

## **Spiritual State of the World's Children**

**Swaziland**





## **Spiritual State of the World's Children A Quantitative Study**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MINISTRY**

#### **Swaziland**

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Prepared by:



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### ONEHOPE

OneHope is a non-profit organization with a mission to *affect destiny by providing God's eternal Word to all the children and youth of the world.* With programs in over 125 nations OneHope has reached over 500 million children and young people with a special presentation of the life of Jesus. Committed to presenting God's Word in a format that is relevant and dynamic, research is a critical step in the development of country and age specific products and programs.



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## **Section I: Key Issues Analysis**

### ***Key Issues***

- Fifty-one percent of the respondents indicate that one or both parents are deceased or that they live without adults or with grandparents.
- Although they believe the stories of the Bible, scripture reading is not a regular or formative practice.
- Their world view seems to be dichotomous; God is transcendent and relevant to eternal issues, yet they reflect a pragmatic “getting by” regarding present reality.
- High levels of violence and suicide ideation.
- Christian assent without strong commitment and practice.

### ***Strengths & Opportunities***

- Generally, those with parents indicate that they enjoy a close, productive relationship with their parents.
- Students indicate a positive view toward marriage as an institution.
- There are indications that they search for meaningful sources for formation and values.
- Seventy percent are influenced by Christianity, and religious practice is highly regarded.
- Students report practice of prayer, but more than half indicate all religions pray to the same “God”.

### ***Weaknesses & Threats***

- They demonstrate a confused view of family, indicating a wide range of family definition, including unrelated or homosexual couples as family.
- Students indicate that only half are positive about their family experience.
- Students report that they are learning about sexuality primarily from media and pornographic magazines.
- There is a much higher than expected rate of those reporting contemplated or attempted suicide.
- There is a higher than expected rate of reported violence: physical or psychological.
- Moral decisions appear to be formed pragmatically and without religious formation.
- Forty percent regard the idea of sin as outdated.
- Many are not engaged in regular religious practice and religious study groups are small.

### **Research Recommendations**

- Develop programs to demonstrate the relevance of Christian faith and scripture to daily life, and use the interest in music and media to communicate positive truths.
- Highlight positive role models of stable family structure and principles for successful and fulfilling marriages, and develop strong programs of moral formation.
- Further study be undertaken to identify the cause of the lack of formative influence of Christian faith.

*It is important to note that the data was collected from secondary school students still attending school. This may not accurately represent the conditions for all children in Swaziland. During the process of data collection it was noted that respondents may have been uncomfortable describing the starkness of their reality.*

*The preceding analysis is subjective and attempts to identify issues that should be explored further. It is recommended that the “Data Report” be studied before engaging in program modification.*

## **Section II: Project Description**

### ***Acknowledgments***

This project was made possible in part by funding from the Maclellan Foundation and Distribution-OneHope International.

We acknowledge the cooperation of the Department of Education Swaziland, the headmasters and staff of the schools included in the sample, and the cooperation of students and volunteers.

The instrument administered in this study was made available by Josh McDowell Ministries.

### ***Overview***

OneHope seeks to understand what children and youth deal with in their day-to-day realities. We know that children and youth face a variety of social challenges and experience psycho-social needs to which they are often left without effective responses. We do know that the needs of children vary from country to country and even regionally within countries. However, without reliable information we are unable to tailor our products and distribution programs to address needs specific to particular contexts.

While the issues and challenges facing children and youth in developed countries are researched and documented, those in developing countries are not. Without an accurate analysis of their contexts these populations are treated as though they share a common reality. An awareness of the immediate reality of children is often discovered only after ministry has begun and resources have been committed to a project.

As part of OneHope's *Spiritual State of the World's Children* study, the Attitudes and Behaviors of the Youth (ABY) project will capture the following information about children in Swaziland:

- Typical family situations, relationships and parental contact
- Behaviors and moral values guiding relationships with peers of the opposite sex
- Daily occupations and pastimes
- Worldviews, influences, beliefs, future goals, and religious affiliation
- Theological perspectives and commitment

### ***Research Methodology***

The SSWC survey is a stratified random survey of secondary school children. The survey was stratified by degree of urbanization and gender for Swaziland. Additional strata that offer analysis are age, economic status, family composition, ethnicity and religious affiliation.

The core survey is constructed using the Survey of Juveniles designed by Chris Sleath of Josh McDowell Ministries. The survey was administered in secondary schools in the instruction in English, the language of instruction and will be supplemented by focus groups if warranted. Surveys were administered in randomly selected schools segregated by population density (proportional to national population distribution of urban-rural residents) to students in the schools randomized by gender (proportional to the national ratio of male-female).

## ***Project Overview***

The data was collected June through July of 2007. The local coordinator for the research conducted in Swaziland was Siboniso Mncina, with research assistance by Carol Jacobs. Oversight was provided by Kimberly Morrison and Dr. Allen Reesor of Pompano Beach, Florida. The research followed the project design instructions (see below under Logistics).

Data was entered into a web-based database. The data base was hosted by Philip Issa of Elite Survey and assessed by Dr. Rene Paulson, Ph.D. The final report employs Dr. Paulson's analysis of the data and is supplemented with secondary data drawn from research projects and primary qualitative data.

The final report will be made available to ministry partners who promote ministry to children and youth through collaborative research.

## ***Logistics***

### Review

National leaders reviewed the survey and recommended minor edits.

### Randomization

Reliability of the survey results depends upon consistent randomization of the participants. Two strata of randomization that govern participant selection employed in this project were gender and population density distributions.

The National Coordinator provided a list of schools segregated by population density.

Population density was interpreted as either urban or rural. Additionally, the study population was further segregated into one of two classes: less than one hundred thousand or between one hundred thousand and one million. This list was used to select randomly identified schools at Book of Hope Headquarters. The list of randomized schools was returned to the local Research Coordinator for review. Schools that were inaccessible (see footnote on inaccessibility above) were replaced by following randomization procedures.

To ensure that gender participation reflects the male/female ratio of the national population, randomization by gender was finalized when students were selected for participation.

### Verifying Access

The National Coordinator met with the administration of each school to explain the survey and obtain commitment for participation. No schools were identified as inaccessible.

### Survey Printing

A master copy of the survey response form was forwarded electronically to the local Research Coordinator who received bids for the printing of 5,000 collated and stapled copies.

### Quality Control

Hard copies of the survey response form were randomly assessed to evaluate survey validity. Hard copy survey response forms will be retained by the local coordinator in Swaziland for one year to verify the accuracy of data entry if needed and as a back up to electronic data files. The surveys are kept confidential and will be turned over to a designated OneHope headquarters representative on or about



12 months following the close of data collection. After 12 months, a OneHope representative will oversee the destruction of all hard copy surveys.

### ***Implementation & Survey Administration***

#### Data Collection

The survey was administered in the schools identified by randomization and previously contacted. The research agent identified the number of classes in session on the day of the survey.

- If the average class size at a school was less than 30 students, 15 classes were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. 15 students from each class were randomly selected proportional to the male/female ratio for Swaziland.
- If the average class size at a school was more than 30 students, 10 classes were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. 22 students from each class were randomly selected proportional to the male/female ratio for Swaziland.

Students were asked to voluntarily participate. Participants were administered the survey in groups that could be accommodated in a classroom. Approximately 200 students were surveyed at each school.

The surveys were conducted by two people. A brief scripted introduction was read aloud and students were given the opportunity to ask questions. Administrators took turns reading each question aloud to students.

#### Data Entry

Data entry was done in Swaziland by contracted workers who were responsible for accurately inputting the data into a web-based survey interface.

### **Section III: Profile of Youth in Swaziland**

#### ***Demographic Profile***

Our sample drew on a slightly higher proportion of girls (54%) than boys with about 1/3 younger and 2/3 older than 16 years of age. The median grades are represented by 8-10<sup>th</sup> grades with about 20% reporting that they are “average” students, nearly half that they are doing “good,” and 25% that they are “excellent” students.

Respondants typically report that their parents profession is “other.” However for those who answered more specifically in this area, fathers are more likely to be in agricultural employment and mothers in professional work. Their parents tend to be married at 41% with 24% reporting that one parent has died and an additional 8% that both parents have deceased. About 15% report that their parents have been divorced. About half of those surveyed report that they are living with two parents, although in 15% of these cases one of the parents is a step-parent. Nearly 20% live with one parent and about 16% are living with grandparents. Three percent indicate that they do not live with an adult.

#### ***Family Relationships***

When describing families, the survey indicates that children believe that a family is generally comprised of those related by birth, adoption, or marriage. However, one-third indicate that any group of people living together comprise a family unit. Family units may be polygamous although the survey did not allow for a distinction between these and monogamous families. The presence of children in a family is considered important in its definition since 40-60% believe that the presence of a child in any group constitutes a factor in family definition. It is interesting to note that nearly 20% accept a homosexual relationship between either men or women as sufficient condition to qualify as family.

Approximately 25% of those responding indicate that their father has deceased. Of those remaining, they tend to indicate that they are fairly or very close to their father although this is more frequently true of boys than girls. While respondents may refer to male figures other than their biological fathers by this term, they report that they talked to their father about personal concerns, are proud of their father, or exchange expressions of love with their father, they are less likely to be involved in activities with their father or seek advice. Children generally spend less than 60 minutes a week in conversation with their fathers. Boys, however, are more likely than girls to spend time with their fathers in conversation as are rural and youth below the age of sixteen.

About 13% of respondents report that their mother is not alive. Of those with mothers, approximately 70% indicate that they are fairly or very close. Younger children are more likely to indicate that they are very close than are those over the age of sixteen. Children are more likely to interact with their mothers than their fathers, with girls only slightly more likely than boys. Urban youth and those older than sixteen are more likely to do “something special” with their mothers than do rural and younger children. They also report spending significant time in conversation each week with their mothers, particularly when compared to time spent conversing with their father.

Youth indicate that the adults in their family are interested in “who they are,” demonstrate love, set good examples, and spend time with them. Girls are more likely to express that parents are too strict than boys. Analysis of population density and age do not show variance. Sixty percent of those responding indicate that their home is a place where they feel safe and loved; this is higher for females and children younger than sixteen.

In the question that specifically seeks to evaluate attitudes towards marriage, we find that 78% of respondents indicate that God intends marriage to last a lifetime. Although two-thirds indicate that they would like a marriage like their parents have had, fewer (at 50%) indicate that their family experience has been positive overall. When looking to the future, they are fairly positive with 86% anticipating a happy marriage and only 25% indicating that they expect typical marriages to end in divorce.

Most (70%) indicate that they would prefer to be virgins at marriage with an increase of 10% that if they could change the past, they would wait until after marriage for sex. Girls are more likely by 7% to indicate that marriage is intended to be a lifetime commitment than are boys, and that they would like to be a virgin at marriage.

Rural children are more likely to agree that traditional family is a main-stay of society but less likely to agree than God intends marriage for a lifetime or that they would like to be a virgin at marriage. Respondents older than sixteen indicate a slightly higher agreement that traditional family supports society, but are more pessimistic about the problems in marriage and show less desire to have a marriage like their parents.

### ***Relationships with People of the Opposite Sex***

Only half report that they have even held hands with a member of the opposite sex. However, 20% overall have engaged in sexual intercourse. Boys, rural youth, and youth older than sixteen are more likely to have engaged in intense sexual activity such as fondling genitals and sexual intercourse.

Between 50-60% express the opinion that fondling and sexual intercourse are never acceptable. Again, males, rural youth, and those older than sixteen tend to be more accepting of intense sexual activity for those who are not married than do the girls. Factors such as friendship, parental permission, or pregnancy are a permissive influence for fewer than 30%.

Respondents are most likely to have learned about sex from TV/movies. They are least likely to have learned about sex from their parents. There is little difference between urban and rural responses. However, boys show a slightly higher interaction with the internet as a source of sexual understanding, and older children are more likely to report that sex-related magazines or peers are a source of information than those below the age of sixteen.

### ***Beliefs and Perspectives on Daily Life***

Students report that their most frequent past time is listening to music, followed by reading, studying, and watching TV. At this point, the least likely past times are web-surfing, internet, or SMS chatting. Although reading the Bible more than one-hour a week is only practiced by half the respondents, the boys are more likely to have engaged in Scripture reading than girls. Respondents below the age of sixteen report slightly higher levels of television watching and Scripture-reading. The emerging cultural influence most likely to become a factor is electronic media followed by fashion magazines.

A majority of respondents indicate that they are very satisfied with their life and 22% somewhat satisfied. Conditions that are desired for the future sense of well-being are most frequently related to education, family, material well-being, making a difference, and physical health. Integrity is seen as a significant necessity by less than 50% of respondents. Activity in church and having a well paying job are about equally valued with close family relations and purpose for life. Least valued criteria for future satisfaction are having an influence on others and experiencing sexual fulfillment within marriage. Girls

show a slightly higher value than boys for physical health, activity in church, and relationship with God. Boys show a slightly higher value on having children.

About 50% of those responding indicate that they have lied in the last three months. Girls are about 10% more likely to have lied to their friends or peers. Rural youth are 3-5% more likely to have cheated or lied to an adult than urban youth. Sixty-five percent report having watched MTV at least once a week.

Thirty-six percent of respondents indicate they have watched an X-rated or pornographic movie, and 43% that they have read a pornographic magazine. Seventeen percent report having been drunk, 12% using tobacco, and 25% gambled. Boys are more likely by 6% to have read pornography, 8% to have been drunk or smoked, and 12% to have gambled than girls. Rural youth are also 3-5% more likely to have used drugs, read pornography, or gambled than their urban counter-parts. Older youth (21%) are twice as likely as those younger than sixteen years of age to have been drunk.

About 30% have intentionally attempted to hurt another person physically or emotionally. Boys are 8% more likely to have attempted to hurt someone else, and rural youth are 3% more likely to have used attempted physical violence than their urban counter-parts.

Much higher than expected is the indication that 23% have considered suicide and that 15% report having attempted suicide. Rural youth at 26% are 6% more likely to have had suicidal thoughts, while youth below the age of sixteen are 3% more likely to attempt suicide than their older counter-parts.

The greatest influence is reported as being parents followed by music and Scripture then Christian faith and friends. Movies and television are influences which are about 10% greater than that of religious leaders in the community at 34%. Twenty-six percent report the influence of other religions and 23% that of traditional ancestor worship and national political leaders.

### ***Religious Background and Practice***

Seventeen percent of the respondents indicate that they have no religious affiliation and 9% indigenous faith. Most however, fifty-five percent, indicate that they are Christian (Red Gown, Zion and ZCC may also have been identified as Christian) – 42% Protestant and 13% Catholic. Ninety percent of those responding indicate that their religion is either somewhat or very important to them.

The survey shows that 79% believe that their faith is very important, and equally, that it is important to be a member of a church. Over 70% of students have learned about the Bible or Jesus from all of the sources offered except Western literature; most (88%) learned about Jesus at Church.

Eighty-two percent prefer to think of God as omnipotent and Creator of the universe, however the existence of God is only positively affirmed by half of those responding and additionally considered probable by another 40%. Their belief in the existence of heaven and hell, that ghosts influence life, and other popular religious practices are similarly ranked with about 40% positive and another 40% tentative.

More than 70% indicate that the Bible is accurate and provides moral truths. However, despite the fact that 60% indicate that religious beliefs have changed their behavior, about 40% feel the Scriptures do not provide practical standards and that it is okay to bend the rules. This is supported by an equal number that regard truth as relative, morals as right “if it works,” and lying as a necessity. Thirty-four percent indicate that all religions teach equally valid truths, and 28% feel that following the Bible for moral guidance is foolish.

With respect to Jesus Christ, about 80% believe that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Him and accept the virgin birth. Seventy percent indicate that he was a real person who led a sinless life, and that if one does not accept Christ they will be condemned to hell. However, about half are unsure that Jesus physically rose from the dead.

It is unclear what is thought of the Holy Spirit since 70% accepted the statement “the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God’s presence but not a living entity.” Since this is the only statement concerning the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to validate whether the intent is to accept the idea and deny the person of the Holy Spirit, or to simply validate some faith in the Holy Spirit’s existence.

About 65% indicate that the devil is a symbol of evil, not a real living being, and there is an equal lack of certainty as to the existence and roles of angels.

Although 80% indicate that they believe in the judgment of God, there are varying views as to how one gains access to Heaven. Sixty percent indicate that if someone is “generally good” they will earn a place in Heaven, and 42% percent that it is necessary to confess sins and accept Jesus Christ for access to Heaven. Considering that 30% believe that following religious rites will ensure access to Heaven and that half of the respondents are uncertain whether people are reincarnated or not, we may see a pattern of uncertainty as to exactly whether or not Christian tradition is accepted as fully authoritative. Regarding sin, 40% agree that the whole idea is outdated.

Seventy-seven percent report they have made a commitment to Jesus Christ with female students 7% more likely to have made this decision. Most students report that they made a commitment at the age of 13 or older, with 31.9% selecting 13-15 years old and 23.7% selecting 16-18 years old.

About 80% indicate that they accept the accuracy of Biblical narrative and the value of prayer to change the events of life. However, 67% report that they rarely or only sometimes read Scriptures, including the Bible or the Koran. Nearly 60% report weekly or daily prayer, yet we also find that 60% indicate that all religions are essentially praying to the same God.

Eighty-four percent report that they are somewhat or very likely to continue to be involved in religious services on a regular basis after they have left home. However, the data indicates that fewer than half of the students participate in weekly or daily religious activities, though females are more likely to be involved in regular religious services.

Participation in formal religious study groups, as contrasted to religious services, is actually reported at less than 30% in weekly or daily participation. Group size for religious meetings tends to be small with nearly 60% attending groups smaller than 30. Rural groups are generally reported as smaller than urban groups, and females appear to report attending larger group size than males.

**Section IV: Swaziland Secondary Data**

**Secondary Research Profile  
SWAZILAND**



<b>DEMOGRAPHICS &amp; POPULATION</b>	
Population	1,147,741
Population (under 15 yrs)	41%
Internet users per capita	33 per 1000
Cell phones per capita	104 per 1000
Televisions per capita	20 per 1000
Computers per Capita	33 per 1000
Life Expectancy	32.5 yrs
Birth Rate (per 1,000 people)	26.98
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	70.66
% Estimated Urban / Rural Population	1 : 3
Largest City / Population	Manzini 120,034 – 10%
<b>EDUCATION &amp; LITERACY</b>	
Education is not free: private public partnership with fee based education	
Literacy Rate (over 15 yrs)	81.6%
Primary Enrollment	70.1%
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	88.4:95
Literacy Rate – Males	82.6%
Literacy Rate – Females	80.8%
<b>ECONOMICS</b>	
GDP (2005, per capita, USD) (per capita)	\$1,425.55
GDP (2005, Billions USD)	\$1,877
Poverty Rate (% below poverty line)	69%

<b>SOCIAL</b>			
Human Development Index <sup>1</sup> (out of 177)	146	Prisoners (per capita)	3,245 (1.5% youth)
Divorce Rate <i>as percent of Marriages</i>	Not Available	Adult prevalence rate 15-49 with HIV AIDS	194,163
Unemployment Rate	22%	Suicide: Male per 100,000 Female per 100,000	13 6
Murder (per capita) 1,000 people	93.32 per 100,000	Street Children	Not available
Child Prostitution	Not available	Teen Pregnancy (15-19 yrs)	Not Available
Drug use/Alcoholism	Not available	Child Prostitution	Not Available
Governmental children's organizations and agencies (secular)	Not available	Orphans, Children (aged 0–17) orphaned due to all causes, 2007, estimate (thousands)	70,000
<b>ETHNIC GROUPS &amp; RELIGIONS</b>			
African	97%	Christian	60%
European	3%	Indigenous beliefs	40%
<b>LANGUAGES</b>			
siSwati /English			

This data is drawn from CountryWatch.com, World Health Organization, and public domain data. Statistics are generally from 2005 but may be earlier if none more recent are available.

<sup>1</sup> Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the UN's Human Development Report since 1993.

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