstatic union between man and woman. This applies equally to the man, who gives of his seed, as to the woman, in her reception of that seed. Put another way, the “out of this world” pleasure of orgasm is a real sign of the true “out of this world” meaning of sex – the generation of eternal souls.

An extremely important clarification must be made here. From a skeptic’s point of view it might go like this: You say the child bearing aspect of sex is essential, but what about those who are too old to have children, or who are naturally sterile, or what about the days of the month when a woman is not fertile. Is sex at all those times wrong?

In fact, the response to this concern leads to another insight into God’s nature. Namely, He is lavishly generous with his gifts. Consider almost any aspect of the fertility of nature. I grow strawberries at home, and every year I am astounded at how many fruits come from one small strawberry patch. From a purely practical level, the strawberry is reproducing so that a seed will fall to the ground and grow into another strawberry plant. All you need is one seed for one plant, but one strawberry bush could produce 10,000 seeds in a season.

With humans it is the same. In just one act of intercourse there are roughly 20 million single sperm seeds of potential life, each one unique. Why? Well, one reason is to show just how spectacularly special you and I are. In a lifetime of marriage there are perhaps 100 billion combinations of sperm and egg that are possible, and out of those 100 billion potential persons, YOU were chosen, never before seen and never to be repeated. Congratulations.

I am making this point to parallel my main point. That God does not restrict the gift of sex to just acts that will lead to children, any more than he restricts the production of seeds to just those that will grow into new plants. After all, he invented sex, and he chose to have the woman be infertile most of the month, and he chose to create some infertile couples, and he chose to have fertility end long before the end of sexual relations between husband and wife. Sex really is a gift that we are meant to enjoy throughout our lives. And its purpose is not just to provide children, but to bind husband and wife closer together, in part through the profound meaning of their union, but also in the profound pleasure they are blessed to share together. So just using sex for children, say treating humans like cattle breeders, would be a terrible distortion also, at least as bad as using sex just for pleasure. But again, sex is a package gift, and we cannot intentionally destroy any one of its essential characteristics. We are called to work with the gift as it was given.

So to be clear. Respecting God's design for sexuality does NOT necessarily require having many, many children. No one can say how many children any family should have – that is a private decision between the parents. For example, Natural Family Planning is a method that allows couples to space out their children as they deem best, and it preserves the dignity of sexuality and avoids sex degenerating into selfish indulgence. It requires abstaining from sexual intercourse during fertile times, when needed, but also provides immense blessings to the couple, such as respect for one another, increased romance, awe and even reverence for the fertility cycle of the female, self-control, increased communication, and most important, an overall respect for the great gift of sexuality as God created it.

Moving on to the final point:

Sex is a gift that can bless or destroy our individual lives and society as a whole

Just consider the mess created by modern sexual behavior....

We now we must come to the most beautiful and sacred and powerful interaction possible between a man and a woman armed with plugs and drugs to shut down our fertility, many of which have serious even life-threatening side effects. And as there are inevitably failure rates, babies that are conceived by surprise must either be killed through abortion or often brought up by relatives, or in an orphanage, or a single parent home. To stop here for a moment: What pursuit of pleasure by adults could possibly justify even the potential consequence of forcing a child to grow up outside of a loving relationship with a committed mother and father?

But to continue: We must hope we are not getting involved with someone who may carry one or all of the 20 or so sexually transmitted diseases that are now flourishing around the globe, the crown jewel of which is HIV-AIDS. And we can hope we will not end up a victim of date rape, or hope we are not just one more conquest for someone who has slept with 40 or 50 others and who is utterly incapable of commitment or emotional sharing, and hopefully we are not finding ourselves with someone who is hooked on pornography and expecting us to perform like an animal on a stage. And so on. Are we really sexually liberated? Is this sexual freedom?

And saddest of all, nearly all of us still hold the tender dream in our hearts of meeting someone so special that we will be able to loyally love and cherish them for the rest of our lives.

I know that in Africa you do not yet have unrestricted abortion or a general acceptance of homosexuality or sky-high divorce rates. But I am afraid that these things will come to your land, and soon, and the reason is simple. When men and women embrace the idea that sex can and should be divorced from having children, then the logical and inevitable consequence of this mentality is a widespread acceptance of abortion, homosexuality, divorce, and pornography. It is only a matter of time. When we say that sex is just for fun, then all these consequences are actually logical. For example, two homosexuals can say they are committed to each other in a loving, respectful relationship – if sterile sex is socially sanctioned, practiced widely by even married couples, what can we answer? The greatness of the pleasure of sexual experience was meant to be tied to, and balanced by, the greatness of the responsibility of having children, of raising new life. If you split the pleasure away, it simply cannot be controlled; it is like trying to keep a raging lion behind a thin straw fence. Splitting the gift of sexuality is like splitting the atom, and the chaos released into society spreads like a cancer.

Another cancerous idea is the terribly destructive myth that one needs to have sexual experience before marriage. Nothing could be further from the truth, as sex before marriage only destroys the proper understanding of the gift of sexuality and undermines the ability to appreciate and to live the lifelong commitment of marriage. We fail to see that the price we will pay for a couple of years of “experimentation” is likely to be, at worst, adultery, divorce, and serial relationships, sexual disease and sexual dysfunction, and at best decade after decade after decade of haunting memories, regrets, and burning temptations.

It need not be that way! Sex was created, and is still capable of delivering, a whole lifetime of joy and happiness.

I can say this from lived experience. I am referring to my lovely wife, to whom I have been blessed to be married for 21 years. My wife came to our marriage as a virgin. I can confidently say she has been blessed every one of those 21 years, or, as I calculated it, 7,665 days with the following:

- 1) Not so much as fleeting worry over sexually transmitted diseases (as I stated earlier, there are currently about 20 available on the market of liberated sexuality)
- 2) No psychological or emotional scars from sexual relationships of the past
- 3) No haunting memories of even the good relationships of the past. No indelible memories of other partners, no comparisons, no “what ifs.”
- 4) No worries of the terrible embarrassment or scandal of past partners returning into her life.
- 5) No temptations to want sex with other men (the idea is nearly unthinkable to her)
- 6) No shame or guilt over sexual behavior
- 7) Complete sexual serenity. No worries of ever getting tired of her spouse.
- 8) No fear of being left alone or divorced.
- 9) No fear of pregnancy. Pregnancy is always seen as a blessing (we have been blessed nine times!)
- 10) Not one act of sexual intercourse that has ever been poisoned by a sense of betrayal or bitterness or loneliness or manipulation. Instead sexual intimacy that is always grounded on complete trust, commitment, and is infused with joy.

For those of you who are not yet married and not yet sexually experienced, ask yourself: What possible fleeting sexual experience before marriage would be worth it if you were trading it away for the blessings listed above for the 40, 50 or even 60 years of your married life?

I will conclude with a message of hope, because there *is* great hope in Africa. In fact, in some ways you are the greatest hope for the West, because, sad to admit, but the modernized, industrialized Western countries are exporting a culture of death around the world.

Kenyans love children. Africans love children. Africans love life, and families. In fact, despite the ravages of AIDS, the population growth in almost all African countries is quite healthy, unlike virtually all Westernized and communist countries, which are literally headed for extinction, the United States being one exception.

My friends, nurture and develop this love for children and families. Do not start putting price tags on each of your children and calculate that fewer children means more money, more opportunity, or more advantages for you. Be proud of large families. Children are our greatest treasure, and always will be.

Africans have a better sense of modesty in dress and decency in public behavior. Be proud of your beautiful clothes and feminine dresses that dignify a woman rather than demean her. I have spoken about the godliness of sex and the human body, but sexual enticement is not something for the strangers of the marketplace. In many westernized countries the women seem to compete for how sexually revealing they can make their clothing. No, I ask each of you to do what you can to maintain your African standards of modesty.

However, let us not practice a “false” modesty and avoid speaking to our own children about sexuality. It is vitally important that you the parents speak with your children opening, plainly, and completely about the beautiful gift of sex that God created. If you don’t tell them, rest assured someone else, who is much less qualified, will.

Africans are a social people. Beware of television that can erode family communication and open family members to disturbing ideas and indecent behavior. Television is particularly damaging because it is a one way flow of information and influence, it pours into your homes day and night with no input from you. And further, it carries an aura of acceptability, of power, and social status. It is damaging not only in its content, but in the fact that it renders humans passive and brings families to dumb silence. Do what you can to stop the spread of incredibly obscene shows like “Sex in the City.” And let me share that one of the best decisions of my adult life, and certainly as a father, was to decide to have no television in our home at all. No child has ever complained about this, and every one has flourished because of it. Give it a try!

Africans are also a naturally spiritual people, and you remain open and enthusiastic about religious worship. This again is a precious trait, as the United States is swamped in materialism, and European countries are rotting away from cynicism and religious indifference. African worship is full of dance and song. Sing so loud you wake us up! Sing with youthful hearts, full of gratitude for the blessings of the Creator. Love your own religious traditions; cherish your deeply ingrained sense of the divine. Pray for the more industrialized nations, who seem caught in a sad suicidal spiral because we have lost our sense of the sacred.

So while in areas of socio-economic development Africa may lag behind many parts of the world, in the areas that really matter to the development of the human person, and to our eternal salvation, namely the fundamentals of Faith and Family, you can be a leader of nations, a light to the world.

Thank you.