

Article

Sex, Abortion, Domestic Violence and Other Unmentionables: Orthodox Christian Youth in Kenya and Windows into Their Attitudes about Sex

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Abstract: This article is based on the results of a survey of Orthodox Youth in Kenya and their attitudes about sex, abortion and domestic violence. This survey was taken of the participants of an all-Kenya Orthodox youth conference held in western Kenya in August of 2016. The results give insight into the participants' sources for first learning about sexual matters, as well as the sources that are preferred today. The youths' perception of the Orthodox Church's handling of sexual matters and sexual education is also revealed. Difficult moral issues facing Orthodox Kenyan youth are raised, such as premarital sex, domestic violence, the impact of HIV-AIDS on behavior, and responses to unintended pregnancy, with results providing insight as to how Orthodox youth are navigating the challenges facing them as they grow up into modern life both as Kenyans and as Orthodox Christians. After relating the story told by each set of survey results, conclusions are drawn from each of the issues addressed, with suggestions made as to a way forward, or further questions to pursue.

Keywords: Orthodox Church of Kenya; youth; sex; sources of information about sex; internet; pre-marital sex; domestic violence; HIV-AIDS; unintended pregnancy; abortion

1. Introduction

While the Orthodox Church in Kenya has existed since the 1930s, its real expansion began after the British colonial authorities ended the 10-year-long Emergency in 1962, during which the Orthodox Church had been banned and shuttered by the authorities [1]. With Kenyan independence in 1963, the Orthodox were finally able to reopen Churches, ordain clergy, buy property and build new buildings and schools. In the more than 50 years since this new start for Orthodoxy in Kenya, the Church has expanded across the country and includes more than 300 parishes, with a trained and educated clergy, along with numerous schools, clinics and development projects [2]. With such a growing number of parishes, it should not be surprising that there is a thriving youth movement throughout the Church. These young people meet on a regular basis at the parish level and also hold regional and national meetings on an annual basis. It should be noted that the word 'youth' is used in Kenya (and in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa) differently than the way it is often used in many Western countries. In the United States, for example, 'youth' is most often used to refer to those in high school or perhaps even middle school. In Kenya, 'youth' is an inclusive term that encompasses young people from puberty until even 30 years of age. One is no longer considered a 'youth' when one gets married. One of the unexpected reasons behind this extension in the age of Kenyan youth are the challenges that arise for many young men in raising sufficient funds to cover the required amount for the bride price or dowry. This is one of the major reasons why Kenyan men may wait until their late twenties or early thirties before getting married.

Delayed marriage means that youth groups in Kenya, Orthodox and otherwise, may be made up of both young teenagers and young unmarried adults. This age range presents a particular challenge to youth leaders, both in the community and in churches, who are attempting to address issues that concern all of their members. However, because this way of viewing 'youth' is a cultural given, the young people themselves do not feel out of place when participating in such groups, even though they themselves may be much older or much younger than many of the other members.

Over the period 17–21 August, 2016, a conference was held for Orthodox Youth in Serem, Nandi County, in the Diocese of Kisumu and Western Kenya. More than 500 youth attended, representing Orthodox Churches from across Kenya. The author participated in this conference as a speaker. Such a large number of Orthodox Kenyan youth gathered together presented the author with a further opportunity, to gather information on a subject that is not much discussed in Kenyan Orthodox circles, much less explored. The author decided to devise a survey that would access the attitudes of these young people with respect to a number of different issues having to do with sex and related controversial issues such as abortion and domestic violence. The survey was distributed, explained, completed, and collected during the Conference's morning session on Thursday, 18 August 2016 [3,4]¹.

It must be stated at the outset that the group of youth taking this survey was not a scientifically controlled set in the traditional mold of social science research. Survey takers were self-selected participants in a Kenyan Orthodox-sponsored conference. As such, the participants were all Orthodox Christians and were all participants in local Orthodox youth groups. They were active enough in their youth ministries and motivated enough to travel to a remote spot in western Kenya for four days of meetings, speakers and fellowship. Some were leaders, others local members. Most had grown up in Orthodox Christian homes. A very few were from other Christian backgrounds.² The conference, which occurs annually, is considered important enough to the Orthodox Church that both the Archbishop of Nairobi, His Eminence Makarios, and the Bishop of Kisumu and Western Kenya, His Grace Athanasios, were both in attendance (His Grace Bishop Neophytos of Nyeri and Central Kenya was unable to attend at the last minute).

The wide range of ages presented a particular challenge when tabulating the results of the survey. The decision was made to tabulate the results not just according to the total responses to all of the questions, but also to separate the responses both by gender and by age range, to see if the responses were the similar across the board or if there might be any interesting differences in response, either according to age or gender. The full survey completed by the Kenyan Orthodox youth is found in Supplementary Materials.

The results of the survey were tabulated according to the following scheme:

- All respondents of both genders and all ages.
- Males of all ages
- Males 14 years old and younger
- Males 15–17 years old
- Males 18–22 years old
- Males 23–30 years old
- Males 31 and older

¹ This survey was opportunistic in nature and did not involve the controlled sort of sampling seen in many other social science research surveys. As a result, this survey and article are not seeking to uncover information about Kenyan youth in general, or to make scientifically verifiable statements about the attitudes of Kenyan youth on matters of sex or domestic violence. Rather this survey provides insight into what the participants in a national Orthodox youth conference in Kenya believe about these issues. Even within the limits of what a survey like this can accomplish, it will be undoubtedly useful in the hands of Kenyan Orthodox Church leaders and will be of interest to those in the wider Christian mission community and others interested in the impact of Christian values in African faith communities. For a more accurate reflection of what Kenyan youth in general believe on these issues, a more controlled study will need to be undertaken.

² The information contained in this paragraph was obtained informally through conversations with the conference leaders.

- Females of all ages
- Females 11–14 years old
- Females 15–17 years old
- Females 18–22 years old
- Females 23–30 years old
- Females 31 and older

There were also a number of surveys that were handed in which indicated gender but failed to indicate age. These surveys have been included under the category of Male—no age indicated; and Female—no age indicated. Their responses were included in the ‘All respondents of both genders and all ages’ category and in the ‘Males of all ages’ and ‘Females of all ages’ categories.

A word should be said about my choice of age range for tabulating the results of the survey. For both males and females, the age ranges follow the usual ages for the different levels of school, i.e., middle school, high school and college or university. However, this is not as straightforward as it seems, as the Kenyan government has restructured the education system recently, and plans are circulating to do so again. Moreover, age at the time of matriculation into university studies can vary wildly, with some beginning their studies immediately after their high school exams, and others delaying studies until their twenties or even thirties [5].

There are inherent challenges with any survey seeking to understand sexual behavior [6]. This is even more so in the Kenyan context, where there is an even more profound cultural reticence to discuss such matters. Turner et al. state that “We know that adults typically underreport many sexual activities and that important gender-related differences are present in the error structure of the data [7].” These researchers are commenting on studies done primarily in the United States in the context of American cultural norms and issues. Similar studies in the African context are rare, and even if there are methodological studies undertaken in South Africa, for example, the cultural contexts in Kenya or Nigeria or Senegal are so different as to make it unwise to assume that the results from a study of one or even ten African cultures can be applied to the other several thousand without significant revision [8,9].³

This study has a different purpose than just a contribution to the general understanding of attitudes towards sexual behavior of young people in Kenya. The context of this study is within the Orthodox Church of Kenya, and the participants are religiously active Orthodox Church members. The social science community will, of course, have an interest in the results. In addition, the leaders of the Orthodox community in Kenya (as well as other religious groups) for reasons of its own catechesis, will be keenly concerned with what this survey reveals about its youth.

2. Goals of the Survey

The survey consists of ten questions (including an initial question concerning the gender of the respondent), with both males and females answering eight questions, and then males only answering a gender-specific ninth question and females alone answering a similar but gender-specific tenth question (the survey itself may be found in Supplementary Materials below). Questions 2 and 3 are concerned with determining where the respondent gets his or her information about sex, both initially and currently. Question 4 asks when it is alright for a man and a woman to initiate sexual relations, i.e., “is premarital sex ok or not?” Questions 5 and 6 asks respondents to choose the source that is most influential in their current attitudes towards sex, be it media, culture or Church. Question 7 raises

³ Researchers of sexual behavior in other non-African cultures have met with similar issues. The research team of a study among Thai students observe that “An enduring problem of research on sexual behavior and other sensitive topics is that the validity and reliability of the data collected depend on the accuracy of the answers provided by respondents who, for a variety of reasons, may not wish to disclose personal information. Indeed, there exists well-documented literature on the problems of reliability and validity of data on sexual behavior collected through standard surveys.”[8]

the issue of domestic violence between a man and a woman and asks if this is always, sometimes or never acceptable. Question 8 asks if the presence of HIV-AIDS has altered the respondent's attitude and behavior with respect to sex. Finally, question 9 asks men about what their response would be if they got a woman pregnant, with choices ranging from marrying the girl to encouraging her to get an abortion. Question 10 asks a similar question of girls/women, concerning their response if a boy got them pregnant, with answers again ranging from marrying the boy to seeking an abortion.

The matter of abortion is actually what drove me to better understand the motives driving Kenyan youth and their choices concerning their own sexual behavior. I had been asked to give a talk at a local high school in a Nairobi slum. As part of my presentation I presented a kind of case study of a high school boy who got his girlfriend pregnant. I asked the students what this boy and this girl should do, and almost in unison they replied, 'Get an abortion.' I had heard anecdotally that this was becoming the preferred solution to teenage pregnancy, but I was still shocked that when given the opportunity to suggest options for this couple, the student body chose abortion. I began looking for an opportunity to explore these issues more fully, mainly as a way to help myself and others engaged in working with Kenyan youth in general and Kenyan Orthodox young people in particular better understand the moral context in which youth find themselves and to come up with more effective ways to help them cope with the increasingly terrible choices that confront them.

My observation has been that sex and related topics such as abortion and domestic violence are almost never discussed within families (an observation confirmed by the responses to this survey, as we shall see). Nor is information about sex handled effectively by schools or churches. Instead, it seems there is a vast cone of silence over this issue between the generations which is buttressed and further enabled by local societal institutions. Because of this, I wanted to find out what was actually happening in the lives of Orthodox young people, how they were getting their information, and how their sources influenced their own moral choices. Again, a survey like this does not enable one to say conclusively that Kenyan youth, or even Orthodox youth believe this and do that. However, it does provide a fascinating window into a significant sample of Orthodox young people and how they chose to answer these particular questions. It provides grounds on which to make a few tentative suggestions as to how Orthodox parishes and Orthodox leaders may respond so as to help their young people navigate increasingly stormy moral waters.⁴

3. Results

After the surveys were printed but before they were distributed, the author determined that it would also be useful to know how old the respondents were. When the surveys were distributed, I requested that everybody stop what they were doing, listen and write the number of their age at the top of the page. While some surveys were turned in without an age written on it, the vast majority did include the age of the respondent, enough to enable me to make tabulations by age as well as by gender.

The first question asks one simply to identify oneself as male or female. At least 457 Orthodox young people took part in the survey, of whom 271 or 59.3% were females and 186 or 40.7% were male.

4. Sources for Information about Sex

I was concerned to find out where the Orthodox youth attending this conference would say that they first learned about sex. I was also interested in where they currently went for information about sexual matters. To this outsider from a different culture, their responses were unexpected.

⁴ This article is not interested in arguing the morality of the various issues raised in the survey, but rather accepts as the starting point the traditional teachings on sexual and relational morality of the Orthodox Churches, not just of Kenya but globally.

Allowing that the survey's first question asked the gender of the person completing it, the survey's second question asks—"You first learned about sex from: my mother; my father; my brother; my sister; another relative; my friends; movies or TV; the internet; other (school, books, etc.)?" (Tables 1 and 2) The respondent was to choose one from that list of possible sources. What follows immediately below are the responses by the male respondents of question 2. The first column records the responses for all the males who answered. The following six columns breaks down the male responses by age.

Table 1. First Learned About Sex—All Males.

1. First learned about sex from:	All Males: all ages (186 resp)	Males 14 and younger (10 resp)	Males 15–17 (55 resp)	Males 18–22 (61 resp)	Males 23–30 (33 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no Age (21 resp)
Mother	3% (6 resp)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4.9% (3)	3% (1)	20% (1)	0% (0)
Father	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	3.6% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Brother	0.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Sister	0.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Another relative	8.6% (16)	10% (1)	1.8% (2)	3.3% (2)	9.1% (4)	0% (0)	4.8% (1)
Total for family members	12.9% (24)	10% (1)	5.5% (3)	8.2% (5)	15.2% (5)	20% (1)	4.8% (1)
My friends	44% (82)	10% (1)	47.3% (26)	47.5% (29)	33.3% (11)	60% (3)	57.1% (12)
Movies or TV	23% (42)	60% (6)	21.8% (12)	21.3% (13)	24.2% (8)	20% (1)	9.5% (2)
Internet	17% (32)	10% (1)	12.7% (7)	21.3% (13)	18.2% (6)	0% (0)	23.8% (5)
Other (school, books, etc.)	7% (13)	10% (1)	12.7% (7)	1.6% (1)	9.1% (3)	0% (0)	4.8% (1)

Table 2. First Learned About Sex—All Females.

1. First Learned about sex from:	All females: all ages (271 resp)	Females 11–14 and (49 resp)	Females 15–17 (104 resp)	Females 18–22 (55 resp)	Females 23–30 (32 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females no age (28 resp)
Mother	9.2% (25 resp)	18.4% (9)	4.8% (5)	5.5% (3)	9.4% (3)	0% (0)	17.8% (5)
Father	0.7% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	3.6% (1)
Brother	0.4% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Sister	1.8% (5)	0% (0)	1.9% (2)	1.8% (1)	3.1% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Another relative	2.6% (7)	6.1% (3)	1.9% (2)	1.8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total for family members	14.8% (40)	26.5% (13)	8.7% (9)	12.7% (7)	12.5% (4)	0% (0)	21.4% (6)
My friends	33.9% (92)	22.4% (11)	29.8% (31)	34.5% (19)	56.3% (18)	33.3% (1)	42.9% (12)
Movies or TV	33.9% (92)	34.7% (17)	40.2% (43)	30.9% (17)	21.9% (7)	33.3% (1)	25.0% (7)
Internet	11.4% (31)	12.2% (6)	11.5% (12)	18.2% (10)	6.3% (2)	33.3% (0)	3.6% (1)
Other (school, books, etc.)	5.9% (16)	4.1% (2)	8.7% (9)	3.6% (2)	3.1% (1)	0% (0)	7.1% (2)

The striking thing emerging from the responses to this question, seen across both genders and all ages, is how few of these young people got their initial information about sex from either their mother or their father or another family member. The women had slightly elevated percentages of those who first learned about sex from their mother. Even allowing for that, more than 85% of the female respondents got their initial information about sex from outside the home or extended family. The percentage was even higher for males, with more than 87% learning about sex from sources outside the home or extended family. For both males and females, the most cited source for their initial information about sex was from friends, with media sources such as movies and TV and the internet coming in second and third, respectively, as information sources. In fact, for young women, TV, movies and the internet, taken together, were the most cited initial source of information about sex, accounting for 45.3% of the responses, whereas friends accounted for 33.9% of responses. In contrast, 44% of young men indicated that their friends were the source of their initial information about sex, while 40% got their information from media sources (movies, TV and internet). This corresponds with other studies of young people in other sub-Saharan African contexts that show friends and mass media

to be the major sources of information about sex, as opposed to learning about sexual matters from parents or other relatives [10,11].

At the very least, one can say that sex is simply not discussed in the homes of the Orthodox youth represented in this survey. There are undoubtedly cultural reasons informing this silence. However, the effect is driving Orthodox youth outside the home to find other sources for their information about sex.

In a recent conversation with the principle of a local Orthodox primary school, I was told that just last week, a group of six or seven 8 year olds (both boys and girls) were discovered ‘pretending to have sex’ in their class room. When asked where they learned about this behavior, they said they were trying to do what dad and mom did. Many of these children live in what could be termed a slum, in houses that have one or two rooms for both parents and multiple children. Privacy in such conditions is a luxury at best, and most usually non-existent. So these children, at least, are taking what they have seen and heard at home and then trying it out with their playmates. Notice that none of the parents of these children offered to have a conversation with their children about what their son or daughter had been hearing or seeing, or offered a more age-appropriate way to understand what sex is all about. That lack of parental engagement would be consistent with the responses to question 2.

The third question of the survey asks: “Where do you go for information about sex today?” Respondents were given a list of possible answers identical to the second question. The difference was respondents were allowed to tick more than one response to allow for multiple sources of information. The responses (Tables 3 and 4) are as follows:

Given the lack of consultation with family members, particularly parents, about sex that we saw in the first question concerning one’s initial information about sex, it should surprise no one that the trend continues when it comes to current sources of information about sex. With respect to this lack of parental engagement with their children with respect to sexual issues, it is worth noting that fathers in particular all but disappear from the conversation, with marginally more than 2% of males citing their fathers as sources of information about sex. Slightly more than 5% of females said their mothers were their main informants. For reasons that this survey does not reveal, mothers play a marginal role and fathers almost no role at all in their children’s sex education.

Table 3. Sources of Information about Sex—All Males.

2. Sources of Information about sex today?	All males: all ages (216 resp)	Males 14 and younger (11 resp)	Males 15–17 (69 resp)	Males 18–22 (61 resp)	Males 23–30 (77 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no age (20 resp)
Mother	0.9% (2 resp)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4.9% (3)	1.3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Father	2.3% (5)	0% (0)	3.6% (2)	1.4% (1)	2.6% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Brother	0.5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	4.3% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Sister	0.5% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)	1.3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Another relative	2.5% (13)	0% (0)	1.8% (2)	4.3% (3)	3.9% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total for family members	10.2% (22)	0% (0)	5.5% (3)	11.6% (8)	9.1% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)
My friends	15.3% (33)	0% (0)	47.3% (26)	15.9% (11)	20.8% (16)	20% (1)	15% (3)
Movies or TV	23.6% (51)	27.3% (3)	21.8% (12)	21.7% (15)	26.0% (20)	40% (2)	20% (4)
Internet	45.4% (98)	63.3% (7)	12.7% (7)	42.0% (29)	39.0% (30)	40% (2)	55% (11)
Other (school, books, etc)	7.9% (17)	9.1% (1)	12.7% (7)	8.7% (6)	5.2% (4)	0% (0)	10% (2)

Table 4. Sources of Information about Sex—All Females.

3. Sources of Information about sex today?	All females: all ages (311 resp)	Females 14 and younger (56 resp)	Females 15–17 (122 resp)	Females 18–22 (60 resp)	Females 23–30 (35 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (20 resp)
Mother	5.1% (16 resp)	16.1% (9)	1.6% (2)	3.3% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Father	0.9% (3)	3.6% (2)	0% (0)	1.7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Brother	0.9% (3)	0% (0)	1.6% (2)	1.7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Sister	0.9% (3)	0% (0)	0.8% (1)	1.7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Another relative	1.9% (6)	1.8% (1)	1.6% (2)	1.7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Total for family members	10.0% (31)	21.4% (12)	5.7% (7)	10.0% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
My friends	18% (56)	10.7% (6)	18.9% (23)	16.7% (10)	25.7% (9)	20% (1)	0% (0)
Movies or TV	33.1% (103)	37.5% (21)	40.2% (49)	21.7% (13)	28.6% (10)	40% (2)	66.7% (2)
Internet	34.7% (108)	26.8% (15)	29.5% (36)	48.3% (29)	45.7% (16)	40% (2)	33.3% (1)
Other (school, books, etc)	4.2% (13)	3.6% (2)	5.7% (7)	3.3% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

The biggest surprise from this question is how the human factor in terms of learning about sex has been almost entirely replaced by media. When it comes to current sources of information about sex, 69% of males and 68% of females find their information from either the internet or movies and TV. With females, the divide between internet and movies/TV is about half and half. With males, the internet is almost twice as popular as TV and movies as their go-to source for information about sex (45.4% vs. 23.6%). This is actually astonishing, to me at least. Kenya is a developing country not known for its robust infrastructure. The Orthodox youth represented in this survey come from major Kenyan metropolitan areas such as Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret, but they also come from smaller towns and villages in the rural areas. Understand that these young people most likely do not have access to desktop computers or laptops; rather, they are, for the most part, using smartphones (with a few tablets thrown into the mix). Relatively inexpensive smartphones have made the internet accessible to millions of young people across Kenya, including the young people filling out this survey. It is almost a cliché now to say that this new technology is revolutionizing communications across Africa in general and Kenya in particular. That being the case, it should give one pause when almost a majority of young men are citing their smartphone-accessed internet as their current source for information about sex. Given that online information sites to answer one's questions about sex are rare, and given that internet filter usage in Kenya is even rarer, it would not be leaping to unfounded conclusions to suggest that for most of these young men, using the internet as their current source for 'information about sex' is a safe way to say that the internet is their current source for access to pornography. It would take a more specific set of questions and a more controlled set to survey to say more conclusively just what their online sources are for information about sex. While my speculation in this instance about pornography use cannot be proven on the basis of the current evidence, it is also not entirely unwarranted.

For purposes of organizing the data, it is appropriate to include question 5 in this section: "Your attitudes towards sex are influenced most by (one of the following)—what I hear on the radio or watch on TV; what I see or read on the internet; what I read in books; what my friends say; what the Church teaches; what my parents say". The results are as follows (Tables 5 and 6):

Table 5. Attitudes about Sex Most Influenced by? All Males.

5. My attitudes about sex most influenced by:	All males: all ages (179 resp)	Males 14 and younger (9 resp)	Males 15–17 (52 resp)	Males 18–22 (61 resp)	Males 23–30 (32 resp)	Males 31+ (4 resp)	Males: no age (21 resp)
Radio/TV	22.3% (40 resp)	55.6% (5)	25.0% (13)	19.7% (12)	21.9% (7)	25% (1)	9.5% (2)
Internet	43.0% (77)	33.3% (3)	36.5% (19)	36.1% (22)	53.1% (17)	25% (1)	71.4% (15)
Books	2.2% (4)	0% (0)	3.8% (2)	3.3% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Friends	20.7% (37)	0% (0)	19.2% (10)	29.5% (18)	15.6% (5)	50% (2)	9.5% (2)
Church teaching	8.9% (16)	11.1% (1)	11.5% (6)	9.8% (6)	6.3% (2)	0% (0)	4.8% (1)
Parents	2.8% (5)	0% (0)	3.8% (2)	1.6% (1)	3.1% (1)	0% (0)	4.8% (0)

Table 6. Attitudes about Sex Most Influenced by? All Females.

5. My attitudes about sex most influenced by:	All females: All Ages (261 resp)	Females 14 and younger (50 resp)	Females 15–17 (104 resp)	Females 18–22 (54 resp)	Females 23–30 (31 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (25 resp)
Radio/TV	28.3% (74 resp)	30% (15)	28.9.0% (30)	22.2% (12)	38.7% (12)	100% (3)	28% (7)
Internet	34.5% (90)	18% (9)	33.7% (35)	44.4% (24)	41.9% (13)	0% (0)	36% (9)
Books	5% (13)	8% (4)	6.7% (7)	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	0% (0)	4% (1)
Friends	20.3% (53)	20% (10)	21.2% (22)	22.2% (12)	9.7% (3)	0% (0)	24% (6)
Church teaching	6.5% (17)	10% (5)	5.8% (6)	7.4% (4)	6.5% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Parents	5.3% (14)	14% (7)	2.9% (3)	3.7% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	8% (2)

The answers to this question continue to show that a majority of both males and females of all ages are looking to media, not only for answers to their questions about sex, but also for how they should think about sex. Nearly 63% of young women and 65% of young men indicated that the internet and then TV and radio carried the most influence when it came to their thinking about sex and sexual matters. Given that we have already seen that parents are rarely consulted by their children about sex, it is not surprising that only 5% of women and 3% of men considered their parents influential in shaping their perspectives on sex. What is most surprising to this observer, given that this is a survey of Orthodox youth gathered for a spiritual conference, is that 93.5% of the young women and 91.1% of the men indicated that their attitudes about sex were shaped by other factors than by Church teaching or input. Possible reasons for this include that the Churches are doing an excellent job in teaching young people about sexuality and Christian sexual behavior, but that young people are ignoring the Church's teachers and being influenced by other sources. It may be a combination of neglect on the part of Church leaders and choices to behave otherwise on the part of Orthodox youth. It could be that the Churches, like most parents, are saying nothing and doing nothing with regards to their young people and matters of sexual morality. Regardless of the reasons, even this small statistical sampling raises challenging questions for Orthodox priests and hierarchs in Kenya (and beyond) to consider, not least of which is, what are we actually teaching our young people and is it making any difference and if not, why not?

The participants in this survey had an opportunity to address their own attitudes towards the Orthodox Church and how Church leaders were handling the various issues relating to sexuality. The statement posed to them was: "When it comes to Christianity and the Church and their message about sex and relationships"—with four options from which to choose: "(1) My local Church is very clear in its teaching on sex and very supportive to me as a young person and the issues I have; (2) My local Church is very clear in its teaching about sex and relationships but is not very supportive and helpful to me as a young person and the issues I have; (3) My local Church is not very clear in its teaching about sex and relationships and is not very supportive and helpful to me as a young person and the questions that I have; (4) My local Church pretends that sex doesn't exist". In hindsight, I regret the wording of the fourth option, as sometimes sarcasm does not translate into Kenyan cultures,

and sarcasm is never the best option when trying to conduct research. Also, the question itself is a difficult one, being posed to a group of people who are guests of the Church who may feel that it is to their advantage to give the 'right' answer to the question. Certainly the moral ambiguity reflected in subsequent answers raises the question of how far the responses to this question can be taken. In any case, problem or no, their answers reflect their opinion when they were given the opportunity to grade the performance of their local parishes when it comes to Christian teaching and guidance about sex (Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7. Church's Teaching about Sex—All Males.

6. My Church's teaching about sex	All males: all ages (179 resp)	Males 14 and younger (9 resp)	Males 15–17 (52 resp)	Males 18–22 (60 resp)	Males 23–30 (33 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no age (20 resp)
Clear, supportive and helpful	59.8% (107 resp)	66.7% (6)	57.7% (30)	68.3% (41)	48.5% (16)	80% (4)	50% (10)
Clear but not supportive and helpful	18.4% (33)	33.3% (3)	17.3% (9)	16.7% (10)	12.1% (4)	0% (0)	35% (7)
Not clear, not supportive, not helpful	13.4% (24)	0% (0)	15.4% (8)	11.7% (7)	21.2% (7)	0% (0)	10% (2)
Sex might as well not exist as far as my parish is concerned	8.4% (15)	0% (0)	9.6% (5)	3.3% (2)	18.2% (6)	20% (1)	5% (1)
Percentage less than satisfied with the Church's input on sex	40.2%	33.3%	42.3%	31.7%	51.5%	20%	50%

Table 8. Church's Teaching about Sex—All Females.

6. My Church's teaching about sex	All females: all ages (265 resp)	Females 14 and younger (47 resp)	Females 15–17 (101 resp)	Females 18–22 (54 resp)	Females 23–30 (32 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (28 resp)
Clear, supportive and helpful	67.5% (179 resp)	78.7% (37)	71.3% (72)	61.1% (33)	59.4% (19)	33.3% (1)	57.1% (16)
Clear but not supportive and helpful	15.4% (42)	12.8% (6)	13.9% (14)	14.8% (8)	15.6% (5)	66.7% (2)	25% (7)
Not clear, not supportive, not helpful	11.3% (30)	8.5% (4)	7.9% (8)	18.5% (10)	18.7% (6)	0% (0)	7.1% (2)
Sex might as well not exist as far as my parish is concerned	5.3% (14)	0% (0)	5.9% (6)	5.6% (3)	6.3% (2)	0% (0)	10.7% (3)
Percentage less than satisfied with the Church's input on sex	32.5%	21.3%	28.7%	38.9%	40.6%	66.7%	42.9%

Even with the prospect of some respondents feeling obligated to support their parish and not speak ill of their leaders, 40% of young men and nearly one-third of young women felt their parish was lacking when it came to providing meaningful help for youth navigating the issues of sexuality as Orthodox Christians. Given that the actual percentages of the dissatisfied may be significantly higher, and that the ones responding to this survey are the Orthodox Church of Kenya's youth leaders and most active members, these responses should at the least alert Orthodox Church leaders that all is not well with the new generation of Orthodox Christians in our parishes, and motivate these leaders to

find new more effective ways to raise the children of their parishes as responsible Orthodox Christians. Young people who are dissatisfied with their Church have a tendency simply to disappear [12].⁵

5. Orthodox Youth in Kenya and Challenging Moral Issues—Premarital Sex

The remainder of the survey addresses several of the difficult moral issues facing Orthodox Christian young people. These are not issues particular to the Orthodox Churches, but they affect young people across the ethnic, economic and societal divides of Kenya. The first of these issue-oriented questions deals with premarital sex. Respondents were asked to check the statement with which they agreed. The first statement for consideration is: “A man and a woman should wait until they are married before they begin a sexual relationship.” The second statement reads: “It is OK if a man and a woman want to have a sexual relationship before they are married.” The results are as follows (Tables 9 and 10):

Table 9. Attitudes about Premarital Sex—All Males.

4. With respect to premarital sex	All males: all ages (181 resp)	Males 14 and younger (10 resp)	Males 15–17 (54 resp)	Males 18–22 (60 resp)	Males 23–30 (31 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no age (21 resp)
Couple should wait until married before having sex.	76.2% (138 resp)	90% (9)	79.6% (43)	78.3% (47)	64.5% (20)	60% (3)	76.2% (16)
Sex before marriage is OK	23.8% (43)	10% (1)	20.4% (11)	21.7% (13)	35.5% (11)	40% (2)	23.8% (5)

Table 10. Attitudes about Premarital Sex—All Females.

4. With respect to premarital sex	All females: all ages (264 resp)	Females 14 and younger (47 resp)	Females 15–17 (102 resp)	Females 18–22 (54 resp)	Females 23–30 (32 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (26 resp)
Couple should wait until married before having sex.	83.3% (220 resp)	87.2% (41)	86.3% (88)	83.3% (45)	81.3% (26)	100% (3)	65.4% (17)
Sex before marriage is OK	16.7% (44)	12.8% (6)	13.7% (14)	16.7% (9)	18.7% (6)	0% (0)	34.6% (9)

Given then conservative nature of Kenyan society, and the morally conservative culture that characterizes Orthodox parishes, any deviation from the bedrock moral teaching of the Church should be cause for concern. In this case, nearly a quarter of young Orthodox men have no problem with premarital sex, and almost 17% of young Orthodox women concur. Of course there are many factors at play in an issue such as premarital sex, such as the very long delays in Kenya before marriage, the sexualization of popular culture through both music, internet, film and TV, the lack of supervision for teenagers and the seeming disengagement of parents from positive roles in their children’s character and moral development—all of these play a role in creating a context in which it seems impossible to make positive, intentionally Christian choices when it comes to moral issues pertaining to sexual behavior. There is also a concern as to whether the terms used in the question are fully comprehended by the respondents. An earlier survey of Kenyan youth found that less than half understood what terms such as ‘abstinence’ actually mean [13]. In an atmosphere of heightened religious expectations,

⁵ Other studies across other Kenyan denominations reveal a similar level of discomfort among young people concerning their church’s engagement with sexual issues.

there may be a need to give the right answer to questions such as this may be perceived as more important than giving an accurate answer.

6. Orthodox Youth in Kenya and Challenging Moral Issues—Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is simply not discussed in Kenyan society. This silence is reflected in Orthodox Churches in Kenya. But as we will see, people ‘keep quiet’ not because domestic violence is not happening, but for reasons that are beyond what one question in a survey can unravel. The question was phrased in this manner: “Physical violence between a man and a woman is (choose one): (1) Ok. No problem; (2) Sometimes it’s alright, sometimes it’s wrong, depending on the situation; Or (3) Never right, always wrong.” Here is how these Orthodox youth responded (Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11. Attitudes towards Domestic Violence—All Males.

7. With respect to domestic violence	All males: all ages (184 resp)	Males 14 and younger (10 resp)	Males 15–17 (53 resp)	Males 18–22 (61 resp)	Males 23–30 (33 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no age (22 resp)
Physical Violence between a man and woman is OK	4.9% (9 resp)	30% (3)	3.8% (2)	3.3% (2)	3% (1)	0% (0)	4.5% (1)
Physical violence between a man and woman is sometimes all right, sometimes wrong	57.6% (106)	50% (5)	71.7% (38)	54.1% (33)	48.5% (16)	60% (3)	50% (11)
Physical violence between a man and woman is never right, always wrong	37.5% (69)	20% (2)	24.5% (13)	42.6% (26)	48.5% (16)	40% (2)	45.5% (10)

Table 12. Attitudes towards Domestic Violence—All Females

7. With respect to domestic violence	All females: all ages (267 resp)	Females 14 and younger (48 resp)	Females 15–17 (102 resp)	Females 18–22 (55 resp)	Females: 23–30 (32 resp)	Females: 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (27 resp)
Physical violence between a man and woman is OK	4.5% (12 resp)	12.5% (6)	2.9% (3)	5.5% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Physical violence between a man and woman is sometimes all right, sometimes wrong	61.4% (165)	60.4% (29)	59.8% (61)	58.2% (32)	75% (24)	100% (3)	55.6% (15)
Physical violence between a man and woman is never right, always wrong	34.1% (91)	27.1% (13)	37.3% (38)	36.3% (20)	25% (8)	0% (0)	44.4% (12)

Clear majorities (more than 62%) of young men of all ages responded that physical violence between men and women was all right, given the circumstance (with a small percentage—4.9%—indicating that such violence was ok at any time). An even greater percentage of women (nearly 66%) answered that physical violence between men and women was acceptable depending on the circumstances (again with a small percentage of that number—4.5%—seeing no problem with violence between men and women at any time) [14,15]. These results were unexpected and startling, and I endeavored to find out if my question had been misunderstood or if I had misunderstood the responses or if the results were somehow simply wrong. Numerous conversations with sources within and without the Orthodox Church reassured me that the question was clear and that the results, to

them, reflected reality on the ground.⁶ The most-repeated explanation for the apparent prevalence of domestic violence in Orthodox marriages and families was that ‘this is our culture. Indeed, the fact that young women who are presently or who stand to become the objects of physical violence at the hands of their partners think that such violence is allowable under certain circumstances indicates the likelihood of powerful cultural factors overriding fears of personal safety or personal shame in the experience of these women. If this is the case (and a better analysis of the issue may be found or forth-coming), then it means that physical violence between a man and a woman is not being addressed from the standpoint of New Testament morality or Church Tradition and teaching on the matter. It could mean that such perspectives and teachings are being ignored by the majority of Orthodox married couples. It may mean that culture rather than Orthodoxy is informing behavior in marriages, or it may be a combination of all three. The fact that a significant minority (37.5% of men and 34.1% of women) understand physical violence between men and women to be never right and always wrong may show that some Kenyan Orthodox leaders have attempted to address domestic violence and have met with some success in changing hearts and minds on the issue. However, the fact that these Kenyan Orthodox youths are so accepting of domestic violence as simply what men do to women demonstrates that there is still a considerable gap among Orthodox Christians in Kenya between Christian profession and Christian behavior, at least on this issue.

7. Orthodox Youth in Kenya and Challenging Moral Issues—The Impact of HIV-AIDs on Attitudes and Behavior

HIV-AIDS has left the headlines of western news outlets, but it is still silently spreading across Africa, infecting men who engage in risky sexual behavior (with sex workers, for example), who then unknowingly come home and infect their wife (or wives) and any children who may be born to an infected mother. Massive efforts to educate sexually active men and women concerning HIV-AIDS and how it is spread has had some success. The work of activists to push western governments into providing the latest anti-retroviral medication for those infected has meant that HIV-AIDS is not the death sentence that it once was. However, the availability of education, testing, and medication will not stop anyone who chooses to live a sexually reckless life or who lives in denial that they could become ill or even are ill. As a result, the newspapers are still full of funeral notices for young, professional-aged men and women, whose cause of death is never mentioned, but for that reason alone it is safe to suspect they died of complications to HIV-AIDS. The upshot of this is simply that HIV-AIDS is still a massive problem in Kenya and across the continent, and while great strides have been made to manage the spread of the disease and to help those who have been infected, the disease is still touching, changing and destroying lives [16].⁷

For this reason, I wanted to find out if, among a group of Orthodox Kenyan youth, there was awareness of HIV-AIDS, and whether or not the push to educate people in Africa over the past 20 years had trickled down to affect the lives of these young people. With that in mind, the eighth question is simply: “HIV-AIDS: (1) has influenced my attitude and behavior when it comes to sex; (2) is something that I think about from time to time; (3) is something I never think about”. There have been many similar and more in-depth surveys covering the issue of HIV-AIDS and sexual behavior across many cultures and populations. Similar challenges are faced by almost everyone who makes use of surveys to better understand the issues [17]. The topic is considered by most to be private and by many to be even threatening. Therefore responses can be evasive, causing the conclusions to be misleading.

⁶ Compare these attitudes with this study of actual abuse which indicates that fully 40% of married women in Kenya have experienced physical and or sexual abuse at the hands of their partner [14]. Another study indicates that more than half of the married women in rural Kenya experience domestic violence at the hands of their spouse during their lifetime [15].

⁷ The circumstances that prompted widespread “Western” Christian concern for and engagement with the HIV-AIDS pandemic, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, are still very much present in Kenya and for the participants of this survey, even if certain medical advances have meant that the virus is no longer the almost certain death sentence that it was.

There are methods of interviewing that can be adopted that mitigate such responses, but the challenges are never entirely done away with. In this case, the question about HIV-AIDS and sexual behavior is one among a number of other questions, and the issue being addressed is not one of behavior but of attitude. Nevertheless, it is useful to keep in mind the wealth of experience others have when attempting to understand the very complicated situation that has arisen, especially in a Sub-Saharan country like Kenya, with respect to the ongoing impact of HIV-AIDS on the lives of young people, and even the young people of the Orthodox Church in Kenya. Here are the results for the young men (Tables 13 and 14):

Table 13. Influence of HIV-AIDS on Attitudes and Behavior About Sex—All Males.

8. HIV-AIDS ...	All males: all ages (183 resp)	Males 14 and younger (10 resp)	Males 15–17 (53 resp)	Males 18–22 (61 resp)	Males 23–30 (33 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no age (21 resp)
Influences my attitude and behavior when it comes to sex	76.0% (139 resp)	70% (7)	83.0% (44)	73.8% (45)	84.8% (28)	80% (4)	52.4% (11)
Is something I think about from time to time	16.9% (31)	10% (1)	7.6% (4)	21.3% (13)	12.2% (4)	20% (1)	38.1% (8)
Is something I never think about	7.1% (13)	20% (2)	9.4% (5)	4.9% (3)	3% (1)	0% (0)	9.5% (2)

Table 14. Influence of HIV-AIDS on Attitudes and Behavior about Sex—All Females.

8. HIV-AIDS ...	All females: all ages (261 resp)	Females 14 and younger (49 resp)	Females 15–17 (98 resp)	Females 18–22 (55 resp)	Females 23–30 (29 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (27 resp)
Influences my attitude and behavior when it comes to sex	75.9% (198 resp)	77.6% (38)	75.5% (74)	76.4% (42)	79.3% (23)	66.7% (2)	70.4% (19)
Is something I think about from time to time	13.8% (36)	18.4% (9)	11.2% (11)	10.9% (6)	17.2% (5)	33.3% (1)	14.8% (4)
Is something I never think about	10.3% (27)	4% (2)	13.3% (13)	12.7% (7)	3.4% (1)	0% (0)	14.8% (4)

8. Orthodox Youth in Kenya and Challenging Moral Issues—Youth Pregnancy and Abortion

Anecdotal evidence indicated to me that teen pregnancy was an issue, at least in the expansive Nairobi slum of Kawangware where I live. Informal discussion with local high school students and several youth pastors suggested that abortion was a more common solution to the ‘problem’ of teenage pregnancy than is being reported. I included the last two questions of my survey in an effort to find out if any of this was true among Orthodox youth. Because of the great stigma involved in admitting sexual behavior (even anonymously) and owning attitudes about abortion, it is difficult to know for certain how accurately the responses below reflect actual behavior, or if it merely reflects what these young people think the right response should be. Charles Nzioka, who surveyed the responses of young men in a particular district in Kenya with respect to their attitudes towards unwanted pregnancy and abortion, found that:

“In Kenya, where abortion is permitted only to save a woman’s life, unsafe abortion accounts for over one-third of maternal deaths and hospital emergency rooms are overcrowded with women suffering complications of induced and spontaneous abortions. Adolescents constitute the majority of

those who die or present with pregnancy-related complications due to unsafe abortion in most medical facilities in Kenya” [18].

Given the limits of this instrument, it must be left to others to devise a more precise way to resolve some of these issues. Even so, as Nzioka observes, the few studies that exist on this issue have focused mainly on the perspective of young women with regards to on pregnancy and abortion [18]. With this present study we now also have a record of how both Orthodox male and female young people from across Kenya answered questions about roles and responsibilities in pregnancy and abortion. Even so, given the cultural factors involved, it is impossible to give any assurance that the responses reflect the actual perspectives of the respondents. In the case of his own survey, Nzioka summarizes some of the challenges:

“Some young men are responsible for a proportion of unwanted pregnancies, but accurate data on the level of their involvement in causing these pregnancies is lacking and difficult to capture owing to the unwillingness on the part of young men to own up to causing these unwanted pregnancies. Relatively few young men are willing to admit to playing any role in the abortion procurement decision-making process. Young men appear to admit to fatherhood but few are ready to accept parenthood due to the heavy responsibility associated with parenting” [18].

While Nzioka’s study relates to actual behavior, my questions do not require admitting responsibility but create a hypothetical situation and invite a response. In this case, the responses reflected in this survey are aspirational, carrying a sense of how one might want to respond if faced with this situation. As such, these questions are asking different things than Nzioka’s. But even though ‘how I might want to respond’ may be different from ‘how I actually responded’, the way these Orthodox youth answered still gives valuable insight concerning the moral context these young people are assuming.

I posed this question to the young men completing their survey:

“If I got a girl pregnant, I would:

- (1) Encourage her to carry our baby to term and take steps to marry her.
- (2) Encourage her to carry our baby to term by not marry her but rather take steps to support her and the child.
- (3) Break off my relationship with her.
- (4) Encourage her to get an abortion and continue to have relationships with girls.”

Here is how these young men answered (Table 15):

Table 15. Pregnancy Options—All Males.

9. If I got a girl pregnant:	All males: all ages (185 resp)	Males 14 and younger (10 resp)	Males 15–17 (52 resp)	Males 18–22 (63 resp)	Males 23–30 (32 resp)	Males 31+ (5 resp)	Males: no age (21 resp)
Encourage her to carry baby to term and marry her	48.6% (90 resp)	20% (2)	36.5% (19)	54% (34)	71.9% (23)	60% (3)	42.9% (9)
Encourage her to carry baby to term but not marry, support instead	42.7% (79)	30% (3)	61.5% (32)	38.1% (24)	21.9% (7)	40% (2)	52.4% (11)
Break off my relationship with her	3.8% (7)	20% (2)	3.8% (2)	1.6% (1)	3.1% (1)	0% (0)	4.7% (1)
Encourage her to get an abortion	4.8% (9)	30% (3)	1.9% (1)	6.3% (4)	3.1% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Here is how these young women answered a similar set of questions (Table 16):

Table 16. Pregnancy Options—All Females.

10. If a boy got me pregnant:	All females: all ages (269 resp)	Females 14 and younger (48 resp)	Females 15–17 (103 resp)	Females 18–22 (56 resp)	Females 23–30 (32 resp)	Females 31+ (3 resp)	Females: no age (27 resp)
Want to have my baby and marry the boy	59.9% (161 resp)	47.9% (23)	58.3% (60)	60.7% (34)	62.5% (20)	66.7% (2)	63% (17)
Want to have my baby but not marry the boy	33.8% (91)	39.6% (19)	37.9% (39)	28.6% (16)	37.5% (12)	33.3% (1)	14.8% (4)
Get an abortion and continue to have relationships	6.3% (17)	12.5% (6)	3.9% (4)	1.8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	22.2% (6)

The way these questions are phrased for both the young men and the young women mean the answers are aspirational—how I would want to respond, as opposed to how I have responded. One obviously would need to have a control set of respondents who were not necessarily so obviously Christian in their morality, but I suspect that if we had access to a wider sampling of young people that included those outside the circle of Christian faith, we might see the above responses as reflective of Christian self-identity—in other words, this is what one as a Christian *should* believe and do. Even so, the fact that abortion is considered an option by 4.8% of the young men and 6.3% of the young women at a gathering that is so self-consciously Christian is another way of indicating that many of these young people are getting their information about sex and morality from sources other than the Church. One wonders, if presented with the same questions in a different context, such as their local school, if the percentages would remain the same or if the numbers of those opting for abortion would be much higher [19–21]. I suspect the latter, but given the limitations of this survey, my suspicions remain just that.

9. Summary Discussion

Christian morality has always mixed with local culture in unexpected ways in places where there are churches. In the case of Kenya, Christianity was introduced from the outside by Western missionaries, for the most part. Christianity became one of the colonial-era tools for maintaining social control, both through the teaching of what was understood by the missionaries as ‘Christian morality’ but which was perceived by many local people as ‘western morality’. Enforced by both missionary church rules and by the law of the land, Christian morality quickly began legalistic religion in the hands of many mission churches and their subsequent denominations. Morality in general, and sexual morality in particular, became a list of dos and do nots, imposed from up high, demanding conformity as opposed to culturally-sensitive application. The results have been predictable across the board in countries like Kenya, with the widespread pretense of keeping the law and widespread disregard when it comes to one’s actual personal behavior. Morality as legalism has created a nation where the vast majority claim to be ‘Christian’ (84% according to recent surveys), but whose legalistic understanding of Christian morality has created a nation of hypocrites as well. The fear of being found out, of being hauled before a church board and sanctioned means that many people opt to keep their private, relational, sexual, and business lives separate from their religious lives. As such, Christianity never effectively touches who many of these people actually are or what they actually do.

This survey is an effort to get behind the assumptions and the religious postures and to raise questions about sexual and relational morality that are rarely if ever discussed in Orthodox Church contexts at least. The sampling is of Orthodox young people from parishes all across Kenya participating in an annual spiritual life conference. Though such a sampling is limited, it does give insight into how many Orthodox youth are thinking and behaving when it comes to matters of sexuality and relationships.

Several results (those with respect to domestic violence and unintended pregnancy, for example) call for further corroboration and a deeper study of the implications for both the individuals and the life of the Churches. Other results shed unexpected light on family dynamics, for example. It will surprise many Western readers that both parents and the Church disappear when it comes to sources from which young people learn about sex. This puts young people effectively at the mercy of the culture and of cultural morals when it comes to sex. My sources in Kenya acknowledge that this is the case and assume that this is normal. Obviously there are cultural issues at play here. However, is this a case of culture being used as an excuse for parents and local parishes not taking responsibility for teaching their own children about sex and relationships? This is not a question that I can answer for my friends who are doing the hard work of raising children in this place. But it is a question surely worth asking.

A second result concerns the immense power technology and social media are exercising over the youth of Kenya. Solid majorities of young men and young women indicate the internet (first) and movies and TV (second) are their primary sources for information about sex today. I think it is a safe assumption that using the internet for information about sex is another way of saying using the internet to gain access to pornography. The amazing and growing spread of smartphone use means that young people now have unfettered and unmonitored access to the internet. I believe it is safe to say they are not using it just to look up football scores. This should be deeply troubling to parents and to Churches. As far as I know, no Christian organizations, certainly no Orthodox ones, are providing parents and young people with help and guidance as to how to use responsibly the powerful technologies available to youth, far more powerful than anything they or any previous generation ever had. More study needs to be done to determine if access to pornography means actual use of pornography and what impact that may actually have on morality and relationships. If the results of this survey come close to measuring reality, the Orthodox youth in Kenya are in serious trouble.

A third result to highlight concerns youth satisfaction with the input on sex and relationships they have received/are receiving from their Orthodox priests and parishes. The fact that 40% of young men and 32% of young women had problems with the Church's input on these issues should be a flashing red light for Church leaders that all is not well in their parishes. Given the denial that exists on the part of priests, parents, young people and parishes on matters of sex and relationships, the fact that a random sampling of youth would put up these numbers of unhappiness means that the Church is not helping to solve the problem but is rather part of the problem. It is not the role of this paper to suggest yet more culturally-inappropriate ways of responding to this need, but rather to challenge those in positions of responsibility to help the youth under their care as Christian leaders.

A fourth result concerns the prevalence of domestic violence, even in Orthodox homes, and the assumption of the majority of young people that violence between a man and a woman, under certain circumstances, is normative. This is a classic example of the clash between Christian values and cultural values, with Christian values simply routed from the field. There is a significant minority who understand that this behavior is never right and always wrong, which is encouraging. Clearly the Church has been delinquent when it comes to explaining what love is, what marriage is, what self-sacrifice means, what loving your wife as Christ loves the Church means, etc. Even though parents are refusing to teach their children when it comes to sex, we can see that a majority of fathers (and mothers) are teaching their children all the wrong lessons about love, relationships and marriage through the ongoing battering of their spouses. Their children are learning that it is acceptable, in fact desirable to treat women badly. The Orthodox Church should be at the forefront in leading the charge against this travesty of marriage and family life. As far as I can tell, nothing is being done, nothing is being said. Once again, if we Orthodox are not part of the solution, we are a significant part of the problem.

Such a survey can, at best, provide a window into what a certain set of young people believe about the questions with which they were presented. It is hoped that this effort will provoke even better studies, which will not only provide more clarity with regards to the attitudes and behavior of

Orthodox Christians on these matters, but also even more helpful suggestions for youth, parents and Church leaders as to a way forward. The moral landscape of Kenya is changing, and the youth are the ones driving that change across the country. The fact that Orthodox youth in Kenya turn out not to be that much different from their non-Orthodox neighbors in this regard should be, for Orthodox leaders, a call to action.

Supplementary Materials: The following are available online at <http://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/8/4/73/s1>.

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