

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

FROM HEGEMONY TO PARTNERSHIP



**A Church Manual on Men as Partners:
Promoting Positive Masculinities**

Edited by
**Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth and
Philip Vinod Peacock**





Printed in Switzerland by SRO-Kundig

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World Council of Churches

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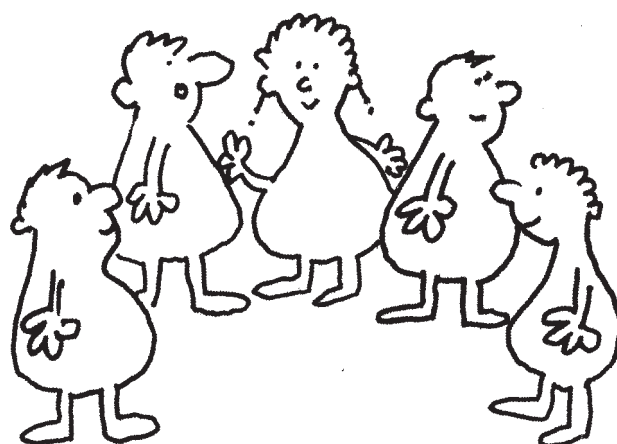
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PREFACE

Setri Nyomi

So God created humankind in his Image, in the Image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1: 27)

In the creation account of the very first chapter in the Bible, the emphasis laid on God creating humanity as male and female in God's Image is very significant. However, throughout history, cultural and other social factors have led even believers to think and act in ways inconsistent with this basic truth of both male and female being created in the Image of God. In so doing, such people have yielded to values that seem to glorify gender injustice. Men in many cultures have adopted hegemonic attitudes and ways of life and have oppressed women, and far too often they justify such behaviour either by reference to Bible passages or church doctrines.

A rereading of the word of God, acknowledging that human beings (male and female) are created in the Image of God, demands that we act differently. Such an acknowledgement is inconsistent with any way of life which makes a man a kind of "demigod" over women. If men have been culturally and socially conditioned to having a hegemonic self- understanding, our coming to faith in Christ calls us to begin putting off this "burden" and to begin to learn ways in which God calls men and women to partnership, in living in community as well as in engagement in God's mission.

This is what this book is about. The book is a result of men and women of God reading the word of God and daring to ask critical questions about how we can be more faithful to God in how women and men relate. The book has been developed with sensitivity to invite men into dialogue and critical examination of what it means to be a man in today's society. It is neither confrontational nor prescriptive, but takes into consideration that gender analysis needs to be contextual and must be done with gender justice perspectives. While some men who see their identity in the "macho" cultural construct may find the contents of this book challenging, many faithful Christians who are ready to be faithful to the Word of God will find this book resourceful and will see it as a valuable instrument that will strengthen their faith as they commit to the vision of partnership reflected in God's intention for women and men.



I give thanks to my colleagues who have worked very hard on this manual – to Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth who has led this effort on behalf of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and its predecessors. A special word of thanks is due to Rev. Dn. Philip Vinod Peacock for contributing to this manual and co-editing it. We are grateful to all from our churches and seminaries that participated in workshops and consultations through which this manual has emerged, as well as all the contributors and editors. This work is done in partnership with other ecumenical sister organizations. We note especially the partnership of the World Council of Churches through its women team leader – Dr. Fulata Lusungu Moyo. We are also grateful to Ms Daphne Martin-Gnanadason for assisting in bringing this volume to birth. I am grateful for how Dr. Aruna Gnanadason has placed her years of rich experience at our disposal in reading through this manual and helping in finalising the product.

In 2003, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches produced its first gender manual, *Created in God's Image: from hierarchy to partnership* with a focus on women. In this volume *Created in God's Image: from hegemony to partnership* the focus is on men. It is our hope that this manual may be used as an important instrument to promote men as partners, through a process of fostering positive masculinities.

We commend this manual to all people of faith. Let us dare to affirm in our attitudes and actions that we believe women and men are created in God's Image and when we move away from hegemony to partnership we will be more faithful to God.

Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi

General Secretary,
World Communion of Reformed Churches
Geneva



MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

This gender training manual, the product of a collaborative process of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) since 2007, is for me an important signpost on the path to that visible unity which is our goal in the ecumenical movement. Jesus' prayer "that they may all be one" (John 17:11) is not a call to unity at any cost; it is a call to a unity that is inseparable from the call to commitment against all forms of discrimination. "Positive masculinity" and the potential for full partnership between men and women has been the theme of recent study within the ecumenical movement, particularly in the WCC's programmatic work on women in church and society. We have been seeking ways of building a "just peace" community of women and men, in which men play their role side by side with women, in nurturing mutual partnership and especially in ending violence against women. We appreciate the initiative taken by the World Communion of Reformed Churches in this gender training manual and affirm the ecumenical collaboration of the WCC and the WCRC in this endeavour.

Since 1948, when the WCC formally came into being, the importance of women and men working together in the search for unity has been a theological and methodical given. Although there were not nearly as many women as men at our first assembly in Amsterdam, some watershed statements that have guided the ecumenical movement were declared by women like Kathleen Bliss.¹ A generation later in 1975, the Nairobi assembly report analyzed Christian unity in the church as a community of women and men. Section II of the document, "What Unity Requires", makes the following argument:

The relationship of women and men must be shaped by reciprocity and not by subordination. The unity of the Church requires that women be free to live out the gifts which God has given to them and to respond to their calling to share fully in the life and the witness of the Church.²

1 Kathleen Bliss' statement made at the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, adopted in its Message, remains a motto of the ecumenical passion for visible unity: "We intend to stay together!" (See "Bliss, Kathleen" in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement 2nd ed., Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002) 123.

2 For the full section report, see : David M. Paton (ed.). 1975. Breaking Barriers Nairobi 1975: The Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi, 23 November- 10 December, 1975. London/ Grand Rapids: SPCK; Wm. B. Eerdmans; 59- 69 (introductory information) 57- 58.



The Uppsala assembly's decisions became the starting point for a process that led to the recommendation³ by the Nairobi assembly in 1975 for a study to be undertaken by Women in Church and Society in collaboration with Faith and Order that led to the Sheffield Consultation and report on The Community of Women and Men in the Church (1981 and 1983, respectively). The Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988 to 1998), and its popularization of the Apostle Paul's concept of our Christian lives as "Living Letters" witnessing for Christ, played a significant role in the process as a result of which the WCC declared the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV), 2001- 2010, whose culmination will be marked by the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) in 2011.

As the WCC moves towards the IEPC at Kingston, Jamaica in May 2011, and beyond in its commitment to just peace, this gender manual will be part of the harvest of good practices that we would like to share with our member churches and partners as a testimony to peaceful partnership. As a community of women and men together, we can deconstruct misconceptions about being men that seem to uphold violence and domination as "masculine" traits, and we can work towards re- socialization for just peace. The modules of this manual examine gender, masculinity, identity and the sense of self, sexuality, gender- based violence, leadership, power and partnership. Discussion of the content can open a space where both men and women may explore their relationships to one another in the face of the social construction of gender roles, values and responsibilities that are imposed by contextual assumptions in church and society. Activities described in the manual are designed in creative ways that invite participants to consciously examine the processes of socialization of men and boys, and how social, cultural, religious, economic and political contexts influence such processes.

For the WCC, therefore, this gender training manual is an important contribution to the process of building a just, peaceable community, made up of women and men, which will bear holistic testimony in response to our Saviour's call for unity. I recommend this manual to all our member churches so that the journey towards unity may continue to be an adventure engaging both women and men of all ages and abilities.

Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit

General Secretary,
World Council of Churches
Geneva

³ Women and church unity: Recognizing that the catholicity of the Church requires the community of men and women in its life, we recommend that the churches participate fully in the study on the Community of Women and Men in the Church, with consideration of issues of theology, Scripture, tradition and ministry. We ask the churches to engage in serious theological reflection on these issues, especially in relation to the issue of the nature of the unity we seek. *Ibid.* 69



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for a gender manual on men, gender and masculinity came from gender awareness and leadership development workshops which were done by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in collaboration with regional and local churches and seminaries in all regions of the world, and out of which, the first WARC *Gender Manual, Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership* was produced in 2003. In 2005 a visit from representatives of the United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries to the WARC office helped to concretise the idea and a strategy and plan were developed to engage men in gender awareness and leadership development. I would like to thank Doreen Boyd for her support, friendship and good ecumenical collegiality.

Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership has been developed with involvement of many persons, churches and seminaries worldwide. I offer a special word of thanks to the World Council of Churches, in particular to Fulata Lusungu Moyo for her collaboration in this project, including the workshops on Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities which were done in Malawi, Guyana and Kenya. We appreciate very much the partnership and support of churches in these countries. We also recognize the ongoing ecumenical collaboration with St. Paul's University, Kenya, and in particular the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Esther Mombo.

The writing team comprised pastors, theologians and lay persons who worked assiduously to construct an instrument which would contribute to fostering positive masculinities and challenging gender injustices. A special word of thanks and appreciation to the contributors: Philip Vinod Peacock, Norbert Stephens, Fulata Lusungu Moyo, Felix Chingota, Joseph Prabhakar Dayam, Dale Bisnauth, Ezra Chitando, Maake Masango, James Tengtenga, Monica Melanchthon, Aruna Gnanadason, Nicole Ashwood, Solomuzi Mabuza and Sicily Muriithi. Many thanks also to Sam Moyo, Michael Miller, Daphne Martin- Gnanadason and Krysta Bisnauth for stories and activities. We acknowledge with gratitude the permission of Yaari Dosti Population Council, New Delhi to adapt and use their manual: *Young Men Redefine Masculinity* for the session on Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Module on Sexuality.

The process of developing the manual involved a writing workshop, individual work and peer review of articles. Philip Vinod Peacock, Dale Bisnauth and Norbert Stephens played leading roles in the peer review. Many thanks to these three men. In addition, Philip Vinod Peacock coordinated, commented and assisted in the overall review and editing of the document. He demonstrated great enthusiasm, commitment and passion for this work.

To Aruna Gnanadason who provided her expertise and creativity in the finalizing of the document, especially with the final review and proof reading, we express our deep appreciation. A book will not be as interesting without excellent presentation and artwork. In this regard we express thanks to Andrunie Harris for the cartoons and sketches and Mallika Badrinath (The Pen & Mouse), the design and layout artist.

Finally, to my colleagues, in particular to Setri Nyomi for his support and counsel and Daphne Martin- Gnanadason for her good work in assisting with managing the project, chasing up writers and offering tremendous support, many thanks!

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE MANUAL

TRANSFORMATIVE MASCULINITIES -
IN PARTNERSHIP FOR GENDER JUSTICE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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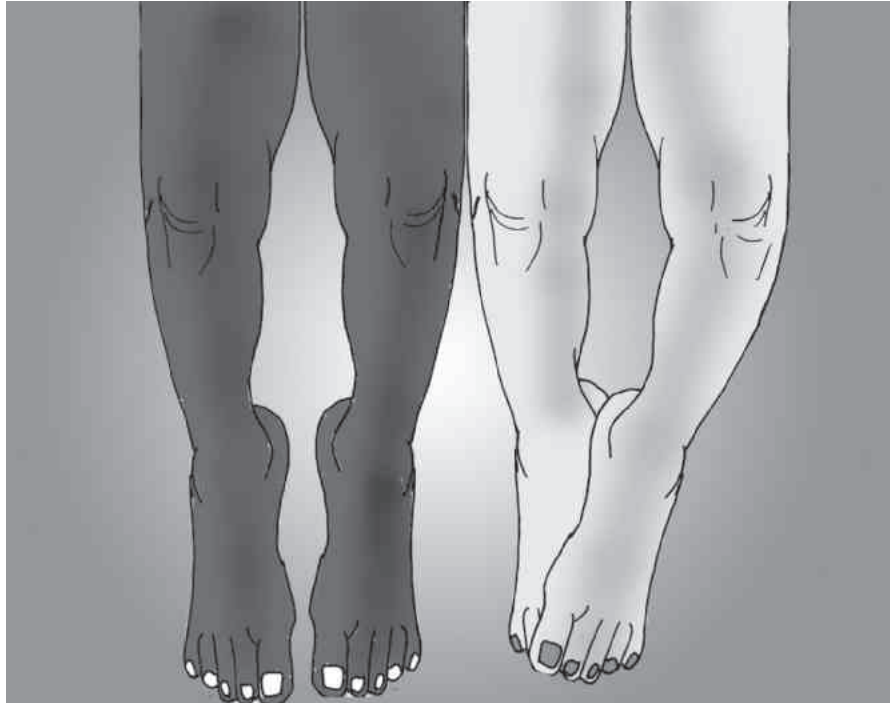
INTRODUCTION

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

There is an increasing realization that governments, international agencies and social movements alone cannot bring about justice and peace in human relationships. Religious influence is significant in deepening spirituality which nurtures life and promotes justice and right relationships as essential in socialization, community building, culture, norms and values. The church is increasingly being challenged to participate in the struggles for justice, peace and right relationships between and among people. Today's grave threats to life including the increasing prevalence of violence against women, HIV and AIDS and the fragmentation of families and communities pose an urgent challenge for churches to act with renewed vision and energy for gender justice and partnership. Gender justice refers to just and right relationships, mutual respect and accountability, respect for creation and the rights of both women and men to live life in fullness. It is also an important instrument in addressing gender and economic injustice, climate justice, violence, HIV and AIDS and a whole range of societal issues, which are rooted or affected by power relations between women and men. Gender relations are a major structure of all societies. It is a fundamental building block for church and society.

In recent decades ecumenical organizations and churches have included women's concerns and gender justice on their agendas. The World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade in Solidarity with Women (1988 to 1998) brought new energy, momentum and recognition to women's work. This process contributed to the promotion of women's concerns as a crucial issue for the churches. The World Communion of Reformed Churches (former World Alliance of Reformed Churches) has done significant work on gender awareness and leadership development rooted in the principles of gender justice and partnership. The ecumenical vision is based on the belief that the Church of Jesus Christ belongs equally to both women and men, who are both called to work for mutual respect, dignity and for caring communities, based on justice, love, understanding and right relationships. The main objectives of the gender justice programme are to challenge patriarchy, to enable churches to name and address gender injustices, to

strengthen women's participation in the ecumenical movement, and to facilitate renewal and transformation of churches and support their public witness for justice and peace. "Challenging patriarchy is not about hating men. It is about building a more humane system where men are not pressured to satisfy a very restricted notion of manhood and the limitations placed on women are removed so all can enjoy more fruitful lives and relationships." Althea Perkins, University of Guyana.



Women's movements in church and society have been a source of strength in broadening the agenda of the ecumenical movement, including the struggle against sexism, racism, casteism, tribalism, xenophobia and homophobia. Today's women continue to build on this legacy, offering alternatives for ushering in a better world where people live in mutual respect and compassion for each other. Increasingly, there is the recognition that the justice and partnership we seek will not advance significantly without strengthening men's partnership in the struggle for gender justice. We can no longer see gender justice as primarily a women's concern. It is a concern for men, women and the whole society and requires both men and women to work in partnership. Men have a great stake in this issue and can benefit from a process of education and awareness to be better men, sons, fathers, brothers, partners and lovers.

Men as partners: promoting positive masculinities

In 2006 the former WARC (now WCRC) in collaboration with the WCC and the United Methodist Church began a process of gender conscientization for men to promote positive masculinities and men's empowerment for partnership of women and men. This process is aimed at unravelling various forms of manhood from a faith perspective. It takes various approaches, which examine and question hegemonic masculinity and provide space for creating enabling environments in which men and women work towards re-defining, re-ordering, re-orienting and thus transforming dominant masculinity. Re-reading and studying the Bible with the perspectives of gender justice is essential in the process. This also has possibilities for further positive impact on society as hegemonic masculinity is transformed through critical

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consciousness of dominant social systems and structures in the political culture, religious institutions, economic and social models, family, community and civil society.

Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership is based on the understanding that gender includes both men and women and any attempt to transform gender relations must be inclusive of both. It takes into consideration the fact that patriarchy also stereotypes and marginalizes men, and is a barrier that prevents men from living life in fullness. Men are placed at the top on the pyramid of human relationships and are systematically encouraged to view power as dominating and controlling. Men, like women, have been socialized with deeply-held beliefs and values which form the basis of how gender is constructed. They also carry the weight of societal expectations of being masculine, which in many cases requires that they show bravery, virility, aggressiveness, dominance, competitiveness, insensitivity and emotional repression. Men are generally socialized into not dealing with their sense of self, especially their emotions, fears, and vulnerabilities. Often, they exercise violence against women so as to maintain their gender privileges of male authority. For example, in the Caribbean, a man or male child who does not show his capacity for aggressiveness as a demonstration of his manhood is called a "sissy", "anti-man" or "unmanly". To be non-violent, sensitive and caring is considered to be "woman-like" which is viewed as being inferior. It is expected that a "real man" flexes his muscles to show his power, which testifies to his masculinity. This logic holds well at all levels of the society and also extends beyond the realms of gender relations, for example, powerful states flex their muscles through military violence to ensure their hegemonic place in the world, and through economic violence to accumulate and maintain their economic and political power.

Promoting positive masculinities is important in dismantling this paradigm of power which is prevalent in the world. Such a process is critical in building men's capacity to be partners with women and in ending gender injustices and working to build wholesome communities. Increasingly, men are engaging in processes aimed at defining a new understanding of masculinity - what it means to be a man and to rediscover themselves and their place in church and society - alongside women. Men's organizations and networks are being established to address men and gender concerns and to look into their needs and ways of transforming their understanding of men, masculinities and gender. The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) are committed to support men in their work to build and promote positive masculinities and to foster partnership. Their work on Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities is carried out in collaboration with local churches in the process of gender conscientization as an effective tool for transformation. This process reflects critically on the Bible, theology, history, culture and identity, race, class, caste, tribe and class structures that support and frame gender injustices.

About the manual

Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership is a Church Manual on Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities. It builds on the gender manual, *Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership*, which was developed and published by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in 2003. It embodies and builds on the rich experiences gained from workshops, which were done from 2006 to 2010 in St Maarten, Malawi, Guyana and Kenya.

The workshops were organized by WARC in collaboration with the WCC, local churches and seminaries and were facilitated by a network of male theologians, pastors and lay persons in partnership with women theologians, pastors and lay persons. The overall goal of the manual is to enable churches and social organisations to promote gender justice and partnership of women and men through the development of leaders, who model good examples. It is intended to make a significant contribution to justice and transformation in church and society. The approach is not to demonize men or to instill feelings of guilt and powerlessness but to peel away the layers of gender construction which are key to understanding manhood within specific cultural, economic, political and social contexts. The overall aim is to make a difference by transforming dominant forms of masculinity which are destructive to women, men, families and society as a whole.

The manual is a dynamic resource that can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse communities and societies. It can be updated and enriched to ensure its relevance to local contexts. Churches should be encouraged to take an ecumenical and interfaith approach and, where possible, to hold joint workshops. The manual includes theological and biblical resources on men, masculinity and gender. The main topics are: understanding gender, masculinities, identity and sense of self, sexuality, gender based violence, leadership and power and partnership. The concepts of masculinity and gender are aimed at enabling men to be more conscious of gender as a construct that affects their own lives as well as those of women. Masculinity is explored from the experiences and teachings of social practices, behaviours and power constructions by which men become conscious of themselves as gendered subjects. It is designed for participants to critically and sensitively examine the socialization of men and boys and the influence of social, religious, economic and cultural contexts on this process. Participants will be engaged in sessions of self-awareness, socialization and sexuality as they study the Bible and examine masculinity against the background of culture, religion, social environment and how these play a significant role in shaping male roles and identities. They will connect with stories of gender based violence and develop strategies for churches to take action and for men to say no to violence against women. The modules include activities for discussion on how men's experiences, beliefs and values form the foundational basis of masculinity and the role of the church in this formation.

The manual was developed using a highly participatory methodology, which provides a helpful approach for critical examination of masculinity, men and gender through theology, social analysis, life experiences and interactive learning. Reading the Bible is an important aspect in the conceptualization of the manual - as a basis for reconstructing masculinities, which are not based on competitiveness, power, control, violence and the repression of emotions.

The development of the manual takes into consideration cognitive, behavioural, psychosocial, theological and spiritual dimensions of education for change. It draws on the pedagogical approaches of adult learning and popular education and opens the way to work with men and women at all levels where both lay and ordained persons can be engaged in the process of promoting positive masculinities and partnership.

This manual very intentionally focuses its attention on gender from the perspective of the community of women and men and attempts to empower men and women to contribute

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of their best to society. At this time, the new quest for identity by sexual minorities is not addressed – it is a concern of the churches and will for some time continue to be a difficult and at times controversial issue. But, it is a pastoral concern and a question of justice to other gendered people who do not easily fit into the categories of male and female – therefore it will need to be addressed both as a sociological fact and as a theological imperative. Monica Melanchthon, in her helpful Bible Study found in Section 4 of this manual, points out that the varied (and sometimes contradictory) texts in the Bible which deal with issues of human sexuality, in all its variety, need to be unraveled and read in context.

The methodology of this manual is informed by the pedagogy developed by Paulo Freire, which requires a highly participatory and transformative process of critical consciousness, analysis and strategic thinking. According to Freire, the process of conscientization enables persons and groups to reflect on their context and to think strategically, opting for ways which are informed by and empowered by critical reflection. Participants will engage in dialogue and experience personal empowerment in the process. The approach places importance on the contextual framework, life experiences, communication methodologies and relevance of people's needs, and seeks to engage men and women at the levels of mind, heart, soul and spirit.

Structure of the manual

The manual is divided into the following sections:

Section I provides a background to the book, a facilitator's guide. It includes principles and description of the methodology and a variety of tools and techniques to help stimulate participation. Facilitators should feel free to make changes to meet their particular style of facilitation and to respond to local needs. Facilitators are also encouraged to do their own research and use additional information.

Section II provides a reaffirmation of the principle of partnership between women and men and gives a theological and a biblical framework and resources for men, masculinity and gender awareness. It includes writings on reading the Bible in the context of sexuality and the political economy.

Section III contains eight modules with theological resources and Bible studies.

Section IV provides the following resources: Bible studies on key topics and texts, sermon notes, liturgical resources, a glossary of key words and concepts and references.



TRANSFORMATIVE MASCULINITIES IN PARTNERSHIP FOR GENDER JUSTICE

James Tengtenga

In my doctor's office is an interesting plaque which reads, "Women's faults are many. Men have only two: everything they do and everything they say." One of Dolly Parton's songs says: "My mistakes are no worse than yours just because I am a woman."

There is a battle raging: men against women. The solution for a long time has been to talk to women and empower them for the struggle. There is no doubt that when bringing groups from the margins it is necessary to have them apart for empowerment without the dominant lot. However, the dominant lot always reads such action as ganging up against them and, in reaction, either sneer at the programme or work out rightly against it. This is what has happened with gender work. It has been construed as women trying to work against men to emasculate them. Mutuality, interdependence and partnership envisaged by advocates for gender equality and justice are missed. With their masculinity considered to be at stake, men feel threatened and see the world rising up against them and this causes them to become defensive.

The work thus becomes one of gender peace and the transformation of masculinity. Without peace there will be no justice and without both there will be no partnership. This may require isolating the males for some socialization on gender issues; as a way to affirm their masculinity; and, engendering a proper perspective on the same. This may sound like empowering the already powerful but, if done well, may help men face the truth about the hegemonic masculinity they live and use. Hopefully such an exercise can lead to a discovery of masculinity which is not defined by its difference (and superiority) to the feminine. Patriarchy needs debunking but cannot be debunked in a heated battle. It needs a safe place where the truth can be confronted without anyone losing face.

Self- esteem and self- worth have to be understood to be intrinsic to our humanity and not based

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on subjugation and hegemony. Gender is not about neutering of the sexes or the creation of an androgynous society. Sex difference was intended by God so that human beings can be complementary to each other. However, it has to be acknowledged that there is a serious differential set by our patriarchal society and hegemonic masculinity. The internalisation of this by both sexes is part of the problem. There needs to be a transformation of the self-understanding of males, leading to an appreciation of their masculinity by both sexes regardless of what gender role they play in society.

Some people believe that the masculine has to be defined by what it is not and by a caricature of the female. (It goes something like this: The masculine cannot be defined without the inferior female. Therefore masculine equals not female but the dominant and hegemonic.) This, it is assumed, leads to all the biological differences, advantages and superiority which in turn are applied to subjugate and not to complement the other and, consequently leads to violence as a demonstration of these qualities. The woman who dares to be different is breaking the law/norm. If by chance that breaking of the norm is taken positively she is taken to be “male” since superiority and prowess in any form is understood to be male. In our language people say of such a woman: “*Mkazi amene uja ndimwamuna*” (translated: That woman is a man!). Even male weakness is understood to be superior to femaleness. It is as if the female is the epitome of weakness. A wimp is a woman!

For many centuries, women around the world have struggled against gender-based subordination and its multiple manifestations – including violence and abuse inflicted upon them by male partners and family members. However, it continues to be a way of life for far too many women and girls in all communities, rich and poor, the world over. Domestic violence is often not seen as a social problem but as a private matter between a man and his wife. In many cases her partner accepts it as a part of “married life” and as a normal means of discipline of a woman. It is also accepted that the woman is the property of the man and what he does with his property is his business. If this kind of violence is done outside of the home and against someone who is not a relative, it is then moved to another level and is seen as a public matter to be dealt with by the law.⁴

The injustices perpetrated against women have roots in these perceptions and attitudes. In order to fully redress the imbalances and eradicate the abuses and abusive tendencies in the males it is imperative that men change their perceptions of women and see women's empowerment and ascension not as a threat but an egalitarian and equitable approach to the mission of God in the world. For God created them male and female and gave them the authority to subdue the earth. Not one without the other but both. The Genesis 2 account of the creation story has been interpreted to make it sound as if the male was created first and then the female, as an afterthought in light of male loneliness. Such understandings reinforce the negative treatment of women.

The exercise will, therefore, also need to address our biblical heritage, which has been used to reinforce the hegemony. The patriarchy of the Old Testament and some of the Pauline corpus will need to be reviewed in the light of partnership and gender justice. Not only is biblical

⁴ Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, *Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership*, A church manual for gender awareness and leadership, World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Geneva Switzerland, 2003). 122

hermeneutics at issue here but also a hermeneutic of suspicion needs to be applied to our cultural and social contexts together with the changing dynamics of our societies that have led to calling into question gender role stereotypes.

Partnership will not be achieved if the gender dividend continues to favour the male in employment and remuneration both in our secular society and in the church. Matters of leadership will therefore need to be faced squarely just as the issues raised by affirmative action. If the church is an instrument of God in God's mission, partnership in mission means male and female in partnership and not masculine hegemony with token women in leadership. The matter of justice, which is part of God's shalom, has to be reflected in the structures of those who are called to be his body. It is, therefore, the height of hypocrisy for the church to champion justice if its structures mirror the unjust structures of society. It is therefore imperative for men and male leaders to begin to appreciate that the hegemony in which they live and wield power is not of the Gospel.

It is important for the church to influence decisions and choices in accordance with Christian values which include compassion instead of greed, care instead of selfishness, cooperation instead of competitiveness and respect for human rights instead of serving structures and systems that are created to exclude rather than to include people. This must be done with an inclusive perspective in which the possibility exists to transform society into one that cares for all people.⁵

Given the different contexts in which we live one cannot claim that there is one understanding of masculinity. Even though the discussion has dealt with the matter as though that were the case, it is recognized that there are many manifestations of hegemonic masculinity. This being the case the matter of the socialization of males and the male child will need to be looked into. What will also need to be borne in mind is that this is but one of the many attempts to redress the imbalance leading to true partnership. It is also hoped that this will advance the dialogue towards the realisation of equality of men and women in God's mission. "In Christ there is neither male nor female..." for we are all called and empowered by the same Spirit.



5 *Ibid.* 110

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

Methodology

The modules and activities in this manual are designed to meet the needs of adult learners. The learner is viewed as a partner, bringing valuable experiences, skills and knowledge to the learning process. This methodology is influenced by the rich international field of education for change and a popular education approach. It aims to be learner-centred and empowering, beginning from where men and women are located, and acknowledging and integrating their knowledge and experiences through shared and highly participatory learning processes.

Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership is offered as a self-paced tool, which means that facilitators can use it at their own pace - in one or several workshop sessions, and in an order that makes sense within the local context. It takes into consideration the varied and diverse cultural and social contexts of its users. It therefore encourages adaptation to such needs, for example, through the inclusion of facilitation and learning styles that are culture-specific. It also allows for concrete and relevant examples of local issues in an effort to deepen participants' understanding of how gender differences influence the way issues are perceived, understood and responded to at various levels of society.

Stories and case studies are used to bring to life the issues and to enrich the discussion. These stories are from various cultural settings and are used to stimulate discussions and for people to share similar experiences. They help to stimulate reflection, analysis and discussion on key issues. You need to note that the stories in the book are true but most names and identities have been changed for discretion.

Facilitators are encouraged to familiarize themselves with local perspectives on gender issues and socialization processes and agencies - such as schools, the church, the media - as well as specific cultural forms, and to bring these to the workshop discussions. Preparation of additional handouts on local gender issues is encouraged. Facilitators should also obtain information on the history, theology, statement of faith, structure and polity of the churches that will participate in the workshop.

Gender, as discussed throughout the manual, is a challenging concept. As with any new concept, the terminology used can create obstacles to learning if it is not explained and understood. A glossary of terms and concepts is provided in Section IV to accompany the manual and should be consulted to make the learning a qualitative experience. You may also need to add terminology from the local context.

Facilitation: a leadership style

The role of the workshop leader is that of a facilitator. Facilitating is a form of leadership that does exactly what the word implies – facilitates the process, participation and activities. It is unlike the “top down” version of teaching where teachers are seen as the experts and students listen, absorb and learn. Facilitative leadership enables a process of education for change and requires a different approach to learning. We suggest a facilitative approach for these workshops.

The term facilitation can mean different things to different people. For our purpose, to facilitate means to make learning a more involved and inclusive process. We view the facilitation style as one which incorporates the expertise of both facilitators and all participants in the learning process. The approach is built on the assumption that participants are not empty vessels to be filled with knowledge but that they come to the workshop with life experiences, knowledge and skills. The facilitator can thus be described as a leader who uses his/her expertise to enable the experiences and skills of participants to emerge, and to inform and shape the discussion, adding new information, and encouraging processes of critical thinking and analyses.

The Bible Study approach in this manual recognizes and values the epistemological privilege of the marginalized. It uses the facilitation style where the role of the facilitator is also an animator, encouraging a high level of participation. Group work is helpful in this process. You may also consider creating groups according to age and sex, depending on the themes, topics and issues to be addressed. For example, in the Masculinity workshop in Eldoret, Kenya, the larger group was divided into younger men, older men and women. The facilitator can be creative about how the groups are divided.

The Bible Study facilitator needs to prepare by reading the theology and Bible resources in this book and others researched. He/she must study the text, context and issues addressed. In his/her introduction to the Bible Study, the methodology should be briefly introduced, to explore the meaning of the text in the light of the context of those who are reading it. The facilitator should indicate that there are no right and wrong answers but the point is to encourage everyone to speak.

A successful gender awareness workshop depends to a large extent on the knowledge and skills of the facilitator. In addition to the skills mentioned above, it is important that the facilitator is skilled and knowledgeable in gender perspectives and clearly understands how gender roles are played out in church ministries, structures and systems. He/she should be a person, preferably from the church, who is experienced in conducting gender-related workshops and leadership training.

Making facilitation work – giving and receiving feedback

Giving and receiving feedback are essential elements of a highly participatory process. How this is done is important not only to facilitate input and feedback from all involved, but also to build trust, to empower, and to encourage an inclusive and democratic process. The facilitator can empathize with participants by acknowledging when he/she has also understood the issue they are raising. This builds bridges and demonstrates that the facilitator is also willing to learn. The facilitator can offer suggestions for alternative ways of looking at a problem. In dealing with gender sensitivities, there are likely to be participants who object to or resist what is being said or done. It is important not to ignore this resistance or to criticize those who resist. Many people are uncomfortable with change and, in the case of gender discussions, men are more likely to put up barriers to participating.




It is important to acknowledge different perspectives and to challenge them in a constructive manner. Some of the activities in the earlier modules in the manual are structured to allow for work in groups of the same sex. These can be very effective in helping both men and women take ownership of the issue and become more effective participants in the rest of the workshop.

Working with discomfort/sensitivities

In any group work or workshop there are likely to be moments of discomfort when incidents upset participants or touch upon deep sensitivities. Education for social change challenges us to confront and deal with issues which touch us deeply. Confronting gender inequalities not only challenges us personally but can evoke painful memories. Some participants may be living with fear and violence or may carry the painful impact of these in their lives.

Promoting positive masculinities needs to build into the training process the capacity to deal with discomfort and sensitivities. This can lead not only to a productive workshop, but also build trust, strength and the ability to make lasting changes in the lives of both men and women. It is important to be prepared to deal compassionately with any incident which may occur.

For some activities there are *Notes to the facilitator* to help the facilitator to respond to such discomfort and sensitivities. Here we provide some general suggestions:

-  Prepare ahead, with your co-facilitator and/or resource persons if there are any, for sensitivities or discomfort that may arise. Identify a discreet place, away from the large group, in case it is needed. Be prepared to take breaks if and when required.
-  Watch out for symptoms of discomfort – such as silence, other nonverbal behaviour, personal attacks, side conversations and challenges that attempt to deny other perspectives. Also watch out for non-participation or reluctance to participate in activities as this often has an adverse effect in small group dynamics.
-  Acknowledge what you see is happening and provide support to talk about feelings and emotions, keeping in mind that this is not a therapy session. Seek permission to pursue the issues raised and exercise judgment on how far you can go in dealing with them.

- ✎ Say what you see and, if possible, deal with the issue openly. For a highly emotional situation you should consider calling a break and work with the person(s) to bring some healing to the issue. Decide with the person(s) involved as well as resource persons on how to proceed. Remind participants of the ground rules they developed on giving support and on confidentiality.
- ✎ Provide enough time for healing. Activities which deal with delicate issues should not be dealt with at the end of the day when there is not enough time for emotions or sensitivities to be adequately responded to before the close of the session. Encourage support of other participants, by being alert to offers of such support.
- ✎ Be prepared to move on to the next activity and do so when you see that the group has gone as far as they can with the situation. It may be helpful to highlight key points and indicate where in the workshop these may be discussed further. You can sense how much of this summary will be useful without referring again to the situation. Some form of closure will be necessary before you move on to the next activity.

Working with the modules

The modules have been developed to provide a solid understanding of the concept of masculinity and gender construction and its impact on the lives of men and women in the church and in society in general.

The Bible studies provide a special space for the life experiences of participants to interact with their faith and belief. They also bring new perspectives on certain issues and, for many participants the studies may present a new approach to the Bible. The facilitator should prepare adequately beforehand by reading the text and background material before the session and allowing for creative and different perspectives among participants. The facilitator should decide when to give assignments in relation to biblical studies and where necessary to remind participants to read texts and background material before coming to the workshop.

Each module is structured to:

- improve participants' awareness and understanding of the issue
- provide stimuli for discussion and critical inputs and feedback
- encourage analysis based on improved information and understanding
- provide a biblical and theological framework for understanding
- assess key points and lessons learned from the module

Review of the day and of the module

Reviewing the module and each day's activities is important and helps to monitor progress on the workshop agenda agreed by participants. The review reminds participants of how much they have covered, key lessons learned and discussion points, and informs on next steps. It provides opportunities to make necessary changes such as adjustment in time management or in the agenda. Generally it provides a picture of the progress made in the particular module or day and in the workshop as a whole.

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Reviews should be “crisp” and brief and can be done at the end of the day or at the beginning of the following day. An easy approach to the review is to facilitate a brief summary of key lessons learned and highlights of the activities and discussions. It can be prepared ahead of time on a flipchart. The facilitator may also want participants to add to her/his presentation.

There are a variety of interesting and stimulating ways to do reviews. While the facilitator may need to present the review verbally, he/she can also use visual aids such as drawing a spiral or circle to trace what was covered within the specific module or day. If the facilitator chooses to use visual aids, at the end of each review the drawings can be mounted on the wall to trace the journey of participants' learning. These drawings make good visual aids and very valuable resources for participants as they move forward to the next module.

Tools, techniques and energizers

Workshops need a variety of tools, techniques and energizers to ensure that participants remain engaged in the learning process. Using a variety of exercises will help stimulate and invigorate the learning process. The exercises take into consideration that adults learn best by using a variety of senses and experiences. They keep participants alert by dealing with boredom, fatigue and low energy. It is important to keep in mind that most adult learners may not be used to sitting in a workshop for long periods.

Some of the exercises provided here may be familiar to the facilitator, but we have included descriptions, purposes and suggestions on how to use them. The facilitator can add others they may know and have found useful. We suggest that the facilitator look upon this section as a “tool kit” in which helpful exercises and ideas are placed to make her/his work more enriching and rewarding.

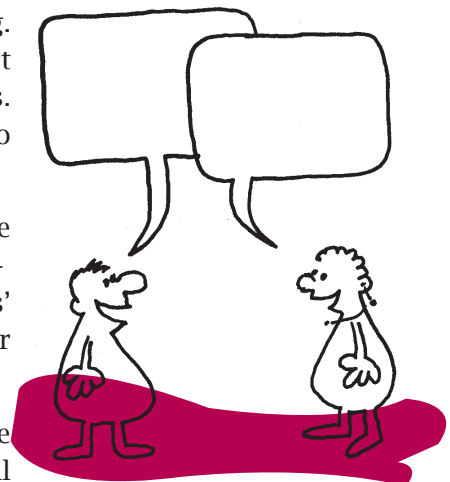
Brainstorming

Description: Brainstorming is used to gather as many ideas as possible in a limited time frame. The aim is to free and stimulate the imagination in order to come up with new ideas for the task at hand.

How it is done: The group is given a specific question to examine. A fixed time limit should be set for brainstorming. Make sure everyone understands the question before you start and ensure that everyone has a chance to express her/his ideas. The facilitator needs to ensure that the group is focused and to monitor the time carefully.

A note-taker will ensure that all ideas are written on the flipchart/chalkboard. All ideas are valid at this point. Note-taking should be clear and should try to use participants' words as much as possible. Both the facilitator and note-taker are also participants in the activity.

Each person tosses in any idea which occurs to her/him. No one is allowed to criticize, judge or comment upon the ideas until



the time for brainstorming is up. Creative thinking should be encouraged and ideas that may seem strange should not be ignored!

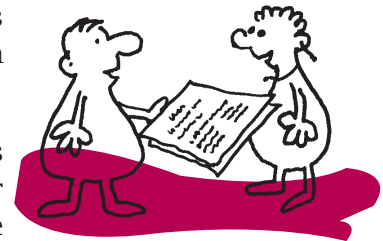
After the list is completed, discussion and evaluation of the ideas and suggestions takes place. The list is refined and some ideas are eliminated or combined. Depending on the use for which the items are intended, the group could go on, for example, to set priorities.

If all that is required is a list of ideas on a particular issue, the activity can be stopped when the list is ready.

Case studies

Description: A case study is basically a story giving a description of a situation and is followed by questions for discussion. Stories of people from other communities with similar problems to those of participants make ideal subjects for case- study analysis. The case study should be designed in such a way that the story is relevant to participants' experiences. Participants should be given enough time to read, think and discuss it.

Why use it: To discuss examples of common issues or problems in a safe environment. The case study offers opportunities for participants to develop problem- solving skills and to promote group cohesion. It enables participants to analyze situations similar to ones they may have to deal with at home and to determine how they can respond, including identifying alternative behaviours and solutions to those commonly used.



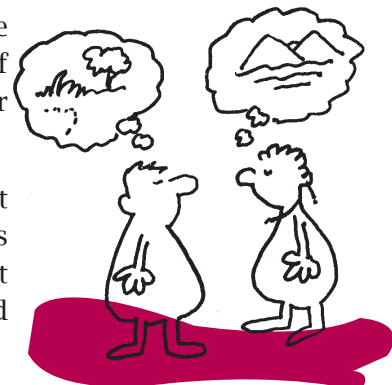
How it is done: The facilitator distributes a written case study that describes a relevant situation or problem to be addressed. Participants read the case study, and identify issues which relate to the activity. The case study can also be dramatized and used to look at the experiences of participants from an objective point of view.

Creative visualization

Description: Creative visualization is a **tool used in education techniques to amplify cognition and thinking and to develop and share ideas**. It is a process of creating calming pictures or images in the mind.

Why use it: It helps to provide a simple, gentle and effective way for drawing out and improving the internal dimension of participants and it can also help them to relax. It helps to clear the minds of participants for exercises such as visioning.

How it is done: The facilitator optimizes the use of environment and language and draws on the signal of her/his five senses and imagination. A suitable environment is a pleasant and quiet garden where participants are led in a brief exercise to relax and clear their minds.



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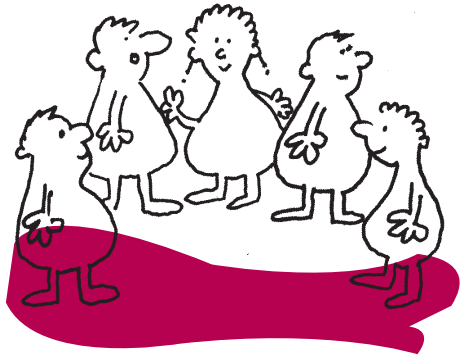
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Ask participants to close their eyes and use a soft or gentle tone and language that will prompt participants to create a certain image in their minds. Speak slowly, allowing time for them to imagine.

Games

Description: Games are structured activities, requiring a certain number of players who play according to set rules in order to accomplish a task. Games must be well thought out and be relevant to the situation.

Why use them: Games are usually a fun and effective way to engage participants in learning new problem-solving skills. Carefully constructed games that are not intimidating can engage even the most hesitant of learners.



How they are done: Facilitators can easily invent games that help participants grasp new information or practice new skills. Here are some suggestions to help plan games:

- ✎ Involve participants in developing games, e.g. ask for ideas, questions, etc.
- ✎ Develop rules that are clear and easy to follow. These should be written up and posted
- ✎ Encourage participants to work in teams so that both strong and weak players are evenly distributed.

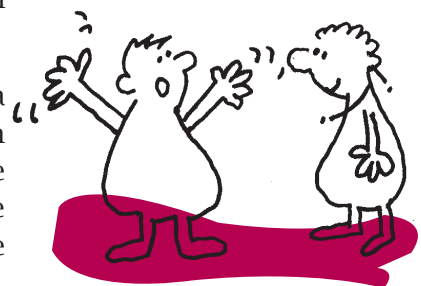
Role play

Description: Role play usually involves two or more persons who enact parts in a scenario designed to help clarify an issue or problem. It is used to help people visualize an issue or situation, to assess consequences of decisions made and actions taken, and to provide an opportunity for participants to see how others might feel and/or behave in a given situation. It is also used to provide a safe environment for participants to explore problems they may feel uncomfortable discussing in real-life situations.

Role play helps participants who are more comfortable in acting out an issue that may be difficult or painful to explain. It can also be a fun and energizing method for participants to deal with tough issues or situations, particularly those dealing with power and control.

Why use it: To visualize and present a situation in order to bring out different perspectives, issues that are not transparent, multiple dimensions of an issue, etc.

How it is done: Participants either act out roles from a given script or are asked to design a script based on a given situation. It is important to remind participants that they are playing roles and not themselves. Observers watch, and while the norm is not to interfere, some scripts call for interactive audience participation.

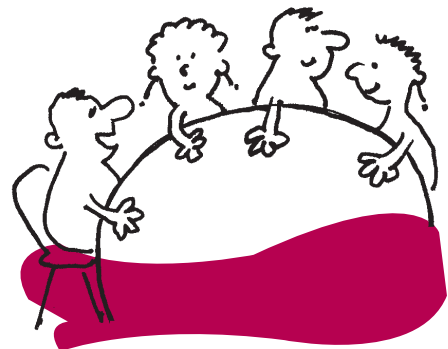


The facilitator should provide instructions if the script is to be developed or distribute an already developed script. Time should be allowed to read and prepare, where necessary. The following are useful suggestions:

- a) Prepare necessary props ahead of time and hand these out to the groups
- b) Ensure that instructions are clear
- c) Allow adequate time for performance, including where interaction is used
- d) Provide time for reflection and feedback, asking questions such as:
 1. Players - how they felt during the role play
 2. Audience - what the players did well/what they could have done differently
 3. Interactive audience - how they felt participating, how it worked for them
 4. All - what learning or insights they have gained.

Small groups

Description: Small groups are used mainly for discussion purposes. They allow learners to share their experiences and ideas or to solve problems in a more focused manner. Small groups are also used to improve problem-solving skills, to help participants share with and learn from each other, as well as to give participants a greater sense of responsibility in the learning process. They are also used to promote teamwork, to bring diverse perspectives to problem solving, to address problems of learners who are not comfortable in a large group, and to clarify personal values.



Why use them: To allow for participation in a less threatening context - often shy people will speak more freely in a small group; to accomplish several tasks at the same time; to provide the opportunity for different leaders to assert themselves; to break the training rhythm; to produce written products; to help participants meet each other.

How they are done:

- *👤 Group tasks and objectives should be clearly defined. A group leader should be appointed who understands the tasks and products for each small group
- *👤 Groups appoint a note-taker who will report on behalf of the group
- *👤 Groups can be homogeneous or heterogeneous - for mixed groups, "count off"
- *👤 For different tasks, the group composition can be changed.



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SECTION 2

READING THE BIBLE IN THE CONTEXT OF
GENDER JUSTICE AND SEXUALITY:

Uncovering new meanings in the Bible –
methodologies for rereading and reinterpreting texts

The Image of God for today: some insights on the Imago Dei

Patriarchy and the political economy of the Biblical culture

Towards a liberatory Christian theology for men:
interrogating the gendered self

Towards a theology of partnership of men and women

UNCOVERING NEW MEANINGS IN THE BIBLE – METHODOLOGIES FOR REREADING AND REINTERPRETING TEXTS

Philip Vinod Peacock

The study of the Bible is a challenging and a rewarding activity. Within the context of the reformed tradition the Bible is pivotal in discerning matters of faith and order, it is the definitive source of authority and therefore the serious study of the Bible is central to the life and work of the reformed churches. For centuries the Bible has inspired ordinary people to act in extraordinary ways, to speak truth to power, to struggle for justice and to discern the right thing to do in times of controversy. The beauty of the Bible is that it is not only a book that we read but it is also a book that reads us.

Yet how are we to understand what the Bible says to us today, after all the Bible was written at least 2000 years ago in a context and culture and does not seem to resonate with the world in which we live today. The Bible uses words, language, metaphors and imagery that is alien to our experiences today and it is not as though we can summon the authors of the Bible to explain what they meant. To act as though the words of the Bible have eternal relevance is to allow ourselves to slip into the dangers of fundamentalism and to deny the history and the context within which the Bible was written. Therefore to understand the Bible today requires that we actively engage with the text of the Bible; the context within which the Bible was written; and the context today. In other words a study of the Bible requires that we engage in interpreting the Bible in a way that is relevant and speaks to our present contexts. Technically this act of interpreting the Bible is called hermeneutics, where hermeneutics is defined as the science or perhaps the art of uncovering meaning.

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There are many methods by which the Bible can be interpreted. Biblical scholars have devised several ways in which the Bible can be studied. In this manual many different ways are used to interpret the Bible. In the following sections we shall explore some of these methods. We shall do this by looking at Text and Context, Suspicion and Generosity, Imagination and Remembering and finally post- colonial hermeneutics.

Text and Context: To look at the context in which the text arises is to realize that the Biblical text arises out of a particular context and situation of human life and that it is not a 'given'. To interpret the text from this perspective attempts to try and determine what the author of the text was trying to convey to the readers, what the intent of the author was so to speak.

To understand that the text is human production is important because it enables us to understand that the text though inspired, and more importantly inspiring, was not dictated to the authors that wrote it but rather they wrote out of their own faith experiences in the light of the revelation they had received. To understand the text therefore it is necessary for us to understand the historical circumstances within which it was produced.

Biblical scholars often speak of the two eyes of hermeneutics where while one eye looks behind to the people and the situations that were involved in the creation of the text, the other eye looks forward to the present and the present context. It is the 'eye in front' that seeks to discern the present situation, it uses the tools of social analysis to understand the present reality, the basic assumption being that the text has to be made real and only becomes real in the light of the present context. To emphasize the context is to emphasize that the text does not have an eternal meaning, that Biblical truth does not hang in the air, but that it comes to life when it is read in the light of the present reality.

Suspicion and Generosity: We must understand that the text of the Bible has been used through the ages to either uphold or critique a particular context in a particular moment of time. The feminist offering to Biblical hermeneutics is to enable us to understand that the Bible, in both its authorship and history of interpretation, was written in a patriarchal context and therefore lends itself to the support of patriarchal values. The text is therefore never neutral and has tended to support hierarchy and exclusion. The question of who is saying something and within which socio- economic context the statement is being made are critical tools which enable the reader to make clear the biases and legitimacies of both the interpreter as well as the text. In the present context however some argue that such an approach to the text has to be tempered with what they would refer to as a hermeneutic of generosity because these texts are a vehicle of human divine mediation, for the faith community. From this perspective one is invited to adopt a reverential position towards the text while at the same time affirming the commitment of both the text as well as the interpreter to human worth and human emancipation.

Imagination and Remembering: Another way of reading the Bible today is to use the tools of imagination and remembering. To use the tools of imagination and remembering invites us to move beyond the confines of the text itself to hear the voices of those who have either been silenced or left out by the text and its historical interpretations. While Biblical hermeneutics is a function of the written word, the use of imagination invites us to listen to those voices that



are missing. Therefore for example, when employing this method we would be invited to consider the voice of Vashti when we are reading the Book of Esther. This process of imagination is often done using the methodology of storytelling and drama and the readers are invited to participate in the story of the Bible by joining their life stories to the story of the text. This creative process enables the readers to highlight certain aspects of the text that speak to them as well as plays the dual role of drawing the community into the experiences of the characters in the text. Such a reading draws parallels between the experience of the reader and the experience of the characters in the text. Closely related to the role of imagination is the role of remembering. This is to say that people's history plays an important role in the hermeneutical process. This process would invite people to bring in

their personal narratives as a way to understand and determine the meaning of the Biblical text for them.

Remembering, using personal and community histories, also plays the role of “re-remembering” of a community that has been broken by violence. Reading the Bible with tools of imagination and people's stories and histories also has the potential to bring healing to broken communities.

Lastly and possibly of greatest importance today, when reading the Bible together in the light of our experience of ‘empire’⁶ is the offering of post-colonial hermeneutics. This method invites us to understand the Bible as a book that is constantly engaged with empire and invites us to read it from that perspective. The Bible after all, is a book that has been written in the context of empire, be it the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek or Roman empires. It is the story of the people of God as they attempted to live out God's truth in the context of empire that breaks human relationships and subsumes women and men to the logic of empire and empire building. This hermeneutical school invites us to critically study the text in the light of a faith response to empire. It draws parallels between our experience today and the experience of the people of the Bible who also struggled in the context of empire.



⁶ The word ‘empire’ as defined by WARC, in its Accra Confession, (2004), refers to the coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power that constitutes a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their own interest.

THE IMAGE OF GOD FOR TODAY: SOME INSIGHTS ON THE IMAGO DEI

Philip Vinod Peacock

Introduction

In the light of the terrible violence that is perpetrated on women and children the world over, the question of the worth of human life seems as pertinent today as ever. The time has come for us to clarify our thinking on the human person. That is to say what is theological anthropology? From very ancient times theological thinking within the Judeo-Christian heritage has considered the Imago Dei or the Image of God to be the corner stone of thinking on who humans are and on their relationship to God⁷, to other humans, and the world around them. The effort of this essay will be to re-look at some of the theological insights that have been made about the Image of God and to see what relevance this can offer us for our understanding of the human person in our present context.

The concept of the Image of God is essentially a Biblical one, though it has to be mentioned that it has a far greater role to play in systematic theology than in Biblical theology. The fact is that the term 'Image of God' is mentioned only five times in the Bible three of which are part of the Priestly writings in Genesis. These occurrences are to be found in Gen. 1: 26, 27, Gen. 5:1, 3 and Gen. 9:6. However it should also be mentioned that this concept is the background for the understanding of Psalm 8:5, Wisdom 2:23 and Ecclesiastes 17:3 and that it is also used as a traditional concept for the understanding of certain New Testament passages such as James 3:9 and I Cor. 11:7. Yet while there are only a few passages which refer to the concept of humans being in the Image of God in the Bible itself, the volume of literature which has been written about it is expansive, both in terms of the quantity as well as the fact that it has been addressed repeatedly throughout Christian history.

Thinking on the Image of God is found from the times of the early Church. Origen, Gregory

⁷ Jurgen Moltmann *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1985) 215

of Nyssa and Augustine have used this concept in their writings in early times, as have theologians such as Pannenberg⁸ and Moltmann⁹ in the present time. The concept has also found its significance in important church documents such as *Gaudium Et Spes* of the Roman Catholic Church and even the Covenant on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation of the World Council of Churches. Indian theologians such as Abhishiktananda¹⁰ have also explored the depths of its meaning while, at the same time, the concept also has a special place for feminist theologians.¹¹

The effort of this essay however will not be to offer a historical analysis of how the concept has been used over time and context, nor will it attempt an exegesis of the relevant passages but rather will raise certain theological themes and concepts that have arisen out of the notion of the *Imago Dei* and will make an attempt to draw out an understanding of these for a relevant Christian Anthropology for our times.

The Image of God is indicative of a special designation of human beings

While there is considerable debate of what the term ‘the Image of God’ could indicate, of one thing we can be certain: that the concept is indicative of a special designation of human beings. In the Genesis creation narratives we find that the creation of humans is distinct from the creation of the other creatures on two grounds. Firstly, we note that while the other creatures are created after their own kind it is only humans that are created in the Image of God. Secondly we also note that while the rest of creation is created by the word of God it is only humans that are created by the special act of God. The German theologian Moltmann while making this point says, “Human beings come into being, not through God’s creative word but out of his special resolve.”¹² We must understand the Image of God in humans is that characteristic which separates us from all of creation. This understanding of humans being separate and even over and above creation has had its negative and disastrous implications, a point that we will deal with later, but the point that has to be made here is that at least for the creation narratives humans are to be distinguished from the animals.

This point of course has serious implications for conceptions of humanity that derive from using biology as ideology. It immediately brings into question the entire ideology of social Darwinism¹³. There can hardly be any doubt that Darwin’s theory of evolution has had its social significance for the human community. The theory of the survival of the species has not only had its relevance for the animal kingdom but it is often applied to the human community as well as a justification of the fact that the strong will thrive while the weak perish. Insights from the Animal Kingdom are used to justify this kind of position; therefore the displacement of Indigenous Peoples and the usurpation of Indigenous lands is justified on the ground that

8 Wolfhart Pannenberg *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985) 43 - 74

9 Jurgen Moltmann *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation Op. Cit.*, 215 - 244

10 Abhishikitananda *Saccidananda* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1974) 163 - 174

11 Chung Hyun Kyung *To be human is to be created in God’s Image* in Ursula King ed. *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader* (London/Maryknoll: SPCK/Orbis Books, 1994) 251 - 259

12 Moltmann *Op. Cit.*, 217

13 Social Darwinism is a pejorative term used for various late nineteenth century ideologies which, while often contradictory, exploited ideas of survival of the fittest. While the most prominent form of such views stressed competition between individuals in free market capitalism, it is also associated with ideas of struggle between national or racial groups

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some will have to bear the cost of development. The ideology of competition and the devastating effect it has on the poor and the marginalized is also justified using similar arguments. But the use of biology as ideology is not only restricted to social Darwinism.

Feminists have long struggled against this use of biology as ideology while insisting that gender roles are a matter of social construct and are not natural. Among the many excuses that are offered for patriarchy is of course that similar tendencies are to be found among the animals. The striking point of the Genesis narratives is that humans are not animals and therefore analogies between the animal kingdom and human kind cannot be made. Just because a particular behaviour is prevalent among animals it does not mean that the same is natural for humans. For, after all, humans are distinguished from the rest of creation because they are created in the Image of God.

The Image of God is only realized in the context of community

It is significant that Genesis 1:27 reads, "So God created humankind in his image, in the Image of God he created them, male and female he created them." What is being indicated to us here is that the totality of who God is cannot be represented by a single human. In fact the Image of God as a community of being as represented in the three persons of the Trinity can only be represented in human community as a totality. That is to say that no one human or even a set of humans can claim that they are made in the Image of God or are God's representatives here on earth. Rather only whole humanity together can claim that they are in the Image of God together. This has serious implications for our world today. The implication being that God is best represented by diversity, the whole diversity of the world in terms of different cultures, genders, races, castes, sexual orientation and religious experience only can represent who God is. This means that no culture, gender, race, caste, sexual orientation or religious experience can claim superiority over another. It is only together that all of them represent who God is.

This manner of thinking also says something to us about the character of God. For a very long time patriarchal religious traditions have seen God in exclusively male terms. This is, of course, the use of religion as ideology where male dominance on earth is justified because of a male Father in heaven. But to claim that the Image of God is represented in human community is also to say that God cannot be represented by one gender only. In fact the Biblical text is very specific about this: God can only be represented by both the genders. Therefore seeing God as only male is a distortion of who God is and is only a partial understanding of God. In traditional Christianity, idolatry is defined as either making God what God is not or making only a part of God into the whole of God. If we see God in only male terms then we are guilty of the sin of idolatry.

If "Image of God" can only be understood in the context of community then we must also understand that the Image of God also speaks about sustaining this community. A much neglected text in the understanding of the Biblical terminology of the Image of God is Gen. 9:6 which says, "Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed: for in his own image God made humankind." While this text has often been used to show that the Image of God continues after the fall the ethical implications of this text are not often looked into. The obvious implication of the text is that human blood ought not to be

shed because humans are made in the Image of God. This obviously shows us that not only is God's Image best represented by community but also that the Image of God is an imperative for us to uphold and sustain human community and not destroy it by bloodshed. Jesus takes this one step further when he says that even despising another human is equated to murder and is therefore against the Image of God in that person. In the terms of Jesus then, hatred and prejudice are also factors that do not sustain community but rather destroy the Image of God in humans.

The Image of God is indicative of a special relationship between God and humans

Not only is the Image of God indicative of a special designation of humans over and above the animals but it is also indicative of a special relationship that humans have with God. To claim that humans are made in the Image of God is also to claim that to be able to understand God we must look at humans. This is a thought that has echoed throughout the ages of the Church. The background to this is a Greek thought which would claim that 'like knows like' and therefore humans being in the Image of God are able to understand God in a special way. Asian feminists however do not see this in an individual sense but more in a collective way. Chung Hyun Kyung, the Asian feminist theologian informs us that for Asian women God is defined by the experience of suffering and hope of Asian women. For her the key to theology is anthropology and not the other way around. In this sense the collective experience of the suffering of Asian women and the hope that they have in their struggle for liberation defines who God is for Asian women. Therefore for Asian women, God is not the ultimate reality or the prime mover who does not get involved with creation, rather God is a God who takes the side of the poor in history, a God who struggles for justice, a God who is met in struggles for justice¹⁴.

Being in the Image of God offers a sense of power to humans

Biblical scholars inform us that the concept of the Image of God comes from an Egyptian royal theology. This theology would state that the Pharaoh and only the Pharaoh is in the Image of God on earth, the Pharaoh is God's representative and reflection. The biblical text is a democratization of this view. It subverts this royal ideology and democratizes it by claiming that it is not only royalty who are in the Image of God but that all of humanity is made in the Image of God. This offers a sense of power and self-worth to humans. It is no wonder that the idea of the Image of God has an important place in various liberation theologies. Particularly in the feminist movement the claim of being in God's Image has for long been a point of political issue. This is seen in Asian feminism with the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology even bringing out a journal titled *In God's Image*. While it is good that we understand that all are made in the Image of God and not only men or the upper castes or other dominant groups, one also has to admit that there are certain dangers related to issues of the Image of God offering a certain sense of power.

Firstly it must be clarified that the danger of claiming to be in God's Image can lead to humans

¹⁴ Chung Hyun Kyung *Op. Cit.*, 252

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becoming monsters. While this is not true of oppressed and marginalized groups making this claim, it definitely is a danger when groups who are in power make this claim. This then has the danger of humans acting like God. This was also a danger that is noted in the creation narratives itself where humans who are made in the Image of God, try to become like God. The theme of creation attempting to become like its creator and its subsequent dangers is a recurrent one in literature. Frankenstein, Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* and the Terminator trilogy are all examples of this. In our times we have the very real example of the former American President believing that he is God's representative here on earth to carry out the justice of God, with disastrous consequences. The same can be said of groups and communities who believe themselves to be God's chosen. To claim to be in the Image of God can therefore have its negative fall out when coupled with political and economic power.

The second danger of claiming to be in the Image of God is that this power is often directed towards nature. Lynn White, the historian of medieval technology, wrote a very short article on how the present environmental crisis has its roots in western Christianity. He makes the claim that interpretations of the Genesis claims of being made in the Image of God and dominating the earth lie at the root of the environmental crisis.¹⁵ While this claim has been adequately contested as being too mono-causal and that White has been hasty in his judgment to lay the entire global environmental crisis at the feet of Western Christianity, one cannot deny that there are interpretations of this manner which exist and have had this negative fallout.

The question we have to answer is how to perceive the power of being in the Image of God in an appropriate way in our contexts today. One approach would be to reinterpret what is meant by the term "Image of God" in the Biblical text. T. Hembrom, for example, shows us that the Biblical injunction to dominate does not convey any meaning of destruction or extermination but rather that it suggests 'to keep it under control' something so that it does not bring harm to another.¹⁶

The approach of the early church theologians¹⁷ gives us another point of view when they speak of a distinction between domination as status and domination as activity. To be able to rule is one thing, to actually do so, is another. Therefore we understand ourselves as being in the Image of God but do not act on the power that could result from such an understanding. It should be mentioned that the early church theologians also had the understanding that humans could not act on this as a result of the fall.

A third approach, and probably the best one, would be to link domination and the Image of God. This view would see that humans are to dominate in the sense that God would dominate. That is to say humans are really called to care and have stewardship of nature rather than to exploit it for their own material benefit.

Closely related to this is an ancient view that it is Christ who is truly in the Image of God. Christ is both the archetype and prototype of the Image of God. If this is true then we are called into an imitation of Christ who is the true Image of God. Then we should use power in

¹⁵ Lynn White *The Religious Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* in *Science* 155, 167, 1203 - 1207

¹⁶ T. Hembrom *The Santals: Anthropological - Theological Reflections on Santali and Biblical Creation Traditions* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1996) 169

¹⁷ Commonly referred to as Church Fathers

the sense that Christ used it, that is to give it up, to opt for powerlessness. The powerlessness that Christ calls us into is not a meek submission to those who rule and abuse their status as being in the Image of God; rather it is a protest against this abuse of power. There is a greater power in this powerlessness that acts as a subversive movement against all who use power to abuse others and nature.

Further we must ask the question who are in the image of Christ in the world? We are all called to be imitators of Christ, but Matthew 25 also speaks of Christ being found in the poor, the hungry, the thirsty and those in prison. The implication for us is that the image of Christ and therefore also the true Image of God is to be found in the marginalized and in the dispossessed. Therefore we can say that the true Image of God today is found in the many starving Dalits in India; that the Image of God is found in the many women all over the world who have to walk long distances in search of water for their families; that the Image of God is found in the prisoners in Abu Gharib and Guantanamo Bay.

Image of God as a project

I conclude this essay by pointing to an old debate on the relationship between the words image and likeness that are used in Gen.1:26- 27. Biblical scholars assure us that the words are used synonymously and that too much should not be made of the two different words that are used here. Yet this has not prevented theologians from making all kinds of distinctions between the two and wrestling to expose theological insights from both of them. Among those who have made distinctions between these words is the early theologian Irenaeus, in fact he may have been the first to make such a distinction. To Irenaeus, image is not perfection but rather a task whose fulfillment is found in likeness. This gives us the indication that being in the image and likeness of God is not to be understood as a gift that is given to humans but rather it is a goal to which we should aspire. The Image of God then becomes a project that all of humanity is called to participate in so that we may become more like God. This is not in the sense of becoming rulers on or even of the earth but rather that we are called to build and sustain community and diversity. That we do not aspire to power but taking the example of Christ that we count equality with God nothing to be grasped, but to empty ourselves taking the form of a slave taking human likeness. To be in the Image of God is a project wherein we do not try to become gods on the earth but rather in imitation of Christ become more human.



PATRIARCHY AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE BIBLICAL CULTURE

Ezra Chitando

The Bible is a sacred text that has emerged out of a particular culture. Like most cultures, the background culture that informs the biblical text is patriarchal. This means that men are the dominant figures in culture and society. It is men who are vested with power and authority. It is men who act as leaders of the community. Women and children count for very little in the community. It is not surprising that the Old Testament is preoccupied with the activities of the patriarchs. These are men who become founders of the nation of Israel. They are shown as having been obedient to God, as well as having direct access to God. Women and children are predominantly portrayed as the supporting cast to the drama of faithful men. In the New Testament, patriarchal values and assumptions run through. However, Jesus challenges these and suggests a model of gender justice.

It is important to bear in mind that the overall patriarchal context shapes attitudes towards human sexuality. When men have been socialized to be dominant and to regard their desire as paramount, there is a likelihood of sexual abuse. Mutuality and equality in sexual relations is difficult to attain in such an environment. There is therefore a need to read the Bible critically to challenge patriarchy and promote a healthy sexuality. Fortunately, the Bible contains many liberating passages that promote gender justice and equity in sexuality. The task of the facilitator is to work with participants to appreciate the significance of these passages.

The following issues are vital for appreciating the need for men to read the Bible critically to promote gender justice:

- ✎ No reading of the Bible is neutral. Many readings of the Bible have been influenced by patriarchal dominance
- ✎ Writers and interpreters of the biblical text have historically been male. There is an underlying male bias in most of the texts

- ✚♂ Male readers need to constantly check whether their interpretations of texts are not being affected by the privileges they enjoy as men
- ✚♂ There are “texts of terror” that openly celebrate male dominance and violence. These need to be re-read in order to be relevant to the struggle for gender justice
- ✚♂ Male readers who are committed to gender justice must continuously challenge themselves, other men and women who wish to use the Bible (consciously or unconsciously) to uphold inequitable gender justice in the name of “protecting and maintaining social order.”

Reading the Bible for the Liberation of Masculinities

Patriarchy derives its justification from religion and culture (alongside other sources). In many instances, religion is used to justify male dominance in culture and society. Men have appealed to religion to justify their positions of power and influence. Especially within the church, they claim that Adam (who they regard as male) was created first (Genesis 2:7). Men use this creation story to support their dominance in society. Furthermore, they appeal to male figures in the Bible (e.g. Abraham, David, Solomon, Jesus, Paul, etc.) as examples of God’s “preferential option for men.” They assume that since men play key roles in the biblical text, it follows that men in contemporary society must have control of all leadership positions.

It is important that men read the Bible with an open mind to challenge dangerous ways of being men. Too many times, men have read the Bible to promote oppressive gender relations. Reading the Bible for the liberation of masculinities means that when men read the Bible, they must do so with the express aim of promoting gender equitable behaviour. This term means promoting behaviour that puts both women and men at an equal footing. For too long, the Bible has been read to promote harmful gender relations. It has been used by men to justify sexual and gender-based violence, the marginalization of women and the silencing of children.

Men must forgo the privileges that patriarchy and gender injustice bring to them. They must read the Bible to identify ways of acting and being that do not cause pain and suffering to children, women and other men. Whenever a biblical passage appears to suggest that it is appropriate for men to enjoy power and authority, they must be critical and suggest alternative interpretations. In the following section, we shall look at a few examples of how a particular biblical passage can be read as promoting the liberation of masculinities.

Real Men: Luke 8: 40-56

Get a number of participants to read the passage aloud. If time permits and the group has the capacity, have some members of the group act out the passage.

1. What is the story about?
2. Who are the key characters in the story?
3. Identify the male characters in the story.
4. What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
5. What do we learn about the disciples in this story?
6. What do we learn about Jairus in this story?

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7. How does Jesus become an example of a gender equitable man in this story?
8. How does Jairus become an example of a gender equitable man in this story?

Key points for the facilitator to highlight

- ✱ Jesus responds to the suffering of other men. When Jairus begs him to go to his house to save his daughter, he obliges. Many men are not willing to respond to the suffering of women, children and other men.
- ✱ Jesus is a sensitive man “Who was it that touched me?” Many men have been socialized to be insensitive or to suppress their feelings. Jesus emerges as a man who is in touch with himself.
- ✱ Jesus respects the dignity of the woman. In his cultural context, she had been made unclean. However, he interacts with her as an equal.
- ✱ Jesus realises that as a man he has an existing relationship with the woman. He calls her, “daughter.”
- ✱ Jesus shares power with a woman. Many church leaders will refute this, but power went out of Jesus to the woman. Why do current male followers of Jesus refuse to share power with women? (Musa W. Dube has emphasized this very point in her writings.)
- ✱ Jesus does not bow to social pressure and conventions. In verse 49, he ignores what the man was saying. If men are to effect social transformation, they need to have the courage to ignore social pressure and proceed to challenge oppressive beliefs and practices.
- ✱ Jesus cares for the welfare of the girl child. During his time (as now), girl children (and children in general) did not have a very high social standing. He also ensures that the child is fed.
- ✱ In all this, it is critical to emphasize the humanity of Jesus. Too many times, men will quickly say, “but that was Jesus!” and wriggle out from acting on an issue to bring transformation. Jesus was fully human, that is why he cried, felt pity, etc.
- ✱ Jairus is the ideal father - he stops at nothing to ensure health and life for his daughter. Jairus is humble - he forgoes military protocol to reach his intended goal. Jairus recognizes the value that his daughter has and does all he can to get her restored. Jairus recognizes his limitations. Many men are not willing to accept vulnerability and weakness.

A weeping male Saviour of the world: John 11: 1- 44

Ask for volunteers to read the passage aloud. If time permits and the group has the capacity, have some members of the group act out the passage. The weeping of Jesus must be pronounced!

1. Who are the key characters in this story?
2. What do we know about each one of them?
3. What kind of man is Jesus in this story?
4. What do we learn about being a man from Jesus' attitude to Lazarus in this story?

5. How can men be “moved” to action in the face of gender- based violence and HIV in our communities?

Some more concerns to raise:

- ✚☿ The socialization of the boy child to not cry in public, as it is considered “unmanly”, cuts across most societies
- ✚☿ Men’s repression of emotions is costly - health wise and in the sense of preventing revolutionary transformation (Jesus was “moved” to perform the miracle of raising Lazarus).
- ✚☿ Jesus’ commitment to a friend demonstrates what men can achieve if they commit themselves to a cause. They too can work out contemporary “miracles” of promoting gender justice and challenging oppressive gender ideologies.
- ✚☿ If Jesus, God in human form, could express emotions, why do ordinary men appear afraid of showing emotions?

Redemptive Masculinities: Principles

In order to read the Bible in a manner that allows men to be liberated from harmful masculinities, there is need to embrace key principles. These principles will assist men to challenge the privileges that patriarchy bestows on them. As we shall see in the Module on the Making of a Man, the patriarchal dividend refers to the benefits that men enjoy for no other reason than for the fact that they are men. It takes courageous men and men of conviction to refuse to enjoy these privileges and work for gender justice. In this section we would like to draw attention to principles that can enable men to read the Bible in liberating ways.

1. A firm understanding that God created women and men equal. If this basic principle is grasped, men will uncover new meaning in all biblical passages that appear to suggest that women occupy a rung lower than men in society.
2. A clear commitment to partnership between women and men as co- workers with God. Partners are not in competition. The Baha’i faith puts it across very well when it likens men and women to the wings of a bird: if one wing is broken, the bird cannot fly. Humanity needs both women and men to be at their best if there is to be progress.
3. A dogged refusal to use violence in relationships. Christianity promotes love, dialogue and friendship. The use of violence in personal relationships must find no place in the life of a man who regards women and children as created in the Image of God.
4. Consistent questioning of the notion of headship. Men have abused the notion of headship to marginalize women and to insist on their viewpoints in gender relations. Headship is no license for men to command women and children.
5. Openness to the capacity of women, youth and children to lead. God’s gifts are not limited to men. It is vital for men to accept that women, youth and children can lead.



TOWARDS A LIBERATORY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY FOR MEN: INTERROGATING THE GENDERED SELF

Joseph Prabhakar Dayam

Feminist theological discourses have not only challenged traditional theologies but have also in so many ways shaped our contemporary approaches to the task of theology and the content of theology. My acquaintance with feminist theology occurred when I came to UTC for my B.D. programme. Like any other male from a conservative Christian background from South India, I came with my own theological prejudices and “spiritual” practices that were shaped by patriarchy. Until then the only way in which I was taught to address the divine was as the Father. Though I was aware that God is mystery, I somehow came to believe that, that mystery unveiled itself as a male God. I also believed that I inherited my sinful nature from my mother as a consequence of what Eve seemed to have done in the Garden of Eden. Consequently I also held my view very strongly that whatever Paul (whoever that Paul was) said about the necessity of women to remain silent in the Church, was the word of God.

As I went to a seminary as a student I began to hear a new language that I was not so familiar with. It was not that my vocabulary in English was insufficient. What I began to discern at UTC was the usage of a language that had a new orientation. Both in the chapel services and the class rooms, it was almost normative that both the faculty and students used inclusive language. As I began to read some of the writings of feminist theologians, I began to come to a new theological consciousness. By the time I had finished my B.D. I was convinced that the liberation of women is a faith issue. In my own vocation as a pastor I did preach on issues related to women’s liberation. However the gender question was posed more as an issue of women. I also held that liberation from patriarchy is something that women need, not being aware that it is primarily men who need liberation from patriarchy! Such a thought, that it is precisely men who need liberation occurred to me only when I got married to a woman who

was raised to think independently for herself and who refused to accept gendered roles. I came to a greater awareness of my gendered self when I lost to her in arm-wrestling. I stopped arm-wrestling with my wife in the presence of my kids. It is this awareness of my own bondage to the hegemony of patriarchy that pushed me to engage in further research in feminist theology as I began my doctoral studies and I did a course under Rosemary Radford Ruether on “the Divine Feminine.” It was not merely an academic pursuit but it was also a spiritual quest, a quest for my own liberation and I was profoundly influenced by her theology. As a matter of fact, the first article I wrote for publication was titled “*Gonthemma Korika: Re-imagining Divine Feminine in Dalit Theo/alogy.*”¹⁸ My acquaintance with feminist theology helped me realize that men too need a theology of liberation: a theology that would help men experience liberation from the hegemony of patriarchy and become partners with women in their struggle for gender justice. It is a way by which men seek their own salvation.

Why is it necessary?

- ✎ We, as men, created this problem of unjust relationships and it is our responsibility to transform this situation. We are the perpetrators of patriarchy and our initiation into Christian discipleship - our kinship with Christ, should anticipate dismantling of this structure as an integral part of the coming of the reign of Love.
- ✎ We, as men, need liberation from our bondage to the gendered self, a distorted perception of being male. A liberatory theology for men envisions men living an authentically human life that is proleptically inaugurated (i.e. anticipated) in the person of Jesus the Christ. It promotes positive masculinity.

The shape of such theology

I think men should not claim what we do in advocacy of gender justice to be a feminist theology because feminist theology needs this separation from male theology for we know from history how in the name of advocacy the discourse could be appropriated and given token affirmation. Feminist theology needs its own identity “so that it may find itself and its own concerns undisturbed” (Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, p. 269).

1. An audit of the gendered self

Theology as a discourse on human communities’ attempt to make sense of their collective living, within a horizon of a shared understanding of the divine, the human and the world begins with a critical reflection on human existence. All our theological imaginations stem from a critical correlation of our analysis of “human existence” with the way in which we understand the divine self-disclosure as articulated in the sources that the community holds as being sacred. They inform, shape and augment each other. However, as we analyze human existence, we privilege certain human experiences as of utmost importance. While the Western theologies of the 20th century privileged the experience of the world war situation and the trauma that is experienced by the parties involved, the liberation theologies of Asia and Latin America privileged the experience of the poor. Feminist theology and other identity

¹⁸ Some feminist theologians have preferred to use the expression Theo/alogy to refer to “Goddess talk” as the basis of their theological reflections.

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theologies rightly insisted that we can not talk about a 'general human experience' unless we locate power and powerlessness in their concrete historical manifestations as we delineate the human situation. A liberatory theology for men therefore begins with an awareness of uneven power distribution between the sexes, in all spheres of life, and questions the positioning of male cultural, political and economic power so as to morally empower men to be just, free and peaceable. It begins with an audit of the gendered male self. It involves taking an inventory of influences that shape our being, the perspectives that we hold as being males, and the practices that function as codes that convey our self perception. It also involves auditing our theological and spiritual symbolic structures so as to discern how these symbols legitimize power concentration in men. It is coming to an awareness of being located in a position of 'power' so as to expand our locale that ensures sharing of power with the other. It is to engage in a critical examination of our gendered selves.

2. An acknowledgement that traditionally theology has legitimized patriarchy

Theology, in general, has taken patriarchy to be a divinely ordered human structure of power. Karl Barth, for instance, in 1934 wrote to an early feminist theologian Henriette Visser't Hooft that "the whole Bible presupposes patriarchy, not matriarchy, as the temporal and earthly order of the relationship between man and woman" and we must accept this 'fact' as God-given' "like the fact, for example, that the chosen people to which Christ belonged just did not happen to the people of Carthage or the Spartans, but was the people of Israel. Consequently the patriarchy presupposed in the Bible is one of "God's particular divine directives in respect of the way he acts with human beings."

This brief quote from Barth suggests how theology in general has legitimized patriarchy and patriarchal imaginations of the divine, human and of the world. This in turn has legitimized power being concentrated with men and its perpetual dehumanizing affects on both women and men.

3. Revisiting and reconstructing theological themes that we hold central to our faith

A liberatory theology for men therefore needs to question and deconstruct the traditional theological imaginations and engage in a re- imagination of the theological framework that would engender human emancipation - the emancipation of men from the sinful patriarchal structure. It seeks to reconstruct theological themes that would positively shape the being and the becoming of the male self that understands itself as being coequal and codependent in, and coinheritor of, the new humanity that comprises of men and women. It is a theology of partnership.

Re-imagining the Divine

I We must say No to a God of absolute power and yes to God as absolute love, which expresses itself in the divine pathos. Borrowing language from my own confessional tradition a liberation theology for men has to be a theology of the cross not a theology of

glory. Perhaps the God of absolute power should die; perhaps that God already died in the Christian tradition, that claims that God revealed Godself in Christ and that Golgotha and the Grave are the sites of God's self disclosure.

- II Re- imagination of the divine feminine in our theological project: Christian theology in the Indian context responded to the gender question at two levels: 1) it argued for an inclusive language in its theology and liturgy, like the incorporation of expressions such as "Our Parent" or "Our mother." It was more of an attempt to be politically correct than a serious theological engagement. 2) In adoption of feminine metaphors in understanding the divine, we tended to talk about the feminine traits of the divine. In so doing we have fallen into the trap of essentialism. What is called for perhaps is to engage in conversations with the Goddess traditions and rework our symbolic structure that would privilege the idea of Goddess over God. In that sense, our theology needs to transform itself into a theology.

Image of God and Image of Christ as potential candidates for theological interrogation and imagination in evolving positive masculinity

In its search for an authentic expression of being human, Christian theology sought to explain it by using the biblical category, *Imago Dei*, the Image of God. It is suggested that the Image of God constitutes the mark of the divine in human. Traditional theology appealed to this category to foreground its argument that human beings are different from and superior to animals. Such an imagination arises out of an anthropocentric reading of the Genesis texts of creation. We are aware that such a human centered reading of the Image of God alienates us from the rest of creation resulting in the exploitation of God's creation. In such a context we need to engage in an alternative reading which affirms the dignity of human beings and the rest of the creation at the same time. In its interpretation, it has also been used to legitimize the supposed supremacy of men over women. Thus the creation account was abused to legitimize patriarchal hegemony. However, there is an equally prominent strand of interpretation that affirmed the equality of men and women. The affirmation of the Image of God in human beings provided a firm foundation for the affirmation and reclamation of human dignity and the church's engagement in human rights struggles.

Several interpretations have been offered in trying to understand the biblical notion of the Image of God. Perhaps the most helpful among them was the notion of relationality and complementarity. The Image of God within, is that which places us in a relationship of "I and Thou", both between God and human, and human and fellow human, both male and female.

The Image of God perhaps needs to be understood not merely as a static being but as a promise. It is to understand our being as an evolving or becoming being that would have the image of Christ as its horizon. Christ, as the first fruit of creation, invites us to participate in the new creation in which any notion of hierarchy is broken down. As a promise it offers hope of the emergence of a new humanity. Liberation for men involves being initiated into this possibility.



TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF PARTNERSHIP OF WOMEN AND MEN

Philip Vinod Peacock

Introduction

What do we mean by partnership?

There can be no denying that it is God's will that women and men are partners. This is an axiom that would have universal acceptance across all communities of faith irrespective of denominational difference, theological tradition, geographical location and cultural orientation. In the present patriarchal ordering of gender relationships, however, we have to acknowledge that both men and women are part of a structure in which often men generally make the decisions. Men as a class benefit from this and women as a class bear the cost. For instance a UN report points out that women make up half the world's population, a third of its official work force, perform almost two-thirds of the world's work hours, receive only a tenth of its income and own less than one hundredth of the world's property. In most societies around the world today the situation of women is characterized by poverty, violence and lack of power to make decisions over choices that affect their own lives. This being the case, the question is not so much one of partnership as much as it is about the nature of that partnership? While it is intended that partnership means equality, the language of partnership is often appropriated and subverted to actually support unequal gender relations. Sadly this is often done by the church and theology.

Partnership as hierarchy

In the context of the church, sometimes the language of partnership is used for hierarchical relationships that justify the subordination of one gender to the other. Men in this context are seen as the dominant partner and women are expected to be subordinated to men. This is often the content of most preaching in our churches; particularly the kind of preaching that is

done at weddings. In this understanding of partnership, women are relegated to the role of the helpers of men and are expected to be subservient to the desires and demands of men. Literal reading of the second creation narrative and certain texts from the Pauline Epistles are used to justify this hierarchical theology.

This understanding of the 'partnership' of women and men is however contrary to the vision of Jesus that sought to reorient the understanding of domination from the perspective of the powerless. Within the context of the patriarchal society that Jesus lived in, the child/slave lay at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. It is in this context that Jesus speaks of receiving the kingdom of God as a child (Mark 10:15). This statement is not to be understood as a call to innocence but rather is should be seen as a challenge to relinquish relationships that are based on the domination of and power over others. It is obvious then that this model of dominant partnership in the context of hierarchy is contrary to the will of God for women and men.

Partnership as complementarity

At other times the language of partnership is used in the context of complementarity. This view is embedded in the understanding that men and women have uniquely distinct character and abilities that are 'natural' to their gender. Therefore men are seen to be aggressive, rational and providers while women are seen to be passive, emotional and nurturing. In the context of relationships then, men and women are understood as complementing each other, each having their specific role in the world, family and church. Sociological studies, however, have more than adequately shown us that characteristics and ability are social constructs. We are socialized into these forms of behaviour and attitudes from childhood, for example my extended family often tell my two year old son not to cry because he is a boy, his twin sister, is however given no such advice. Moreover, between women and men, there are only two abilities that are exclusive to one sex, they are childbirth and breastfeeding, both of which are abilities that women have and men do not. Both sexes are perfectly capable of involvement in all other tasks and roles.

Complementarity, however, is often nothing more than a thinly veiled line for keeping women in subordinate positions while using the language of partnership. The difficulty with complementarity is that it prescribes specific roles and tasks for each of the sexes/genders often in a manner that is convenient to those men who have the power. It is a way of segregating the sexes that is beneficial to men as a class. While at seminary, I was complaining while washing clothes, one of my classmates said that if I hated washing clothes, I should get married, implying that washing was women's work and after marriage I would have to do none!

The gospels indicate to us that Jesus was one who undermined this understanding of complementarity by challenging the roles assigned to women and men in both his relationships as well as in his own lifestyle. He considered women his friends and often engaged them in theological discussions (Luke 10, John 4). Jesus was also one who challenged gender stereotypes and demonstrated this in his own in his own lifestyle; the gospel of John for example tells us that Jesus wept when he heard the news of Lazarus' demise.

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Further the epistle to the Galatians in 3:28 speaks of the removal of gender distinctions in the new community of Christ. The language of this verse indicates to us that in the new community that Christ inaugurates there is no place for distinctions (discrimination/prejudice/injustice/inequality) based on culture, race, work- relations or gender. The church is instead called into the active resistance of such distinctions by presenting itself as an alternative community of justice and equality for all.

Partnership in the context of justice and equality

It is within the context of the struggle for an alternative community of justice and equality for all, the call of every Christian, that we must locate any discussion of the partnership of women and men. It is in this sense that we must resist and reject the appropriation of the language of partnership by those who wish to speak of it in the context of either hierarchy or complementarity. The discussion on the partnership of women and men should be grounded in the framework of justice, equality and the building of an alternative community that are based on Kin- dom¹⁹ values. To insist on this however means two things, firstly it means that we must be open to all our relationships being scrutinized, be these relationships between the 'first world' and 'two- thirds' world, the rich and the poor, relationships between races and castes *and* gender relationships. All relationships must be tested against Kin- dom values that articulate God's desire for justice for all and particularly those who are oppressed.

This being true, it is gender relations then, that must first be open to scrutiny simply because this is the largest and most widespread form of structural discrimination. Moreover gender discrimination involves all of our intimate and personal relationships that extend from the bedroom, to the kitchen, to the work place and to the church. Moreover, the body of religious and theological legitimization that is involved in gender discrimination is tremendous and represents a demonic threat against all who desire to live lives that are faithful to the calling and imitation of Jesus.

Additionally, the discussion on a partnership of women and men should also be cognizant of the connections between patriarchy and other forms of injustice and discrimination including injustice based on economic factors, race, caste and ecological injustice.

It is in this context that we can claim that partnership of women and men must mean the full, equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life - be it the home, the work place or the church. This necessitates an understanding that patriarchal structures and relationships exclude women from full equal participation and that these must be transformed according to the values of the kin- dom. It further means that men as long as they participate and perpetuate patriarchal structures and relationships are excluding themselves from the creation of and participation in the just and equal community that God desires.

The creation of this new community requires both the deconstruction of ideologies and theologies that perpetuate patriarchy as well as the creation of new theologies which speak of women and men as free and equal partners. It requires both the organization of women

¹⁹ The word Kin- dom is used so as to assert fellowship and camaraderie rather than "Kingship" that has associations with power and hierarchy.

for liberation as well as alternative socialization for boys and men into caring nurturers who will respect women and girls. It requires both the transformation of social and economic structures as well as the transformation of personal relationships so that women and men can live authentically as partners. It requires both the repentance of men as well as for them to stand with women in solidarity as helpers in the struggle for a new society.

Useful theological models

Speaking from a Christian theological perspective there are two models of relationships that offer us insight into partnership of the nature that we are speaking of. The first is the model of the Trinity and the second is the model of Koinonia.

Trinity

Traditionally Christian theology has spoken about the doctrine of the trinity in terms of substance and being. But at the heart of it the doctrine of the trinity is a way of resolving the conflict between unity and difference. It seeks to bring about a convergence between unity and difference. Seen in this way the doctrine of the trinity speaks to us of an ideal community in which the three persons of the Godhead are distinct but are yet mutually interdependent on each other. While one must acknowledge the difficulty of the doctrine of the trinity being explained in exclusively male terms such as Father and Son, the intent of the doctrine is to provide a model of leadership and relationship in which no person of the Godhead is greater than the other, yet each is not separate but is influenced by the other. In traditional theological terms this is explained as perichoresis. Here the individuality of each of the persons of the trinity is maintained while at the same time each person shares in the life of the other in a non-dominating sense. The doctrine of the trinity offers us a model of collective leadership in which each of the three persons is seen to exist harmoniously without extinguishing anybody. Everybody has a unique place in that community and no one dominates the other. Further the model of the trinity upholds the values of community and service, not in a hierarchical, oppressive sense, but rather in terms of inclusiveness and mutuality. In this sense it is possible that the male terminology of the doctrine of the trinity could be read as a possibility for men to act in alternative ways.

Theologically what is important for us to remember is that the doctrine of the trinity is *Communicato Idiomatiko* that is to say that it is a communicable property of God that can find its analogy in human community. In this sense the doctrine of the trinity acts as a model community that should find its replication in human community and specifically in gender relationships.

Koinonia

Another model for just and equal partnerships could be found in the understanding of Church as Koinonia. The feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza is known for expounding this model as offering an alternative to hierarchical gender relations. Koinonia is a Greek term that occurs twenty times in the Bible and in our Bibles is translated as fellowship, sharing or sharing in common. It is better translated as shared partnership or commitment. Its first

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occurrence is in Acts 2:42 and here it refers to the mutuality and sharing of life and property that marked the early church. The basis of Koinonia is the common fellowship (koinonia) that we share in Jesus Christ (1 John 1:6-7). Therefore it is the communion that we share in Christ that becomes the model of our communion with each other.

Theologically it is the Church that is seen as koinonia where fellowship and sharing are the basis of the Church. This understanding of Church as koinonia is the opposite of what Schüssler Fiorenza has coined as **kyriarchal**²⁰, or Lord centered. In this sense it is the fellowship of the church that is opposed to its hierarchical structural formulations that is the mark of the church. This brings into focus the necessity of right relationships or righteousness and justice as against hierarchy and 'lord centeredness' while speaking of human community.

In terms of gender relations then, Koinonia offers us a model of shared partnership, collegiality and co-responsibility.

Rethinking gender relationships

The question is how do we as men use these two theological models in the context of the home, in the context of work and in the context of the church to speak of just and equal partnerships? The following represents some indications in this direction.

Rethinking a theology of marriage and family

While the family is proclaimed as the place where nurture and care takes place we must also realize that the family is the location where gender socialization takes place, it is the place where the first chains of patriarchy are forged, it is also the place where men not only dominate but learn to do so, often using violence. Given this, it is of urgent need for us to rethink our theology of marriage and family.

Traditionally, the institution of patriarchal family and marriage has been expounded as the will of God for the world. However what is evident from the sayings of Jesus and the writings of Paul is that marriage is, like celibacy, also a calling (Matthew 19:3-12, I Corinthians 7). Likewise having children is not the natural result of marriage but rather it is a conscious choice that a couple makes together.

The purpose of marriage is not procreation but rather love and mutual companionship. It is the sharing of the lives of two people together and therefore should be based on koinonia and not on dominating models of kyriarchy. The marriage relationship should also be based on a Trinitarian model of maintaining individuality while at the same time each sharing in the life of the other. If this be the case then there can be no place for domination or violence within the context of marriage. If there is violence, it denies its very basis and is therefore no longer a marriage. The concept of saving the marriage does not arise, we should think in terms of saving the survivor from further violence, possibly even death. In as much as the Trinitarian

²⁰ Kyriarchy - Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza uses this word, derived from the Greek words for "lord" or "master" (kyrios) and "to rule or dominate" (archein) which seeks to redefine the analytic category of patriarchy in terms of multiplicative intersecting structures of domination...Kyriarchy is best theorized as a complex pyramidal system of intersecting multiplicative social structures of superordination and subordination, of ruling and oppression. (Glossary, Wisdom Ways, Orbis Books New York 2001)

model maintains individuality this extends to the individual's body as well. In the context of marriage based on a just and equal partnership each partner must understand that they do not own or control the other's body, sexuality or fertility. Even among a married couple, no means no! We must wake up to the serious issue of marital rape.

Further we must also find ways in which the family can become a site for an alternative socialization of men and boys into becoming more nurturing and caring. This becomes even more essential in the context of the growing role of the market systems in which profit dominates the human person and value and the non-market values such as sharing, caring and nurturing are being quickly eroded. In this context, to resist the ideology of the market, we must find ways in which the family can reinvent itself. so that it can be a place where children are born and are brought up in love and security. At the same time it is important that we open spaces for alternative families to find acceptance and welcome.

Rethinking a theology of work

Patriarchy is not only an attitude or an ideology but has its basis in economic relations. Patriarchy involves the appropriation of women's labour. Given that the largest global division of labour is on the basis of gender, seeking a partnership of women and men also calls into question the gendered division of labour.

Patriarchal marriage has ensured a convenient arrangement for men whereby their domestic needs are taken care of by women, since household work is considered as women's work. Not only does the economic system not count household labour as work because it is not paid for, but the patriarchal structure devalues it as an economic activity. Work in the context of the household is not considered work at all, even though tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing and household management require back breaking labour and much planning. Further women who are employed 'gainfully' often face the double burden of work, working both inside and outside of the household.

If a partnership of men and women is based on a model of koinonia, which is sharing, this should refer to a sharing of the household work as well. This should move beyond the claim of 'helping' with the household work, which still relegates the responsibility of household work to women. The fact of the matter is that men should take charge of household responsibilities and childrearing. This is particularly necessary if we need to become responsible fathers, husbands and partners.

At the same time men should stand in solidarity with women in the struggle for more job opportunities, better working conditions and better remuneration. There are still several places in the world where women are paid less than men for the same work.

Rethinking a theology of leadership in the context of church

Lastly it has to be realized that working towards a partnership of women and men has to affect Church structures and organizations as well. Unfortunately the church remains the last boys club, even though its pews often have more women than men. If we are to follow a Trinitarian model of leadership it should challenge us into rethinking our ecclesial and administrative

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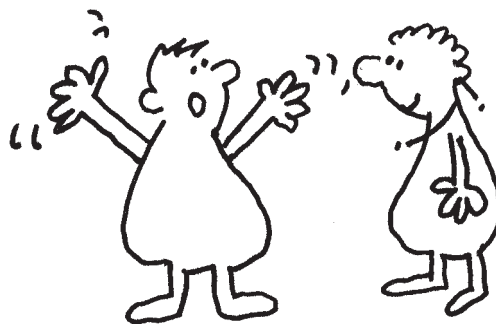
structures that are led by singular males to structures that are democratic, non-hierarchical and gender just. We should rethink church administration as working through consent rather than unilateral decision making.

The church should further learn to recognize the spiritual gifts of women and recognize the legitimate right of women to be leaders and pastors. Further there should be learning from the spirituality of women.

Most of all the church should present an alternative pattern of gender relations to the world. It should be the forerunner in articulating a theology and ideology of partnership of women and men, a theology and ideology that has the possibility of transforming the world!

Questions

1. Can you offer specific examples of how people speak of partnership but mean something else?
2. What insights does the model of the trinity offer us for how Christian families should function?
3. How would you use the Trinitarian model to speak of gender justice in the context of a theology of work?
4. What are the other theological models that you can think of that can speak of just and equal partnerships between women and men? What are the possibilities and problems of using these models?



SECTION 3

MODULE I - GETTING STARTED

MODULE II - MEN, GENDER AND SOCIALIZATION

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MODULE II b - BUILDING A POSITIVE GENDERED COMMUNITY

MODULE III - SENSE OF SELF

MODULE IV - SEXUALITY

MODULE V - REAL MEN AND MASCULINITIES

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MODULE I

GETTING STARTED - SETTING THE CONTEXT AND WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Where are the men?

Dale A Bisnauth and Solomuzi Mabuza

On the Sunday following Christmas last year (2009), I attended worship at the Presbyterian Church in the village where I was born and grew up. It was a relatively good-sized congregation, but was almost entirely composed of women. In fact, only three of us were men, and two of us were visitors. I asked: "Where are the men?" The women explained that they had gone to the rice-fields. Earlier that same day, I had attended another worship service where women and men sat in different sections of the church building. The contrast was stark: while the section of the women was fairly well populated, that of the men was almost empty. In South Africa some men drop their families

off at Church on a Sunday morning and go off to do something that interests them, and return to take their families home. I imagine that this state of affairs was repeated in the majority of churches that morning, and perhaps, is repeated almost every Sunday morning, not just in Guyana and South Africa but in other parts of the world as well.

Women and children fill the church pews every Sunday. And, as the boys approach puberty and are able to make decisions for themselves they also wander away from the church in droves, leaving the women to fill the pews. This begs the question 'where are the men in the church?' Don't we need men to play their meaningful role in the church?

There are possibly several factors that can explain the absence of men in the churches. Among these are possibly both the perception among men of the increasing irrelevance of religion in their lives, but also at another level a perception that the church is a 'woman's place' since women, within a gendered society, are seen to be controlled by men. One man absented himself from worship for a long time because he was miffed by the way his female friend was treated; he came to the conclusion that church-people are all hypocrites, who leave their ethics in the church when they leave after the benediction.

Other explanations are: "macho" men believe that religious practices are mainly for women and children; one can worship perfectly well at home alone; and so on. Nothing serious, more stuff akin to gossip than to gospel, with no serious implications for faith! One gets the feeling that all of these excuses will vanish once the men are challenged to examine them in the light of God's call to the individual Christians to work out their personal faithfulness in this engagement in which service is consonant with worship.

Module I



While a few congregations can boast of good attendance on the part of men across the main-line denominational spectrum on Sundays, the fact is that the species of male worshippers is a dwindling breed. The question, “Where are the men?” must be relevant for any project which targets men as the vehicles for change in the Christian community in the urgent and compelling matter of promoting positive masculinities. What is the point, we may ask, of compiling a “Resource Manual for

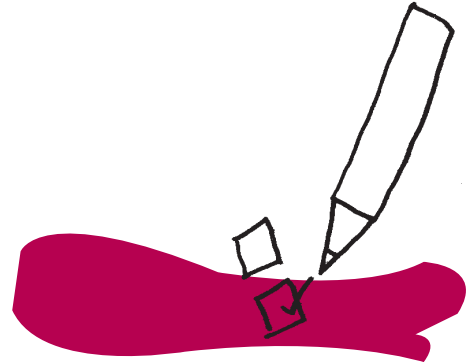
Men”, to sensitize them of their own need to review their perspective on masculinity, and then, to be facilitators in the process for change among their peers in the Christian community, if those peers are conspicuous by their absence? Is this not a waste of time, money and effort?

When Christian men get grounded in the content of this manual, they can bring an important contribution to the empowerment of themselves and other men. They can work with it ecumenically in clusters of congregations or with youth groups, men’s organizations and programmes to nurture church leaders. Also men, who are indifferent to attending worship, may find in this process engagement that is personally fulfilling, topical and relevant, giving them a new sense of witness and mission. Imaginative leadership is what is necessary to convert concern into action for gender justice and partnership.

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Description

This introductory session establishes the context, framework and importance of the workshop and provides participants with an overview. The story above, “Where are the Men?” is aimed at connecting participants with the issue of the decreasing presence of men in the church. It is meant to stimulate some thoughts and brief discussion on men and church.

The session provides an opportunity for the church or organization hosting the workshop on *Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities* to welcome participants and to contribute to the local context for the workshop. It begins the process of enabling participants to build trust and shared responsibility. It includes activities for participants to get to know each other, build community, share expectations and concerns, review the workshop agenda and establish ground rules.





Objectives of the session

- * To understand and appreciate the context and framework of the workshop
- * To introduce themselves and get to know others in the workshop
- * To share information about their skills, experiences and expertise
- * To share their expectations and concerns about the workshop
- * To consider the collective experience and knowledge they bring to the workshop and appreciate the workshop methodology
- * To develop ground rules and a supportive learning environment.

Module I



Notes to the facilitator

-  Prepare well ahead of time and get support of the local church/organisation of community group. Let them know the importance of such a workshop for the church and society.
-  Prepare an overview of the workshop clearly stating its purpose, objectives and methodology. Background information can be prepared using materials from Section I of this manual.
-  Collaborate with the host organization to develop and facilitate this activity. Ensure that it includes a message from the host organization on the importance of examining masculinity and gender construction to building a community of women and men in the church.
-  Time management is important. You will also need to work out the time for each activity, given the number of participants and what would work well for that specific cultural

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context.

Activity 1: Welcome and introduction to workshop

1. Welcome words by host church/organization
2. Brief overview of workshop by the facilitator

Activity 2: Introduction of participants: paired introductions

1. Introduce the activity. Explain that although some people are likely to know each other, some of the people in the room are new to the group, so this activity has been prepared to help everyone get to know a little about each other.
2. Ask each participant to turn to the person on their left and find out the following:
 - Their name, its meaning and where they come from
 - Their skills, expertise and role in their churches
 - One crucial aspect regarding the situation of men in their churches
 - Any other important information that they wish to share, such as something about their families.
3. Ask each participant to introduce the person they interviewed to the group.
4. Introduce resource persons and any other people in the room in addition to the participants.

Review the activity by summing up the rich experiences, knowledge and skills within the group. Remind participants that the workshop methodology is highly participatory and requires full participation of everyone - bringing life experiences, skills and knowledge to the learning process and that each person in the room has something to learn.

Activity 3: Expectations and concerns

1. Make two columns headed: **Expectations** and **Concerns** on a flipchart or white/black board
2. Introduce the activity and ask each participant to share one expectation or hope and one concern or fear relating to the workshop.
3. As each participant speaks, the facilitator or an assistant will write the two comments on the flipchart under the appropriate headings.
4. After everyone has spoken, read through the expectations and concerns listed and group them appropriately.
5. Review the workshop agenda in light of the expectations and concerns. Explain where these are covered or can be accommodated in the agenda. State clearly if there are others that cannot be dealt with in this workshop.

Module I

Activity 4: Developing ground rules – creating a supportive learning environment

1. Introduce the activity and ask participants to think of rules that would help them during the learning process. (You may consider some of the rules in the example provided in the box below.)
2. Write these on the flipchart and add your own contribution.
3. Get a consensus from participants that these rules would be helpful.

GROUND RULES: CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Everyone has the responsibility to create a cooperative, safe and non-judgmental learning environment.
2. Everyone's opinions and input – including diverse perspectives – will be valued and respected.
3. Comments and feedback will be given in a constructive and supportive way.
4. Confidentiality will be respected.
5. Participants will avoid side conversations which are disruptive to the process. Everyone can learn when concerns, suggestions, different opinions, etc. are expressed to the whole group.
6. In case of serious disagreements, participants will agree to use a process to resolve such situations. For example, participants can develop a list of issues to be resolved later in the workshop and ensure that the points of disagreement are addressed.
7. Participants will be punctual and activities will start on time.



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MODULE II:

MEN, GENDER AND SOCIALIZATION

Bible Study: An Analysis of the Pauline Corpus on Male-Female Relationships

Dale A Bisnauth

Readings: 1 Corinthians 11:2- 16, Ephesians 5: 22- 33, Colossians 3: 18- 19, 1 Timothy: 2: 11- 15

In this Bible Study, we will attempt an analysis of what St. Paul has had to say on the matter of male- female relationships. The first statement we shall consider is in I Corinthians 11: 2- 16. Then, assuming that Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Timothy, we will look at Ephesians 5: 22- 33, Colossians 3: 18- 19 and 1 Timothy 2: 11- 15. We know that Paul's letters were written to address concrete problems which arose in the churches which he had founded. We can safely assume that I Corinthians 11: 2- 16 was occasioned by what some Biblical scholars have referred to as "the first woman's emancipation movement" in the Church, inspired by what Paul himself had preached concerning freedom in Christ. An expression

of that freedom was a demonstration by the women of Corinth for the equality of the sexes by the laying aside of their veils during services of worship. They were praying and preaching with their heads uncovered just as the men were doing. It seems very certain that in the passage, Paul is speaking to and of women who were leading the congregation in acts of worship with their heads uncovered. Leading in worship was not offensive; the removal of the veil **was** offensive in that time and context. What I wish to underline is that this had nothing to do with the notion that bare-headedness on the part of women would lead men into committing sexual indiscretions.

Two questions come to the fore: Did the Corinthian women see in the veil a symbol of all that opposed their development as authentic persons? Did they feel that this act - doing away with the veil - would have implications for the larger issue of their right to self-determination? Perhaps not, John Calvin, the reformer, was later to declare that the matter of the veil was of no significance as indeed did Martin Luther. Calvin professed indifference to it. Paul, however, thought differently. For him, it was the sign of the woman's subordination to the man. Calvin might have thought that the matter of the "woman's shawl", as he described it, was of no consequence; but he, like other Protestant theologians who came after him, considered the matter of woman's subordination to man a very definite and important part of Christian doctrine. In our time, the veil has been replaced for the most part by hats, the *chador* and the *hijab*.

For the apostle the woman's subordination to the man was part of a larger hierarchy of superiority/inferiority which reached up to God "Himself". As God is the head of Christ, so Christ is the head of the man who

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is the head of the woman (11:2ff.). And the apostle used the word “head” to indicate the one immediately above the lesser in the hierarchy of divinely constituted authority. Consequently, for Paul, it was very important that a person understood his/her place in the hierarchy and reflect that understanding by conforming to the proper symbolism as far as his/her “head” was concerned. Paul’s language is sharp. The man who prays or prophesizes with his head covered dishonours his “head” (Christ) while the woman who does these things with her head uncovered dishonours her “head” (man). It would be, symbolically, as if the man was subordinating himself to the woman while she, symbolically, was denying her subordination to the man. This would confuse the relationship which God had established between the sexes and this, in turn, would be contrary to nature as God had structured it by the ordinance of creation, and had embedded it in our humanity. What is the evidence of this structuring, we may ask. Paul would point us to the text under review.

The parenthetical remark contained in verses 11 and 12 does not alter the substance of the apostle’s reasoning: the subordination of the woman to the man is an essential part of the hierarchy which God has established to ensure a proper order in the relationships of life. But it does offer something of a counter balance which suggests that the man should not think only of his priority over the woman, but also of this dependence upon her in the divine order, since this dependence is also the will of God from whom are all things. Paul’s hierarchical view was derived from Jewish patriarchal theology and cosmology undergirded by centuries of rabbinical teaching. The question for us is: Is the apostle’s hierarchical view, binding, or even relevant for us today?

Wives and husbands

The theme of female subordination to the male is found in Ephesians 5:22-33. This passage is similar in content to that which we have examined in I Corinthians. Again, the hierarchy of authority is emphasized although Christ’s subjection to God is not mentioned. Reference is made only to the subjection of the wife to the husband, not of the woman to the man as such. However, the theological thrust is identical. Indeed, within the limits of the marriage bond, there is an emphatic statement of hierarchy. The marriage relationship is clearly not a matter of mutuality between equal partners. The husband is told to love his wife; the wife is to fear her husband, “fear” denoting a kind of reverential respect for the husband as the authoritative head of the family. One cannot imagine Paul advising the man/husband to fear the woman/wife. This was unthinkable for the apostle in his time. The Ephesians advice is grounded on Paul’s notion of a hierarchically structured universe. Remove this notion and the Ephesians advice collapses.

Similar sentiments are found in Colossians 3: 18- 19, I Timothy 2- 11. That the issue of subjection is found in I Peter 3:17 is probably an indication that the matter had attained doctrinal status everywhere in the early church. In “all the churches of the saints” too, it was felt to be “shameful for a woman to speak in the church” (I Corinthians 14:33b-35). I Timothy 2:11- 15 provides the reason. The last verse seems to suggest that although the woman was the prime mover in the fall and therefore under a curse in child-bearing (Gen. 3:16) she would be brought safely through that experience if “they (i.e. women) continue in faith and love and sanctification, with sobriety”.

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The Magna Carta of humanity

All this having been said let us now look at Galatians 3:28, described by some as the Magna Carta of Humanity. The passage in which the verse is located reads: *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized in to Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*(Galatians 3:26-28). (A pity that Paul did not include “all sons **and daughters** of God”!)

For the sake of symmetry, many versions retain the “neither- nor” of the series and render the Greek of this text: “neither male nor female”. Literally, however, Paul says “no male and female” and, in this sense, reflects the language of Gen.1:27. Therefore, while his reference when speaking of the woman’s subordination to the man is exclusively to the second creation narrative (Gen. 2:18-23); here his appeal is to the first creation narrative. The apostle is not suggesting that salvation alters the ordinance of creation, rather it redeems it. Redemption breaches the structure. Oneness in Christ cannot point in the direction of man in his solitariness; it can only point in the direction of man-in-fellowship. In Christ the basic divisions that have separated man from his neighbour and have threatened human fellowship, are done away with. This is the essential thrust of the Ephesians and Colossians texts. These divisions have no place in Christ. The areas mentioned by Paul in Galatians 3:26- 28 are: ethnicity, class and gender. In the apostle’s mind they stand in opposition to the new oneness or unity which is in Christ. Can we legitimately add another area: economics? Ethnicity/race has been dealt with; gender is under review; “bond and free” awaits Paul’s encounter with Onesimus, Philemon’s

runaway slave, before he could advance his first words on the subject. Meanwhile, the rest of the Pauline corpus is tardy in catching up with Galatians 3:2- 8.

It is important that Paul’s declaration of Galatians 3:26- 28, be placed within his understanding of the Church – the Body of Christ – as the *one* new people of God who have been baptized into union with Christ. They all owed their new status as “God’s children” to the grace of God alone. They were all debtors to that grace. And so are we.

Paul’s practice

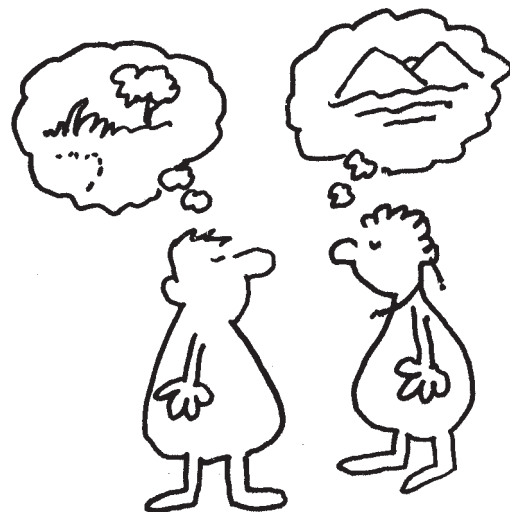
The affirmation that in Christ there is no male and female was, for Paul, not only a matter of theory. He began to implement this insight in his own life and in that of the church, maybe not as thoroughly as we would have liked. After all, he was a former rabbi. But whereas in rabbinic usage a woman was designated only as the wife of a certain man, Paul greets women by name: Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Romans 16:12), Julia (16:15) and Mary (16:6). He mentions Priscilla (16:3) and even names her before her husband, Aquila. He names no less than seven Christian women in Romans 16 which might very well have been a cover letter carried by Phoebe, a woman whom he calls his sister (16:1- 2). As a rabbi, Paul would not have addressed a group of women with no man present as he did at Phillppi, without hesitation (Acts 16:13), neither would he have accepted Lydia’s invitation to stay at her house (Acts 16:15). Paul, the Christian apostle and evangelist, had moved in his pilgrimage from Judaism to Christianity! As an erudite Jewish rabbi he writes as a Jew; as a Christian growing to maturity he speaks as the new person that he asks every new convert to grow into. And remember that he was writing to a first century Church.

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Paul might have made only a beginning in implementing his insight represented in Galatians 3:28. But is it not high time that the church press on to full implementation of the apostle's vision concerning the equality and partnership of the sexes in Christ? This would demand of men the renunciation of the prerogatives, privileges, and powers which tradition and culture have given him in the name of masculine leadership. Of women it will demand courage to share the burden and responsibilities of life with men, that in love and humility they may together fulfill their common destiny as man, created in similitude to God as male and female - the Imago Dei, so dear to classical theologians, but also so important for our self-understanding as members of the Body of Christ.

Questions for group discussion:

1. How important is Paul's hierarchical view of the universe for us today?
 - Within the Church
 - Within male- female relationships
 - Within the family
2. What is a better alternative?
3. Do you agree with the statement that Galatians 3:26- 28 is the Magna Carta of Humanity? Justify your position.



MODULE II a

Understanding Gender

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

Gender - an inclusive concept

Although the term “gender” is widely used today, it is too often employed to mean “woman” or “sex”. It is important to note that while “sex” refers to a person’s biological make-up, “gender” describes their social definition, that is, the values and roles society assigns them. Gender is about both men and women and increasingly recognizes other gendered persons. It is a social construct that is influenced by other forms of social, religious, cultural, economic and political processes. Gender is an important tool for understanding our world and working to transform it into a place that is better for all. The underlying principle taken in this manual is that healthy gender relations based on partnership are necessary for gender justice and positive masculinities.

Gender perspectives examine and unravel power relations between men and women as it takes into consideration the causes of their unequal status, the current division of responsibilities and gender injustices. Gender is defined not only on the basis of male/female dichotomies. It needs to consider specific historical legacies of vastly diverse societies, their unique conditions and the different experiences and realities of their populations. For example, the shaping of the Caribbean man needs to be understood in the contexts of slavery, indentureship²¹, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Violence and abuse have deep roots in the formation and sense of self of the Caribbean man, who was uprooted from family and community and controlled by the whip. The “incentive” to work was physical abuse. It would be helpful for this history and reading the Bible to be part of the process to be done from this historical and socio-cultural context. This will open new ways for positive development of self.

There are notable differences in gender patterns within the relationships between men and women as these intersect with other forms of social identification, such as race, ethnicity, class, caste, religion and geographic location (urban/rural, north/south). Racism, sexism, classism, casteism and other types of prejudice tend to be built into the structure of many societal institutions the world over, and intensify the inequalities already faced by women within these groups because they are women. While women, as a group, are considered unequal to men as a group, other forms of social categorization intersect with sexism to make this inequality even more complex. For example, women of a particular class or caste are likely to be doubly

21 After the abolition of slavery in 1838, the British brought Indians from India to the English speaking Caribbean to serve as indentured labourers on the plantations. Guyana was the first sugar colony to receive Indian indentured labourers in the Caribbean.

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discriminated against – as women and as members of that particular class or caste. Thus, while at one level they may have much in common with male members of their class or caste, for example, in relation to external influences, within the confines of the class or caste, they are members of the unequal group – women. Some men have more privileges than others, based on their socio-political and economic power, race, ethnicity and geo-political location. The disparities between rich and poor, north and south, black and white, Christian and Muslim, rural and urban, older and younger, etc. must be considered in understanding gender and power.

Gender sensitization and education need to take into consideration that race, class, caste and other societal structures intersect with gender. Therefore, a more complex understanding and response is necessary to address inequalities that exist between and among people around the globe.



Description

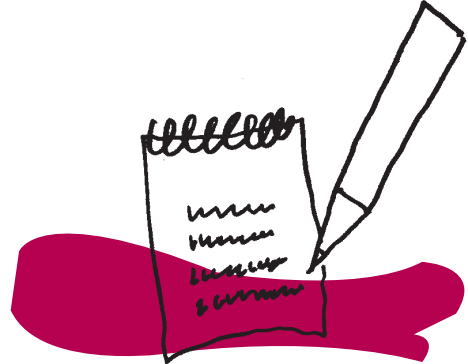
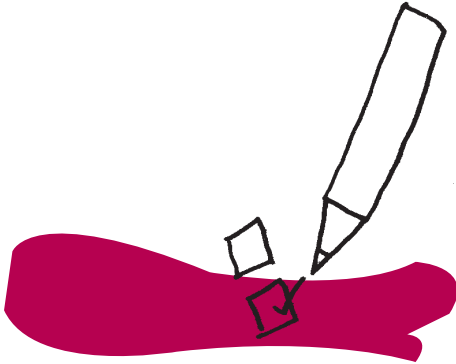
This examines how unequal roles and expectations assigned to women and men are reinforced and promoted by deep-seated societal biases and misperceptions. Participants will identify the different roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men and the differential values attributed to them at various levels of the society.

This activity will help participants to critically examine societal expectations of gender-based roles. It will explore how these expectations combine with biological and social roles to view women as having only certain “natural” traits that have to do with caring and nurturing – roles that are largely undervalued and limit women’s life choices. The concept of power and control will be examined in terms of its relation to gender roles and life choices.

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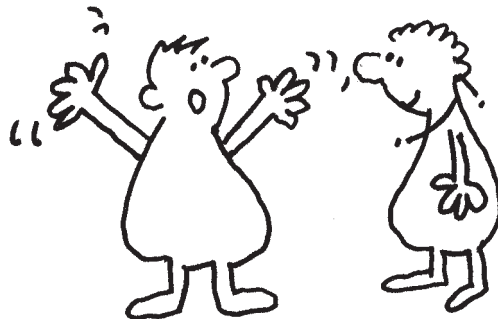


Objectives

- ♂ To explore the differences between biological and socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men
- ♂ To develop an appreciation of the differential values placed on these
- ♂ To explore gender roles and expectations within the church
- ♂ To explore strategies for challenging gender barriers within the church and society.

Notes to the facilitator

- ♂ You may wish to rephrase questions for the small group exercise to make these more appropriate to the local context.
- ♂ Explore how power is used within the home, community and church to maintain assigned gender roles.
- ♂ Prepare a flipchart with two columns headed: Feminine and Masculine



Activity 1:

A: Differentiating our social and biological roles

1. In the large group, facilitate brainstorming on roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men based on societal perceptions. (See section on techniques in the Facilitator's Guide.)
2. For each role and responsibility identify whether it is perceived to be feminine or masculine and give the reason for this classification.
3. On a new flipchart, make two lists and head them: **Masculine and Feminine**. Post responses under these two headings and encourage discussions.

B: Ask participants to work in small same sex groups and discuss the following questions. Each group must identify a member to report on its behalf.

- ♀♂ As a man/woman, with which of society's expectations of men/women are you most comfortable?
- ♀♂ What aspects are you uncomfortable with and would you like to change?
- ♀♂ Are there feminine roles and attributes with which you would like to be identified? What are they? What are possible benefits and costs?

C: Facilitate a discussion on the implications and life choices for individuals assigned to the roles and responsibilities listed with questions such as:

- ♀♂ Do you think your career choices have been controlled because you are a man/woman? Would you have preferred to do something else? Explain.
- ♀♂ As a man/woman have you felt any kind of control on your movement? How does it affect your participation in society?
- ♀♂ As a man do you wish that the women in your life would take more independent decisions and not be so dependent on you? How do you think men can support women in this?



Activity 2: Identifying strategies for change

1. Introduce the activity as one which will pull together the issues raised in this module. Inform participants that it provides a framework to help them make and analyse connections between the ways in which they are socialized, their ideas and beliefs, and their decision-making behaviour and everyday practices.
2. On the flipchart write three points on an imaginary circle:
 - Values/beliefs/ideas
 - Societal socializing forces/agencies
 - Organizational/personal responses
3. Ask participants to identify acceptable values, beliefs and ideas:
 - associated with men and women of different social identities – race, class, caste, profession, nationality, etc. Write these under **Values/Beliefs/Ideas**.
4. Ask participants to reflect on the various socializing forces which have been identified in previous activities and which serve to reinforce these values, beliefs and ideas, e.g., legitimizing why men and women are assigned unequal roles and status at all levels. Ask them to share these and to add others that have not been discussed in previous activities. Write these under **Societal Socializing Forces/Agencies**.
5. Ask participants to point out the different roles which men and women hold within both the private and public spheres. Note the unequal power relations in the homes, church and society.
6. Connect these three to demonstrate points of power as they meet to reinforce values/beliefs/ideas shaped by socializing agencies, which shape and reinforce our attitudes and behaviour towards women and men. Point out that if this is not critically examined and challenged, this triangle of connections serves to place men and women in the socially constructed and “acceptable” places in our society, which often limits their potentials in different ways.
7. Conclude by working with the large group to recapitulate and to identify challenges in socializing processes identified.





Values/beliefs



Societal socializing
forces agencies



Organizational/
individual responses

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DEFINING GENDER AND SEX

The word “gender” is often used as another word for “sex” and both women and men generally accept it to mean being female. This misunderstanding combines our socially-defined roles with our biological roles, leading to commonly held views of woman as only naturalized “womanly” traits, associated with nurturing and caring roles. It is often used to justify the inferior economic, political and social status of women. It is therefore important to clarify the distinction between “gender” and “sex”.

“Sex” refers to the biological differences between women and men. Human beings are either born male or female. “Sex” explains important, but limited, differences between women and men, such as the ability to bear children, breastfeed and impregnate.

“Gender” describes the socially-constructed identities, roles and expectations assigned to women and men. These socially-defined differences between men and women are based on deeply-held societal values and beliefs which are biased and unjust. By understanding gender as a socially constructed relationship between women and men, the possibility of changing the nature of male-female relations becomes realistic. Attitudes and behaviour related to gender are learned and can therefore be unlearned.

Examples of gender differences:

Social: Men are regarded as heads of households and chief breadwinners, while women are seen as mothers, homemakers and caretakers. This view persists, despite the fact that in many parts of the world, there are a growing number of women engaged in paid work and as heads of households.

Religious: Traditional values and beliefs limit women’s access to leadership and decision-making roles in most religious institutions. Gender bias in church hierarchy also works to deny women equal access to leadership positions. The interpretations of biblical texts are often used to legitimize and limit the roles of women within the church.

Political: Most public institutions – political, religious, economic and social – tend to support men in leadership and decision-making roles, while women in public institutions tend to fill positions more related to their nurturing and caring roles. Men are denied the development of their caring and nurturing qualities and characteristics.

Economic: Women and men access economic benefits unequally. While men are more likely to access, own and control financial and other resources, such as land, credit and loans, women face difficult battles to gain similar economic access. Men have access to higher-paid work while women are more likely to be engaged in work that is an extension of their domestic roles, undercounted and underpaid. When women reach more highly-paid positions they often find that these jobs have been developed using the male model as a standard and that they are forced to juggle decision-making and leadership positions with their multiple roles in the home and community.

Cultural: Women and men face different and unequal cultural challenges and opportunities. In some countries it is the norm for women to require the permission of male relatives to enjoy freedom of movement. Gender-based abuse and violence, culturally accepted in some societies, prevent women from enjoying personal liberties and full citizenship. In some cases girls are denied the opportunity of education because of their sex.

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MODULE II b

Building a Positive Gendered community

Fulata Lusungu Moyo

Introduction

Though gender remains the most contested terrain globally, Simone de Beauvoir's 'oracle' that woman or man is made not born, remains a fair summary of the idea that gender is a social construct and not a biological given.²² Physiologically, we are born male, female or other gendered. Generally, gender can be defined as the division, distinction and power relationships between women and men in any given context and at any given time. In other words, it has to do with what each given community conceives to be masculinity, femininity and otherwise. Gender roles, therefore, are not divinely ordained; they are constructed by culture, education, language, politics and religion. Gender behaviour is a product of both biology and socialization. In this process, both the biological given and environment in which one grows combine to produce the understanding of gender differences. In Africa, for example, myths, proverbs, stories, songs and dance through family interaction, schooling, religious participation and rites of passage operate in the process of socializing young people into roles that help them conform to the expected gender roles,

which in turn help them to contribute to the preservation of their communities' norms. In the contemporary urbanised communities, most of the socialization is also done through media internet surfing.

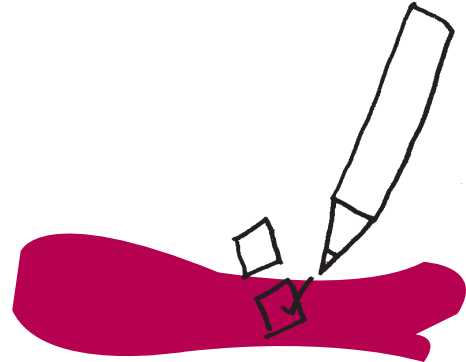
Socialization as a sociological concept can be defined as a process by which one acquires a sense of personal identity and learns what people in the given context believe and how they expect one to behave. The primary agents of socialization are the parents (and in some cases extended family), followed by teachers, peers, mass media to the religious influence including the church. The process of socialization starts from birth and continues throughout one's life through which the self constantly changes in response to life's experiences and continued social interaction. The development of the self through the interaction with others can be summed up in three processes in the following way: first, how we imagine others see us; second, how we imagine they judge what they see in us; and third, how we feel about those reactions. The resultant of the three is that from our consideration and interpretations through our looking glass self, we decide what definitions fit us or are descriptive of our self. In the context where rites of passage take place, this development of self is conceived through a dual response: one's daily interactions with members of the community which in turn gives one feedback on how he or she is viewed; and through initiation rites, which give one an intense occasion where, through interaction with peers and guidance through instructors, one learns how one can find his or her 'corporate' identity by conforming to the community's definition of the normative.

22 Sally B. Purvis in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, Ed. Russell Letty, Clarkson Shannon (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996). 124.

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Description

This session builds on the Bible Study on “The Pauline Corpus on Male-Female Relationships” (page 50) and the session on Understanding Gender (page 54). The activities will animate the lived realities of men and gender socialization at home, in church and community. It will help participants to examine and critically analyse the gender perceptions and construction and how these impact each social unit in the society. The case studies and skit can be adjusted to bring a real situation from your context.

Objectives

- ✎ To understand the concept of gender, its construction and differences and similarities between women and men
- ✎ To identify some of the ways gender differentiation is socialised in communities
- ✎ To give examples of the characteristics that are attributed to each gender within family, church and society
- ✎ To self-critique their own distinction of gender roles as either stereotypical or physiologically justified
- ✎ To work out a plan of action on how they can help embark on awareness raising for transformation in gender differentiation and stereotypes in their own communities.

Activity 1:

-  Ask the participants to stand in a circle
-  Explain to them that each one should dramatise their introduction by accompanying their name with an action. For example, taking a bow as one introduces their name
-  As a facilitator observe whether the activities are indicative of the gender differentiation
-  After every one has introduced themselves, gently ask whether the activities expressed had any gender significance to them. Give some time for responses.

My six year old son was playing with a girl of his age trying to mould something from clay. They decided that they would mould a car. Meanwhile, I was sitting a few steps away from them, assessing my students' papers. I heard my son argue: "You know that you can't mould a car because you are a girl!" The girl seemed really vexed with this and asked why he thought she could not do that? He insisted that the gender differentiation in them was enough reason for her 'seeming' incapability. When I stepped into the conversation, I tried to ask my son what body parts he uses to mould a car. He mentioned hands and eyes. I reminded him that even the girl had these. To my horror, he insisted that despite that, the fact that she was a girl made it impossible for her to have the right conception of how to mould a car. "She could mould a doll but not a car!" he concluded. At six, he had already observed, heard and sucked into the gender role-stereotypes from the community he was growing up in. The fact that he did not use his male organs to mould a car or that the girl did not use her female organs to mould a doll but that sexually unspecific organs were used did not make any difference to this socialised gender bias.

Activity 2: Dramatising rites of passage case studies

1. Divide participants into two mixed groups. Give each group one case study (given below).

CASE STUDY 1:

You are an elder in your community and a couple has confided in you about their having only girl children and how the man feels that he is not man enough because of that. Unfortunately they are also at the crossroad because their community is already in the process of secretly hiring someone to be a surrogate (through natural means not through artificial insemination) so as to ensure that there is a male child in the family.

CASE STUDY 2:

You are an executive in your organization and a woman has accused your organization of gender discrimination because she was passed over for a promotion in favour of a junior male employee, who is less qualified than her. How do you respond? Give at least four points and their explanations that you would raise in response to her accusation.

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2. Invite three persons of different age groups to share for 5 minutes each about their early realisation and experience of being 'a man' and how it was constructed.

*👤 Who and what influenced your understanding and knowing of "being a man"?

*👤 How did that construction distinguish for you men from women?

*👤 What are the gender roles that are attributed to each gender? What do these roles say about the community's perception of what it requires for being a man and woman?

*👤 After an interactive discussion, ask the participants to go into mixed groups for further exploration of gender formation, differentiation and even roles.



You are an elder in the church and have been given the responsibility of initiating teenage boys in your church community. Work out a skit that addresses the following questions:

*👤 Identify the main issues you are going to emphasise in your initiation instructions? Why?

*👤 What possible instruction methodology are you going to use? Give reasons for your choice.

*👤 Identify and include possible songs and a dance the can accompany your instruction.

Alternative Activity:

Gaming and me as a man growing up - Samson John Moyo

Objectives

*👤 To raise awareness on how gaming influences the players' imaging of men and women

*👤 To explore possible alternative socialization to the gaming one.

Surfing the net is part of the new media culture to which video games and other on line games belong. For those of us who are growing up in this culture, our ideas of who we are as boys and young men is greatly defined by the images and ideas that we get from the games, which we end up spending so much time, playing. We network with many people whom we might not ever meet physically, apart from this virtual connection. We learn about many things that would otherwise not be possible in our given real life situations. For example, shooting and

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killing enemies, playing professional soccer, and driving as Formula 1 racing champions is not something we could even dream of in real life but we can take on these roles when we game online. As part of the internet culture, we find ourselves imaging ourselves to the men and women that we “meet” on internet. Some of the images are stereotypical of what a man should be and what he can do, especially in relationship to women. For example, there are games, which present the idea that a real man can do anything he wants to women - even violating their dignity in all possible ways.

The existing violent media usually portray women as sexual objects to be used and enjoyed by macho men. Not only do they present men and women in stereotypes, they also tend to present life as a continuous competition where one has to win and gain control and domination over others. Related to this is also the glorification of the mystical powers that men can acquire to control and dominate women. While we know that in real day to day life such powers do not exist, these games present them as if they really exist somewhere and challenge the player to continuously seek for such powers. What if you cannot win or take control? Probably you are a loser and therefore a lesser man than those who do win and can take control!

In most of these games, violence is glorified as a necessary and important part of life. Most of the games I play also raise a lot of racial stereotypes. Some races are able to lead and others can just follow, the games tell us. Every time I play such games, I cannot help but ask myself what it means to be a man especially to be a young black man.

Probably those boys and young men who grow up with dad present in their lives, have the advantage that they can check the gaming images of being a man against the role model of their father's. Those of us who grow up without a father have to work hard to find alternative images. The gaming culture also portrays an ideal life as if it only comprises of fun and no work. Most of us growing up in this culture, struggle to develop a discipline that recognises that real life cannot be sustained by fun and playing alone but we also need to work hard so as to achieve certain dreams and hopes. Most of these games are also so addictive that you end up playing them for a long time sometimes even forgetting to eat or sleep. Are there alternatives to this popular gaming socialization that can help us to build more positive images of being a man?

Activity 1: Sharing on the synopsis of the description on the back covers of games

I have chosen two video games that my brothers and I play quite often. These are Halo Wars and Fifa Soccer 10. I have given the summary of each to guide your discussions below.

Read out short synopsis of two selected video games.

1. Halo Wars (rated as appropriate for teens)

“Purpose is to take control of the Halo universe. The year is 2531, twenty years prior to the events in Halo, combat evolved....The....ship “Spirit of Fire” is sent to investigate and stop whatever the enemy is up to.Command large armies, lead them into battle, control their every move and use their abilities to gain upper hand in combat. The four main human

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characters are Captain James Gregory Cutter, a battle tactician and logistics officer; there is Serina who is in charge of repairing the ship, who is fascinated with human relationships and a theoretical interest in chocolate; Sergeant John Force, described as decorated for valour and gallantry in the battle field but someone you would not want to introduce to your sister; and Professor Ellen Anders is a preeminent expert in theoretical xeno- biopsychology.” (For more information, visit: www.xbox.com/halowars).

Questions for discussion

1. What is the kind of language that you can imagine is exchanged between the characters in this game and what role do you think such a language plays in the socialization of the ones playing the game?
2. How much time on average do you think would be required to finish such a game?
3. What alternative socialization can you suggest for a child that spends most of his/her time listening and playing with such characters?
4. What resources does your community have to provide positive role models to the above violent ones?

Fifa Soccer 10:

2. **Let us play Fifa 10** “Play like a superstar with new 360 degree dribbling, giving you practice, fluid control over every movement. Use the practice arena to perfect your plays and create your very own custom set pieces for use on match day. Create a personalized player who looks like you with Game Face and play out the ultimate career in Virtual Pro. Join an online club and compete to be the best team in the world in 10v10 Pro Club Championship.” (For more information, visit: FIFA.easport.com).

Questions for discussion

- i. What positive images of masculinity can the above game provide?
- ii. What negative influence can it have on those playing this game regarding gender roles?
- iii. Think of different ways in which games like soccer can help shape a positive conception of being man or woman?

You can close this activity by passing a ball from participant to participant at random. Ask the person who catches the ball, when passed to them, to share his/her ideas regarding gaming.

Wrapping up

1. Ask the group to work out a tentative plan of action on how they can actively raise awareness against gender stereotyping and discrimination for a more gender just environment.
2. Ask someone to close with a song and prayer.

Module III

MODULE III

SENSE OF SELF

Introduction

Felix Chingota

During every stage of our existence, there are people from all walks of life in search of deeper meaning of life - for wholeness/wellness, love, sense of community, justice, hope, peace and happiness. Sense of self with a deep knowledge of the self helps us to understand the core of why we do what we do, and how we live. It also shows us our sources of inspiration, motivation and dynamism and what it is that gives life its deepest meaning. Our sense of self is grounded in our historical, social, religious, political and cultural context and takes shape from our life experiences and education. There are various theories about how people strive to know themselves better, their emotions, personality and attitudes.

How can selfhood be analyzed and understood? Both history and an analysis of human existence may help us to understand selfhood. Deuteronomy 5 verse 3 reads, "Not with your fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us

here alive this day". This statement is very interesting because Numbers 26: 64- 65 indicates that the people who had gathered in the plains of Moab when Moses was addressing the Israelites, were a generation that had never been at Mt Sinai. All the people who had left Egypt except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun had died in the wilderness. Dt 2:14ff also reflects the same scenario. The Israelites had encamped in the plains of Moab, 38 years after they had left Kadesh- Barnea and by this time all the fighting men of that generation had died. Given that the Israelites who had encamped in the plains of Moab were not the ones who had been at the foot of Mount Sinai, why should it be said that the Lord made a covenant with this people? How should this statement be understood?

In its literary context the book of Deuteronomy is the speech of Moses to the Israelites before they crossed over into Canaan. The purpose of that speech was to renew the covenant which God had made with the Israelites at Mt Sinai. However before the covenant is renewed Moses repeated the history of the Israelites from Mt Sinai to the plains of Moab. In this repetition Moses calls the Israelites to appropriate this history as their own so that their identity could be shaped as the people of God. A retelling of a people's past is therefore essential for the construction of the identity of a people. Scholars argue that when the Davidic monarchy was divided in 900 BC the two nations were forced to write histories of their respective nations. The history of the Northern Kingdom was preserved in what is known as the Elohistic document and the history of the Southern Kingdom was preserved in the Yahwistic document. Both documents were used by Deuteronomistic historians when they were writing the national history beginning from the time of Moses to the time of Babylonian

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captivity, a history which comprises the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

Just as the Israelites found history to be formative for their identity, so too the story of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus became the content of the apostolic preaching and formative of the early Church and its self-understanding. During the celebration of the Lord's Supper Christians are actually invited to participate in the death of Christ. In other words although Christ died in 63AD that event is made contemporaneous with Christians as they celebrate the Lord's Supper so that Christians can be said to stand at the foot of Calvary as they celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Therefore history is one of the avenues for the analysis of selfhood. However, this avenue has its limitations and this can be illustrated using the analysis of the phenomenon of human existence. It has been noted by theologians that only human beings can be said to 'exist'. The reason for this is that human beings are capable of having their being disclosed to them. For example when we say, 'I feel pleased with myself', the implication is that the 'I' is distinct from the 'myself'. It is as if one can 'exit' and stand aside so that one can look at oneself. The ability to 'stand aside' has otherwise been described as 'transcendence'. This is the same as saying that human beings are created in the Image of God. Although human beings can transcend themselves, they are still part of the created world. This observation makes human existence as one full of polarities. One of such polarities is possibility and facticity. For example, one may wish to be a successful businessman, but there could be hurdles in life such as lack of financial capital which prevents one to achieve one's dreams. This illustration shows that selfhood

is not a substance which persists over time; rather it is a process in need of actualization. In order for actualization of selfhood to take place one must take responsibility for it. However, because of various hurdles, one may feel powerless. Therefore there is this other polarity between responsibility and impotence. Another polarity is between anxiety and hope. The realization that one may not after all be able to actualize one's dreams may create anxiety in oneself. On the other hand, people still live in hope of eventually being able to realize one's dreams. The one factor which creates anxiety is death, that is, our finitude, or the fact that one day our lives shall end. The prospect of death may render living as 'a useless passion', as an absurdity.

Authentic selfhood must accept death as a fact. Let it be pointed out here that the realization of human limitation should not be viewed negatively. In fact, it is a creative fact. Scriptures say that, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom". The fear of the Lord is here understood as a realization that because human beings are finite, it follows that their understanding of so many other things is also limited. Given such an assessment of oneself, there will be no room for pride (hubris). Furthermore, a realization of one's limitation should naturally lead one to look beyond oneself for support. In this light John Macquarrie has described authentic selfhood as 'temporality' with the constitutive elements of past, present and future. Authentic selfhood takes the limitations of past history into account. However, instead of being bound by it one looks beyond oneself into the future for support. This is the same as dying to oneself so that one may become alive. We noted above that history does shape our selfhood. However, an analysis of human existence has shown that this limitation can creatively be used to move towards authentic

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human existence. The straining beyond oneself is the same as faith. Faith is here understood as part and parcel of 'human existence'. Every human being has some kind of 'faith' and it involves both acceptance and commitment - acceptance, in the sense that one must acknowledge one's limitations; and commitment in the sense that one must always have a prospective view of future possibilities. In consistently directing oneself on this primary possibility, the other possibilities of life are subordinated to it and the movement is towards unified selfhood. However, what distinguishes Christian faith from other types of faiths is the reference point of this 'straining beyond oneself'. The reference point is 'a support' beyond oneself.

One of the amazing things about Christianity is that, whereas human beings do strain themselves looking for support beyond themselves, in Jesus Christ, God reaches out to the realm of human beings. Paul Tillich described Jesus Christ as 'the New Being'. In other words in Jesus it was demonstrated what it means to be a human being. After all who was Jesus? According to J.A.T. Robinson, Jesus was both 'A man and Man'. The argument of Robinson is that Jesus was a particular human being - a Jew, born to particular historical parents etc); and he was also humanity. It is important for salvation that Jesus should be a human being, sharing with the rest of us our human existence. Furthermore, for the sake of salvation, in his humanity Jesus must point beyond himself. He must be a representative figure, standing for all humankind. In him we should have a picture of what it means to be a human being. Jesus died and was resurrected having a transformed spiritual body. By raising Jesus from the dead, God was creating a new *life* out of nothing, out of *death*. This was an event which occurred in history, thereby giving

content to human aspiration for a support beyond itself which leads towards authentic selfhood even in this life. It is possible to live the resurrected life of Jesus today because Christ's resurrection was historical.

Many people (both rich and poor) are disenchanted and dissatisfied with their lives and ways of living. There seems to be a lack of sense of self and thus, an impoverishment in people's capacity and ability to connect deeply with themselves, with each other, and with their communities. People are realising more and more that there has to be more to life and that spirituality leads to deeper levels of existence. People from all walks of life long for the resurrection experience, which will enable them to rise out of the pits of misery, to spiritual renewal and meaning in life. This involves prayer, meditation, soul-searching, self-knowledge, natural healing of the body, soul and mind, and spiritual fulfilment.

How well do you know yourself?



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Description

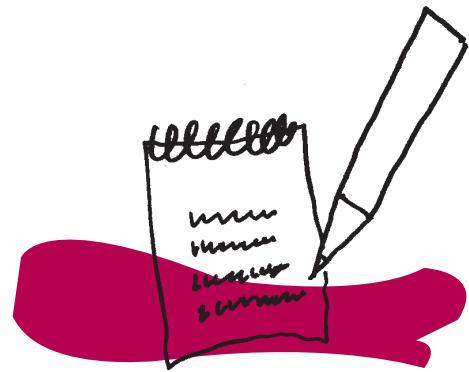
This module on sense of self is designed to help participants explore and develop self-knowledge, as a means to prepare oneself more effectively to become agents of change. Knowing oneself means becoming aware of, and acknowledging one's strengths and weaknesses, to provide the insight necessary for effective leadership in the process of leading to social change. It helps the person to see his or her self in relation to the whole - to the universe, the community, to other people and to various institutions. It drives us to continue the quest for deeper knowledge so as to further develop our understanding of the dynamics of transformation.

The activities in this module are structured to help participants examine who they are, including their deeply-held beliefs and values. This will involve introspection as each person reflects on and shares important factors, which have shaped his/her life and which have had the greatest impact on him/her. It will also help women and men understand how their lives have been influenced by gender-based perceptions and by gender relations.

To explore and develop a sense of self by reflecting and analysing participants' life experiences

To identify the various socializing forces/agencies which have shaped their identities and experiences

To examine the extent to which gender perceptions have shaped their life experiences and choices.



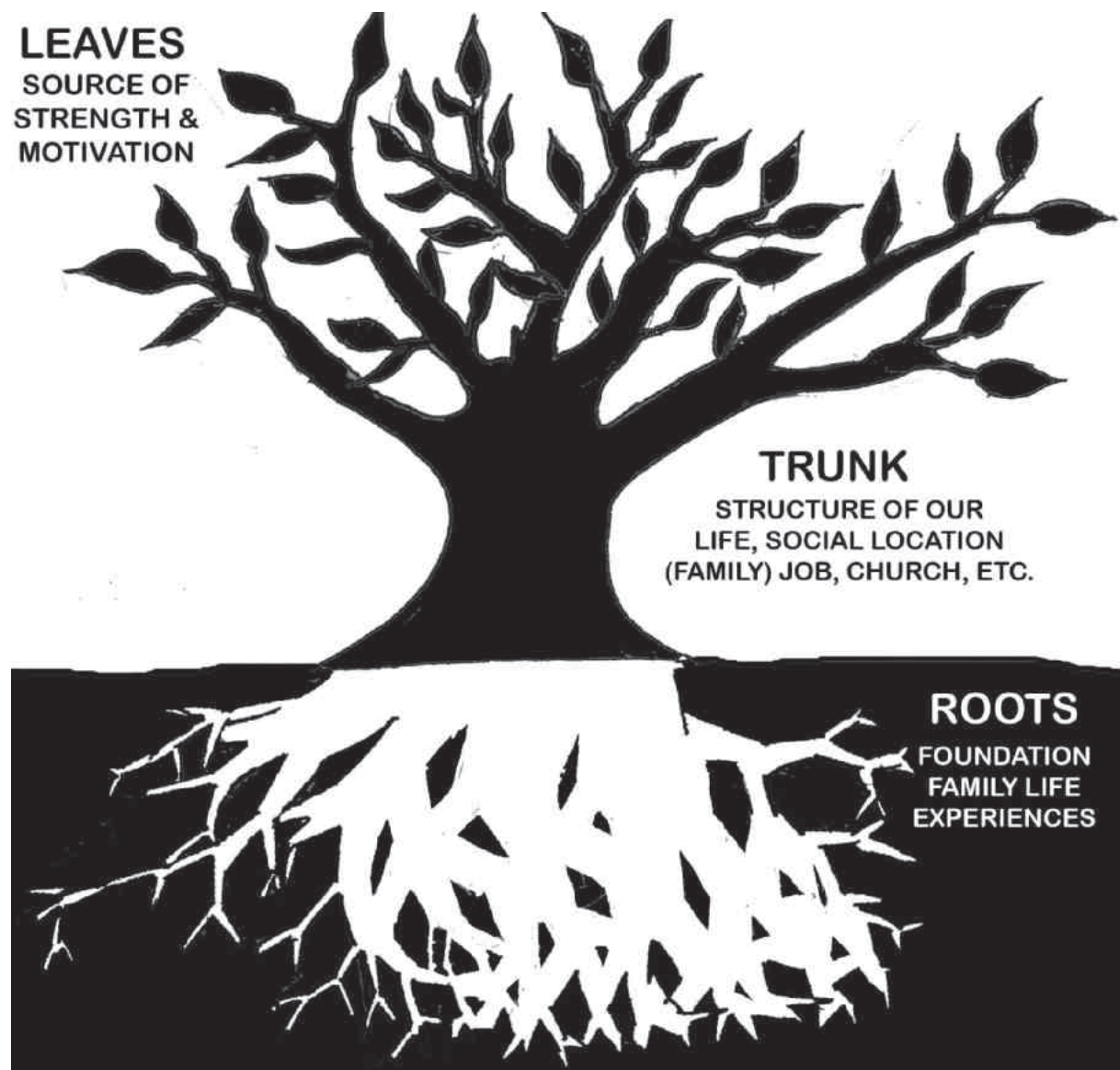
Notes to the facilitator

- ☞ Prepare drawings of the Tree of Life and Journey of Life, using the examples provided
- ☞ Explain to participants that they will be reflecting on their lives as far back as they can recall
- ☞ Ensure that paper and coloured crayons, pencils or watercolour paint are available for participants
- ☞ You could lead a two to five minute exercise to help participants relax

Module III

Activity 1: My tree of life

This activity will help participants understand themselves better through introspection - an examination of their own thoughts and feelings. It will deepen the level of awareness of their relationships with others. The objective is to help participants reflect in greater depth on their own life, using the tree as a symbol of life.



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1. Introduce the activity, stating the purpose and objective. Provide each participant with paper, coloured markers and pens, if possible.
2. Ask participants to work individually and to draw their favourite tree to illustrate their life's experiences, using the following ideas as a guide:

The **roots** represent our foundation, such as family life experiences, religious beliefs, and other strong influences, which have shaped us into the person we are. Here you can include early processes of socialization, education (formal and informal), mentors and role models.

The **trunk** represents the social structure of our life today, such as our position in the home, family, community, job, church, etc.

The **leaves** represent our sources of strength, motivation and further training/education.

The **thorns** represent issues and matters that separate us from God, family and community, and which are responsible for obstacles, failures and pain.

The **fruits** represent signs of growth and development, of progress through our work, success and achievements.

The **buds** represent our hopes, aspirations and dreams.

3. Ask participants to share their tree of life with small table groups, using the following guideline questions:

How did you feel about the activity? About your drawing?

How did you feel when going back over your life's journey? What was the easiest to recall? What was the most difficult?

Were there episodes in your life when being a man represented a strong element in shaping your development?

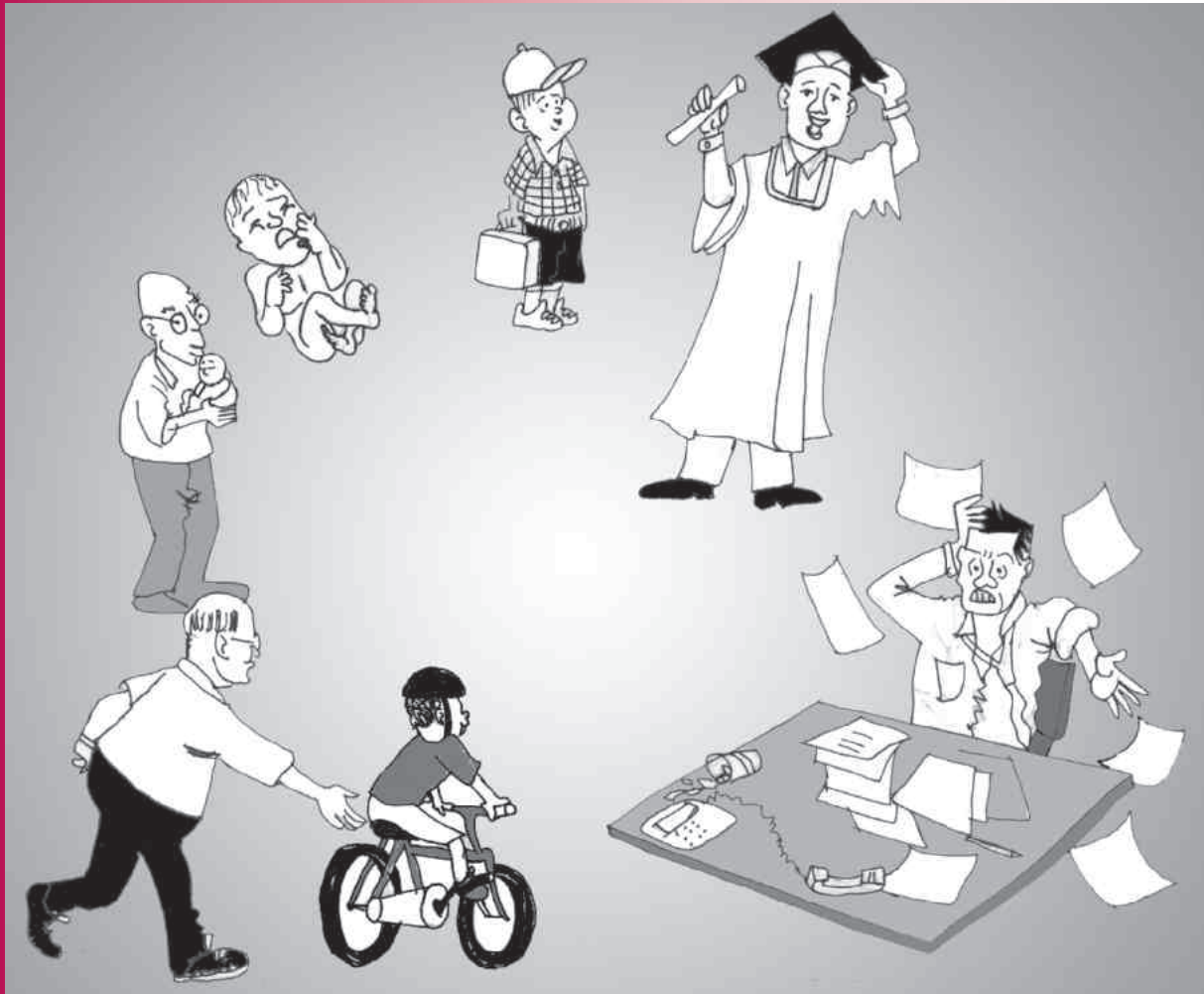
What was it like for your sisters, mother and wife? How is it now for your sons and daughters?

What are points of similarities and differences for the women and men in your family? Why is this so?

4. Create a composite tree of life by writing in some of the similarities of the various participants' life experiences.
5. Ask participants to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. Bring closure by asking participants to close their eyes for two minutes and think of God's presence throughout their lives - from roots to foundation, to trunk, leaves, thorns and buds.

Activity 2: My lifeline – my journey of life

This activity will help participants sketch their autobiography as a woman or man, describing the core factors that have influenced their lives. They will reflect on their relationships with key persons in their lives, with God and with the church.



1. Introduce the activity, its purpose and method. Provide each participant with a sheet of paper and markers/pens.

- ✎ Invite participants to draw a picture of their journey of life, reflecting on their lives, marking key events, memories, achievements, failures, happy and sad moments, challenges and persons who have had significant impact on their lives
- ✎ Ask participants to share their life journey with the table group, indicating the times significant moments in discovering their masculinity and distinctions in being a man
- ✎ Invite participants to share experiences of pressure as men to live up to expectations of family, society and church.

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2. Divide participants into groups and ask each group to share their drawings and reflect on the following:

How were decisions influenced, and opportunities made available or are inaccessible because you are a man? How would it have been different if you were a woman?

What impact did your relationship with key persons in your life have on you?

What would it have been like if you were of the opposite sex? On the other side of your lifeline draw symbols to indicate what your life might have been.

What was your relationship with God at each symbol on your drawing? How did you experience God in your life?

What were the changes and developments in the perception of in yourself and your beliefs? Record these.

3. Reconvene in plenary:

Ask each group to share how they felt doing this activity

Ask each group to share two experiences/thoughts that emerged from the group discussion

Facilitate a brief discussion on how gender discrimination is socialized and perpetuated on this journey.

Bible Study: Jesus, Culture and Identity - Dale A Bisnauth

Introduction

In his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Albert Schweitzer (1875- 1963), missionary, philanthropist and theologian, claimed that it is not possible to write a life of Jesus. His position was that the Jesus who is presented in the Bible is more an eschatological figure than a historical one. Johannes Weiss (1863- 1914), Professor of Marburg and Heidelberg was of a similar opinion. We are therefore cautioned against using the gospel material to construct a history of Jesus. It is possible to write about the life of great historical figures like Mohandas K. Gandhi or Nelson Mandela using archival and other documentary material we have access to, but not of Jesus.

All of that notwithstanding, maybe we have sufficient "historical" material with which to put together a story of the young Jesus, in order to come to some appreciation of a few of the socio- cultural factors which helped to shape the 'lad- factors' which he would transcend - but which were nevertheless useful in his early formation to give him a sense of self.

Nobody after all, not even Weiss and Schweitzer, doubted that he was born and that he had an early life, whatever the nature of his teaching.

Most, if not all our material, comes from St. Luke, who in commending his gospel to the "most excellent Theophilus" declared that he was writing "an orderly account" of the things

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Theophilus had been taught. In his writing of the Infancy Narratives and of the Boy Jesus in the Temple, which we shall be examining, Luke used material that was particular to him.

Read Luke 2:21- 24; 41- 52. Now note the following:

1. In Luke 2: 21- 24, the child Jesus is shown as undergoing three rites of passage which every first-born Jewish male child had to undergo. The most important of these was circumcision. This took place on the eighth day after birth. According to the tradition of the Jewish people, God had said to Abraham: “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for generations to come... Every male among you shall be circumcised” (Gen. 17:9f). Circumcision was linked to God’s covenant. It was at circumcision that the child was named; this was so in the case of Jesus. Circumcision was, in Jesus’ time, the most significant “boundary marker” which distinguished Jew from Gentile – i.e. those who were within the covenant distinguished from those outside.
2. The rite of ‘the redemption of the first-born’, authorized in Exodus 18:16, recognized Jesus as the first-born male of his family. And that of ‘the purification after childbirth’ in which Mary made what was popularly known as “the offering of the poor”, identified the child as a male born, if not born into poverty, then certainly to a poor mother.
3. The rites of passage then, associated with the infancy of Jesus, identified him as a male named Jesus (Joshua), descended from Abraham, within the covenant made between Yahweh and the patriarch, and born to a poor mother. As he grew, Jesus would come to learn of these things which identified him for who he was in his earlier years. What he learned from his parents (and probably his neighbours) would be supplemented by the synagogue- school at Nazareth.
4. Verses 41- 52. Using material from a source to which he alone of the Synoptics had access; St. Luke recounts the story of the twelve- year old Jesus at the Temple. Attendance at the three annual festivals was prescribed for adult male Israelites (Exodus 23:14- 17: Deut. 16:16). That Jesus attended the festival of Passover when he was twelve years of age (v.42) is an indication that at that age he was considered an adult.
5. The rite of passage that marked a Jewish boy’s attainment of manhood was the Bar-mitzvah which he underwent at 12 or 13. By this ceremony, the twelve- year old became a “son of the law”. We can therefore understand Jesus’ keen listening to the Jewish teachers of the law and in asking them questions at a public forum held by the teachers at the Temple.
6. Jesus response to Mary’s anxiety over his whereabouts indicated a growing awareness on his part, of another kind of identity beyond that of a son of Joseph. Nevertheless, the young man would continue to live at Nazareth and be obedient to Mary and Joseph.

Questions for Discussion

1. By which “rite of passage” did you come to know your sexual identity?
2. Both masculinity and femininity are socially constructed. Discuss.
3. What are some of the changes necessary in men’s attitudes and behaviour if gender relationships are to improve?

Concluding remarks:

Rites of passage institutions and ceremonies are related to the development of the “self”, to notions associated with a people’s culture and to the individual’s sense of identity. Many cultures have “rites of passage”. Rev. Dr. Felix Chingota tells us that in his country, Malawi, the life history of a person from birth to death is marked by “rites of passage”, the most significant of which are those associated with puberty.

INITIATION RITES IN MALAWI FELIX CHINGOTA

It is the dry season again in Malawi (August-October) and it is normally during these months that initiation ceremonies for boys are held. What normally happens during these ceremonies is as follows:

The days for the initiation ceremony are identified by the village headman in consultation with the instructors (*anamkugwi*). A place for the initiation ceremony known as *thezo* which is normally located near a stream is chosen and thatched houses are built. Parents who would like their son to be initiated inform the village head about their intention.

On the first day of the initiation ceremony the boy who is about 12-15 years old is escorted to the *thezo* by a guardian known as *adzina*. The departure for the *thezo* normally takes place in the afternoon about 5 pm, after the evening meal. The guardian would also bring with him an extra meal for the evening. On arrival at the place for the initiation ceremony the guardian would hand over the candidate for the initiation to an instructor.

The first thing that is done during the night of this first day would be to circumcise all the boys. This is done using a very sharp knife. Then some herbal medicine is applied on the wounds. The candidates are not allowed to wash their bodies for at least two to three days. Whenever they are allowed to wash their bodies they would go to the stream early in the morning. By this time the wounds will have healed.

The circumcising of the youths is only of the essential parts of the initiation rite. The circumcision is done without application of any anaesthetic medicine. The aim is to inculcate in the youths the virtue of endurance. The other part of the rite is instruction. The youths are normally instructed in the following subjects: sexual education, their responsibilities as sons in their families, as future husbands, and as members of a wider community. The instructors use songs, riddles, and proverbs to reinforce their lessons. Apart from songs, riddles and proverbs, the instructors sometimes would use different types of punishments in order to correct the behaviour of the youths.

While the youths are at the *thezo* being instructed their parents at home have also certain responsibilities to perform for the wellbeing of their children. First they have to prepare food for their child. It is the guardian who brings this food to the *thezo*. Whenever the guardian goes home to collect food, he is not allowed to speak to anyone about how the children are faring at the *thezo*. However, the most important responsibility for the parents is to ensure the wellbeing of their son by abstaining from sexual intercourse.





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This is the reason why parents must abstain from sexual intercourse while their son is at the *thezo*. Going to the *thezo* for initiation is just like going back into the womb of your own mother. In Africa, pregnancy is a very dangerous period. A pregnant woman has only a 50/50 chance of survival. Whenever a woman gets pregnant she is normally described as one standing at cross-roads (*wapakati*). There is always a sense of anxiety for a pregnant woman because one is never sure whether the woman will survive or not.

The village head has also a part to play. He too is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with his wife while the youths of the village are in the bush. A village head is regarded as the custodian of traditions. He is the link person between the world of mortals and the spiritual world. It is believed that God established the traditions of the village or society, and so for the sake of the proper transmission of these divine instructions, the village head must observe sexual taboos.

On the day the graduate from the initiation rite, they are clad in new clothes and they are escorted to the house of the village head where there would be celebrations. The initiates are not only clad in new clothes, they are also given new names to match the new status they have now attained. The whole ceremony can be likened to the Christian rite of Baptism. After the celebrations the initiates go back to their homes. It is normally expected that if previously they were staying in their parent's house, they should try to put up their own houses.

Activity 4:

1. Ask participants to think of three ways of describing themselves, as a man, starting with "I am ..."
2. Ask them to identify inner and outer characteristics, they were made aware of these and how they feel about them.
3. Categorize these according to socializing agencies in your context.
4. Small group discussion:
 -  What is your greatest fear?
 -  What makes you angry/pleased?
 -  What makes you happy/sad?
 -  What do you most like/dislike about yourself?
5. Summarize and explore the meaning of and influences on self-conceptions and self-esteem, on masculinity.
6. Lead a discussion on what needs to be changed and ways in which this can be done.
7. Ask each group to share what they have learnt in a creative way - some examples are: using a drawing, a poem or a role play.
8. Conclude with a song and prayer

MODULE IV

SEXUALITY

A Theology of Human Sexuality: Recovery of Divine Eros in our Theological Imagination

Joseph Prabhakar Dayam

We are all sexual beings, though we may not acknowledge it openly. We want to express our sexuality, yet we feel uncomfortable about it. We are aware of certain parts of our body that we tend to look at and admire, yet we are often embarrassed about them. In several Asian contexts an open discussion about our sexuality is considered as being “dirty.” Keeping in view the centrality of our sexuality in search of our identity and pursuit of happiness, it is important that we think theologically about human sexuality. In this article, I would like to reflect briefly on “eros,” as one of the expressions of love with a view to tap its potential in our theological imagination. In the history of Christian theology, as faith communities and theologians attempted to talk about the nature of God they employed various attributes, which are sometimes called perfections of God. They include: omnipotence, omniscience, immutability and so on. All of these categories were challenged by those who find such language uncomfortable. If there is any perfection of the divine that is least controversial, perhaps

it is Love. God as “pure power” is problematic, while God as “pure love” is well- embraced in contemporary theological imaginations. Perhaps all of us agree that if God has to be God, God has to be love and loving. The Bible is clear about it. The Bible witnesses to a God who out of love disclosed Godself to the humanity. It bears witness to a God who out of love stretches forth his/her arm to liberate those who call upon the name of God. The New Testament witnesses to God as Love. It seeks to suggest that God in God's essence is Love. It also seeks to suggest that the summary of God's Law is love. Accordingly, Christian vocation is to love God and to love the neighbor.

However, the New Testament scholars and theologians as they sought to differentiate the love of God from the love of the humans used three terms: agape - as the highest form of love, phileo as the love between friends and eros as the love between lovers, or romantic love. While agapeic love is understood as the supreme, self- giving love, the other two, phileal love and erotic love were viewed as lower levels of love. While the first one is seen as being operative in the realm of the divine - human relationship, the later two were seen as being operative at the human level. Though phileo and eros legitimate expressions of love they were to view agapeic love as their horizon. Thus we have a conceptual hierarchy within our Christian understanding of love. As love is not merely an attitude or an emotion but also a practice or deed, such hierarchy also comes into place as we imagine our vocations. While expression of love toward the divine are considered religious or ‘sacred’, our expressions of love within the family and the society are seen as ‘mundane’ affections.

With this background, I would like to suggest that these three are interrelated and at the

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heart of agape and phileo lies eros. If eros has to be understood as romantic love, it could be understood as being driven by a passion. In our love for the other within the realm of romance, we seek to know the other and being known by the other. It is a sensuous knowing: all our senses come to play. It arises out of our deep need and the desire to know and be known. Erotic love therefore, is our process of knowing the beloved and being known by the beloved which arises out of our deep desire to know and be known. At the heart of erotic love is the desire to know and to be known. Sex or making love, which is an expression of eros, is a way by which we seek to come to know and be known. As we make love to each other, we lay bare before the other and accept the other with all his/her gifts and vulnerabilities. It is an event in which we expose and embrace our gifts and vulnerabilities and enter into a deeper level of self-knowledge and the knowledge of the other. It is an event in which the desire seeks to fulfill itself in the desire of the other and culminates in the ecstatic experience of transcending desire. It is a union in which the partners fulfill the desire of becoming one flesh and in the process find their individual selves. Perhaps that is what the writer of the creation account meant when he talks of the first couple to be the flesh of their flesh and bone of their bones. This has become a part of the wedding ceremony in many traditions when the man and woman are commended to leave their parents and cleave to each other becoming one flesh. It is a union in which the love for the other results in the love of the self. You feel good! You feel good about yourself and about your body.

It is interesting to note that in the Biblical language, making love or having sex is referred to as “knowing”. It is the same word that John employs as he talks about the disciples knowing Christ. The Gospel writer

thus lifts up eros as a prerequisite for any expression of agapeic love. Eros as the desire to know and to be known therefore it is at the heart of agape and phileo.

The self-giving love of God finds its expression in Christ as a result of the deep desire that is there at the heart of God to know and to be known. Christian faith articulates its understanding of God as a triune God who in their eternal dance of love brings forth all things into being and nurture their becoming until they find their rest in their source of being and becoming. God the Father in perfect love for the world sends forth the Son for us and accompanies the Son in love as the Son comes to us. The Son, who out of his love for the Father and the world, befriends the world through his incarnation, and takes the experience of the world into the very life of God. The Holy Spirit who is the bond of love between the Father and the Son proceeds from the Father and the Son to the world like a rushing wind kindling within us the flames of love, to love God and one another. At the heart of this Trinitarian God’s engagement with the world is the divine eros, the desire to become one with the world, to know and be known.

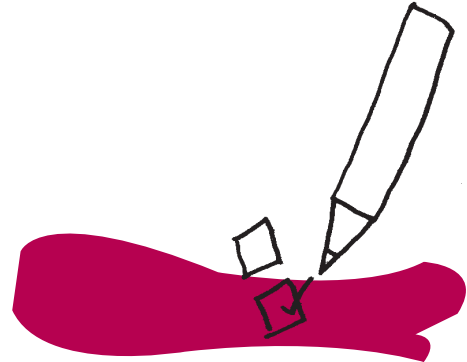
Human beings who are created in the Image of God share this divine eros. This divine eros propels us to know God and to be known by God. It propels us to know our neighbor and to be known. It likewise, propels us to know our beloved and be known. All our friendships and relationships are driven by this divine eros.

Our flames of desire, so long as they arise out of this deep-seated passion to know and be known; and express and embrace the vulnerabilities of each other in a covenantal relationship are to be seen as vehicles of the expression of agapeic love.

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Description

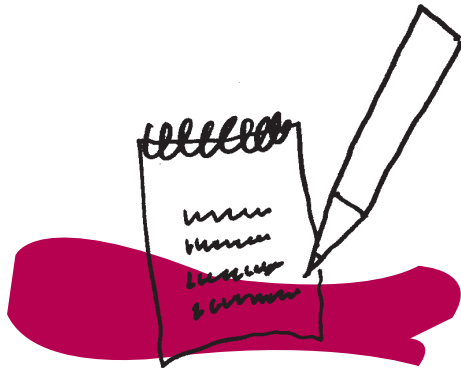
This module is designed to facilitate reflection and discussion on sexuality and to understand this as essential to one's being and an important aspect of spiritual wholeness. The theological understanding helps participants to relate sexuality as an essential aspect of self as God's creation which is a positive element. The module also provides resources and activities to understand the sexual and reproductive body. We recommend that local research be done to gather health information and that a health resource person, preferably one who specializes in sex education be invited to co-facilitate this session on "My Body".

The module will increase and sharpen participants' awareness and understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of sexuality, to open ways in talking about sexuality, sexual feeling and to improve self-esteem. These are seen as important steps for increasing comfort in discussing sexual matters and making sexual decisions.







Objectives

-  To identify components of a multi-dimensional definition of sexuality and to understand its how this is connected to masculinity and self-esteem
-  To examine power relations in sexual relationships
-  To examine the connection between, love, intimacy and sex
-  To build self esteem and courage to talk about sexuality and sex
-  To better understand the sexual and reproductive organs and to learn to care for one's body
-  To propose a way forward for churches to engage with the issue of sexuality and how it affects men, women and societal issues such as violence and HIV and AIDS.

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Notes to the facilitator

-  Read the Introduction, Bible Study and recommended resource to prepare well for the session.
-  Read the Bible Study by Monica Melanchthon in Section 4. You may also consider using this Bible Study.
-  Collect a few popular songs, sayings, cartoons and myths about sex in your local context.
-  Make a list of myths and beliefs about sex and sexuality. If necessary, use the list provided as a basis but be sure to get those which are local.
-  Get a quick agreement of respect and sensitivity for each person to present uneasy heckling, making fun of persons or adverse comments.
-  For each activity, you may choose to divide the questions among the groups, to give each group more time and also to have a variety of responses and dynamics and a broad scope for analysis, reflection and developing strategies to address the issues raised.

“Sexuality is a total sensory experience, involving the whole mind and body—not just the genitals. Sexuality is shaped by a person’s values, attitudes, behaviour, physical appearance, beliefs, emotions, personality, likes and dislikes, and spiritual selves, as well as all the ways in which one has been socialized.

Reproduction is the process of generating offspring. The cycle of reproduction starts with sexual contacts between a man and a woman up till the birth of the child.”
Yaari Dosti: Young Men Redefine Masculinity, Population Council, New Delhi, 2006

Activity 1: Popular understanding of sexuality

1. Introduce the session on sexuality and ask participants to form buzz groups and discuss the following points, for 20 minutes:

What are popular "sayings", myths and beliefs about sex in your society?

What is masturbation? What are some popular beliefs and understanding of masturbation?

How do men talk about sexuality? What is the connection between manhood and sexuality?

What issues regarding sexuality and sex are most important for boys and men?



2. Ask for brief sharing from each buzz group.

Activity 2: Various aspects of sexuality and its definition

1. Group work:

How do boys become aware of their sexuality and what are the main agents that influence their understanding?

What issues regarding sexuality are most important for men in your community?

Do you believe men and women think or feel differently about sex and relationships? How? Why?

How does a man express his affection? What are the meeting points between sexuality and affection?

Do men need sex more than women? Why?

What is a man most afraid of during the sexual act?

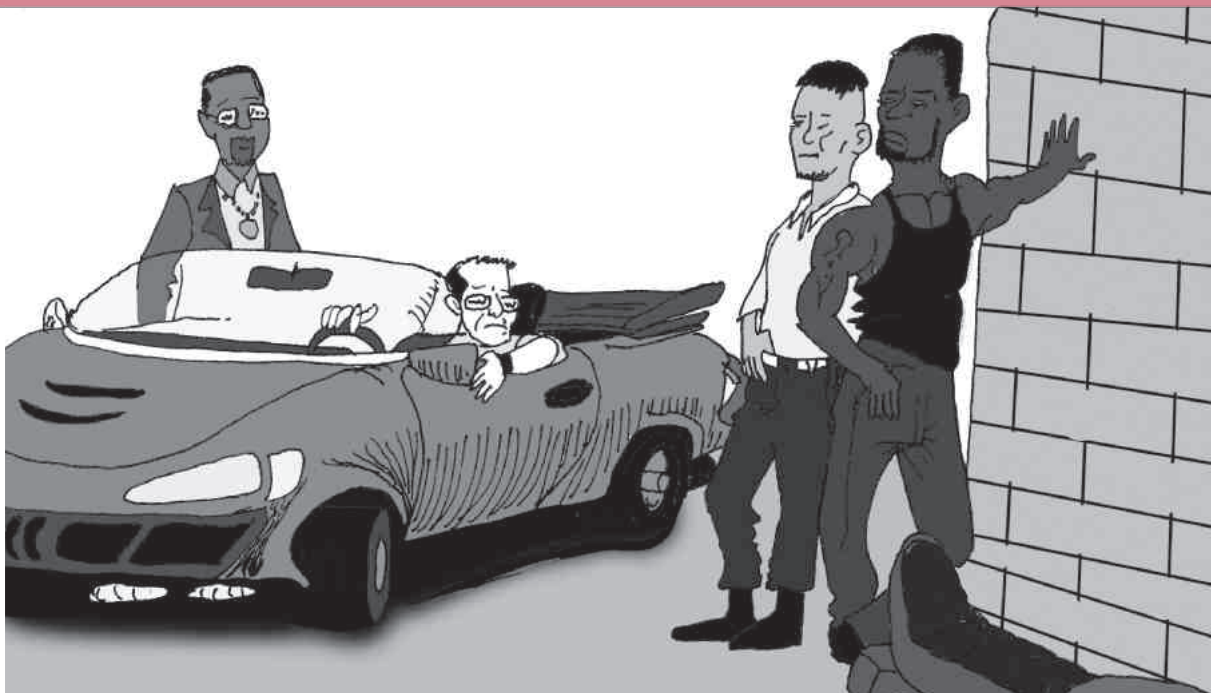
2. Facilitate a plenary discussion on how these impact women and men and society as a whole and the role of the church is nurturing healthy sexuality.
3. Read the definition of sexuality (below) and ask for input for a culturally relevant definition that is acceptable to the group.

Activity 3: Power and violence in sexual relationships

1. Facilitate a brainstorming on the types of violence that can occur in sexual relations. List these on a flipchart or white/black board.
 - ♂️ Divide participants into small groups and distribute the stories below to different groups. Ask them to do the following:
 - ♂️ Read the story and reflect for 1 minute.
 - ♂️ Share similar stories that happened in their communities.
 - ♂️ Examine and discuss the situation. Name the violence that took place.
 - ♂️ Identify and discuss the issues of power in the relationships.

STORY 1

Brian liked a girl, Georgina, in his neighborhood. Very soon they began to go out on dates. Very quickly they moved from smiles to holding hands, to cuddling, necking and kissing. One evening while they were alone in Georgina's home, their necking and kissing got intense and Brian began to take off Georgina's clothes, starting with her t-shirt.



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STORY 2

Gary and Meena have been married for two years and they have an enjoyable sex life. Sometimes, Gary comes home late and by that time Meena is fast asleep. Gary generally wakes her up and asks for sex. Often, even if Meena is not willing, she gives in to Gary for the sake of peace.

2. Reconvene and ask each group for key points. Highlight key issues to address.
3. Ask participants to identify ways in which such situations are dealt with – by persons involved, families, church and society.
4. Distribute fact sheet on provision by state, legal system and support services for survivors and perpetrators.
5. Discuss ways in which the churches and groups can address this issue.

Bible Study on Human Sexuality - Joseph Prabhakar Dayam

(Also see Bible Study on Human Sexuality by Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon in Section 4)

We often prefer not to speak about sexuality as it is viewed as having to do with profanity as opposed to sacred, and usually viewed as being “dirty.” The only occasion it finds its place in our sacred language is in the liturgy of holy matrimony. We rarely hear it being preached from the pulpit. However it is interesting to note that it is one of the major themes of the Bible. In trying to describe the divine human relationship, the biblical witness chooses a language that has sexual overtones. “Knowing” in the biblical sense is to know the other by laying ourselves open as it happens in an intimate sexual relationship.

The Bible is meant to be a public text. The faith community has the collective ownership of it. Hence it is inappropriate to restrict the right to read and interpret to the ‘specialist’ or to the one who is professionally initiated into the task of interpretation. The community reads it and appropriates it as they encounter the text and are encountered by the text. By choosing to live under the authority of the scripture the faith community engages a hermeneutic of generosity. At the same time, since the text is couched in a cultural context which is patriarchal it also employs a hermeneutic of suspicion. It is with this critical approach the Bible Study group needs to approach the text. We read the text as we allow ourselves to be read by the text. The goal is to grow into the likeness of Christ, the freeing Spirit.

Questions for discussion:

1. What are your basic assumptions about human sexuality?
2. What is the usual interpretation on what the Bible seems to be saying about sexuality? (Based on your pre- understanding without referring to any specific texts)
3. What in your opinion are ten major themes of the Bible? As you do this exercise,

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browse through the first ten chapters of the first book of the Bible. Do you think that sexuality figures in as one of the major themes of the Bible?

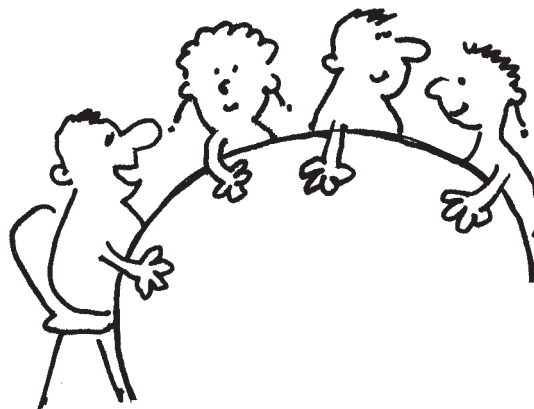
4. Identify five biblical texts that inform your perception of sexuality?
5. What in your opinion do these texts say about human sexuality?
6. How does your reading of these texts affirm the Image of God in humanity and how does it help us in leading us towards conformity to the likeness of Christ?

The facilitator may also use these suggested texts which came out of a masculinity workshop in Kenya: Gen 2: 23, Proverbs 5: 20, Song of Solomon 5:1. 7: 1- 5, I Cor. 7: 1- 7, Hosea 3: 1 ff, John 8: 1- 11, Sirach 23: 16

Activity 3: Developing healthy, happy and respectful intimate relationships

1. Divide participants in small groups to discuss the following:

1.  What is the most basic requirement for a good relationship?
2.  What are some important elements for developing intimacy in a relationship?
3.  Is it possible to develop an intimate relationship with more than one person? Should you make this choice, what are the consequences?
4.  What characteristics might cause difficulties in being intimate with someone? How can these be overcome?



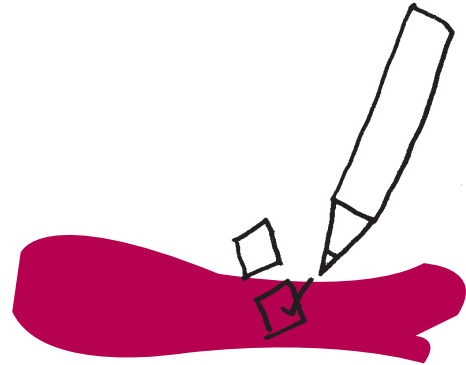
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Activity 4: Me and my body





(adapted from *Yaari Dosti: Young Men Redefine Masculinity -A Training Manual*)

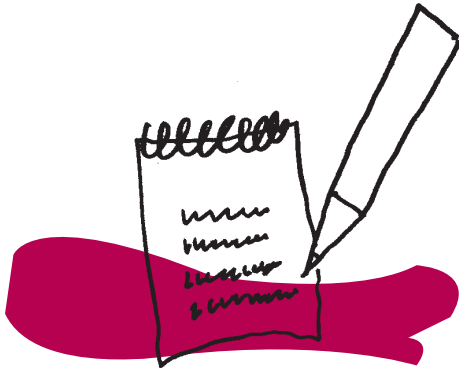


Description







This activity helps the educator explore the special care that young men should take with their own bodies, promoting preventive health measures, particularly in relation to genital hygiene, and consequently, to the prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmissible infections (STI). It is important to get a health or family planning resource person for this session.

Objectives

-  To enable participants to know more about their body, particularly, sexual health care
-  To increase awareness and knowledge about the male sexual organs, as well as increase awareness about the need for self-care and self-examination for different types of cancer
-  To understand contraceptive methods and how they work as well as re-iterating that contraception is the responsibility for both the man and the woman
-  To promote responsible sexual behaviour and responses.



Notes to the facilitator/health/family planning resource person

-  Visit health clinics, men's organizations and/or family planning organizations to gather information including helpful brochures and samples of contraceptives.
-  Study the 4 Resource Sheets below and make large copies to mount on the wall. It may also be helpful to make enough copies to distribute to participants.
-  The facilitator can suggest to the group that they give a name and other characteristics to the drawing of the man's body.
-  If the participants in the group are too embarrassed to draw the genital organs, the facilitator can do so, naturally, providing a little light relief in the proceedings.
-  Encourage the group to do this with the various parts of the body, discussing what the consequences of inadequate hygiene are on the health. The back-up sheet which accompanies this activity can be very useful.
-  Afterward, ask them what alternatives they found to avoid or correct what happened to the person in question. The group should then remove the bits of paper, part by part, until the body is clean again.

Activity 5a: Reproductive Body

1. Place on the floor one (or more) sheet(s) of paper, the size of a human body

Ask for 2 volunteers - 1 to lie on the paper and the other to draw the outline of his body.

Ask other volunteers to add the male genitals to the drawing.

Do men and women take care of their body in the same way?

Facilitate a discussion on sexual health and the importance of knowing the sexual organs and their function.

2. Facilitate a plenary discussion using the following questions as a guideline:

Name the genital organs including local names for these.

What are the basic functions of each organ? Which organs are least known about?

Do most men know about these things? Why or why not?

How should a man take care of his genital tract? And a woman?

3. Use the **Resource Sheets on the male and female sex organs** below and also those that you have researched in your community health clinic.

Explain the function of each organ of the male and female reproductive system, including the physical diversity, that is to say, there are different shapes and sizes of penis, vagina and breasts, etc.

Show that the different types and sizes of the penis do not determine sexual pleasure.

Explore the fact that, although taking care of the reproductive tract is considered in many cultures to be a female concern, this should also be a male concern and that taking care of one's health is a key factor in safeguarding quality of life - in the present and in the future.





Take participants through important steps in caring for sexual health. Use the **Resource sheets** on preventative cancer.

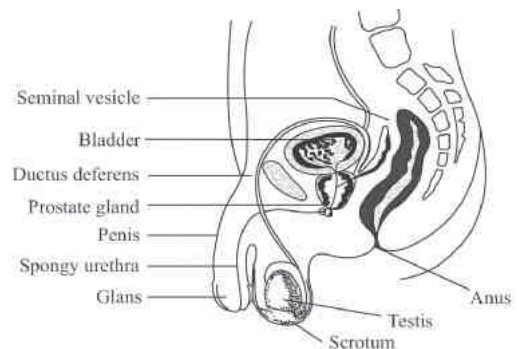
4. Draw out key points and let participants know that a limited knowledge of their own body can have adverse consequences on their health, such as in preventing STIs, HIV and AIDS and various types of cancer which affect the male reproductive organs. Point out the importance of male involvement in reproductive decisions and discuss how spermatozoa are produced and the implications of this on reproduction.

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Resource Sheet I: Male sexual organs

A. External Sexual Organs:

- * **Penis:** A member with a urinary and reproductive function. It is a very sensitive organ, the size of which varies from man to man. Most of the time the penis remains soft and flaccid. But when the tissue of the corpus spongiosum fills up with blood during sexual excitation, it increases in volume and becomes hard, a process which is called an erection. In the sexual act, when highly stimulated, it releases a liquid called sperm or semen which contains spermatozoa. The ejaculation of the sperm produces an intense feeling of pleasure called an orgasm.
- * **Scrotum:** A type of pouch behind the penis which has various layers, the external one being a fine skin covered with hair with a darker coloring than the rest of the body. Its appearance varies according to the state of contraction or relaxation of the musculature. In cold, for example, it becomes more contracted and wrinkled and in heat it becomes smoother and elongated. The scrotum contains the testicles.
- * **Prepuce or foreskin:** The skin that covers the head of the penis. When the penis becomes erect, the prepuce is pulled back, leaving the glans (or the “head” of the penis) uncovered. When this does not occur, the condition is called phimosis, which can cause pain during sexual intercourse and hamper personal hygiene. Phimosis is easily corrected through surgical intervention using a local anesthetic. In some cultures or countries, or in some families, the foreskin of boys is removed in a procedure called circumcision.
- * **Glans:** The head of the penis. The skin is very soft and very sensitive.






B. Internal Sexual Organs:

- * **Testicles:** The male sexual glands, the function of which is to produce hormones and spermatozoa. One of the hormones produced is testosterone, responsible for male secondary characteristics, such as skin tone, facial hair, tone of voice and muscles. They have the form of two eggs and to feel them one only has to palpate the scrotum pouch.
- * **Urethra:** A canal used both for urination and for ejaculation. It is about 20cm long and is divided into three parts: the prostatic urethra, which passes through the prostate gland; the membranous urethra, which passes through the pelvic diaphragm; and the third part which traverses the corpus spongiosum of the penis.
- * **Epididymis:** A canal connected to the testicles. The spermatozoa are produced in the testicles and are stored in the epididymis until they mature and are expelled at the moment of ejaculation.

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- * **Seminal Vesicles:** Two pouches that provide the fluids for the spermatozoa to swim in.
- * **Deferent Ducts:** Two very fine ducts of the testes which carry the spermatozoa to the prostate.
- * **Ejaculatory Duct:** Formed by the junction of the deferent duct and the seminal vesicle. It is short and straight and almost the whole trajectory is located at the side of the prostate, terminating at the urethra. In the ejaculatory duct fluids from the seminal vesicle and the deferent duct mix together and flow into the prostatic urethra.




C. Sexual Dysfunction:

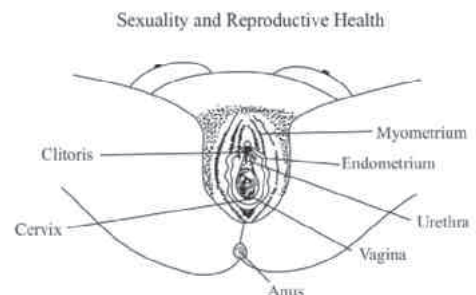
This is when a man or a woman presents certain difficulties, physical or psychological, in expressing or enjoying sexual pleasure, for example, men who are unable to have an erection, or suffer from premature ejaculation or women who do not feel sexual desire or who are unable to have an orgasm. The dysfunctions can have organic causes (cardiovascular conditions or diseases, diabetes, side effects of medication, substance abuse, etc.) or psychological (a repressive upbringing, anxiety about sexual performance, guilt, problems between the partners, previous frustrating or traumatic experiences, stress, etc.). The most common sexual dysfunctions among men are:

- * **Erectile Dysfunction** - when a man is unable to have an erection. It can be in two forms: primary (when the man has never had an erection) or secondary (when it appears in a man who never had erection problems before).
- * **Premature Ejaculation** - when a man ejaculates involuntarily before penetrating the vagina or immediately after penetration.
- * **Retarded Ejaculation** - when a man is unable to ejaculate.

Female Sexual Organs:

A External Sexual Organs:

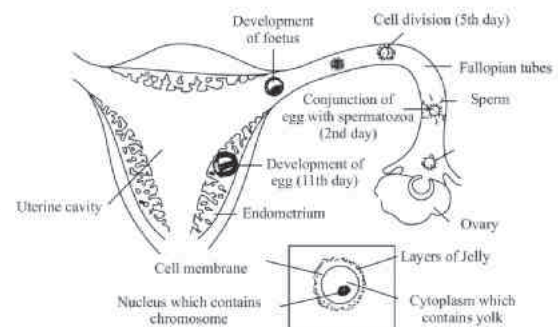
- * **Mons Veneris or Mons Venus:** The rounded protuberance located on the pelvic bone called the pubis. In an adult woman, it is covered with hair which protects the region.
- * **Labia majora:** Covered with sparse hair, the most external parts of the vulva. They commence at the Mons Veneris and run to the perineum.
- * **Labia minora:** A pair of skin folds, with no hair. They can be seen when the labia majora are parted with the fingers. They are very sensitive and increase in size during excitation.



- *👉 **Clitoris:** A rounded organ, very small, but extremely important for the sexual pleasure of the woman. It is very sensitive and when a woman is not excited, touching it directly can be unpleasant. But when gently stimulated, the woman experiences an intense and pleasurable sensation called orgasm.
- *👉 **Opening of the urethra:** The opening where the urine comes out.
- *👉 **Opening of the vagina:** The elongated opening where discharge, menstrual blood and the baby come out.

B Internal Sexual Organs:

- *👉 **Uterus:** The organ where the fetus develops during pregnancy. When a woman is not pregnant, her uterus is the size of a fist.
- *👉 **Cervix:** The lower part of the uterus. It has an orifice where the menstrual fluids pass and where the spermatozoa enter. In a normal delivery, this orifice increases or dilates to allow the passage of the infant.
- *👉 **Body of the uterus:** The main part of the uterus, which increases in size during pregnancy and returns to normal size after the birth. It consists of two external layers, a membrane called the peritoneum and muscular tissue called the myometrium. The mucus membrane that lines the uterus is called the endometrium, which loosens and sloughs off during menstruation and is renewed monthly.
- *👉 **Fallopian tubes:** There are two, one on either side of the uterus. Where they join the ovary, they open out like a flower. Through the tubes, the ova or egg cells pass to the uterus.
- *👉 **Ovaries:** There are two, the size of a large olive, one on either side of the uterus, attached to it by a nerve ligament and by layers of skin. From birth, the ovaries contain about 500,000 ova. There, the ova are stored and develop. They also produce the female hormones.
- *👉 **Vagina:** The canal which starts at the vulva and runs to the cervix. Inside, it is made of tissue similar to the inside part of the mouth, with various folds that allow it to stretch during sexual intercourse or to allow passage at child birth. Some women feel pleasure during penetration of the penis in the vagina, others less; for most women, stimulation of the clitoris provides greater pleasure than stimulation of the vagina.

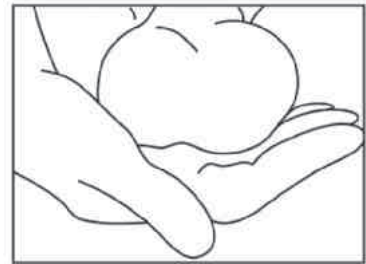


Resource Sheet II: Preventive exam for cancer of the testicles

Testicular cancer, while seldom discussed, accounts for 1% of all cancers in men and is the most common form of cancer among men 15 to 35 years of age. It generally occurs in only one of the testicles and once removed causes no problem to the sexual and reproductive functions of the man. Today, testicular cancer is relatively easy to treat, particularly when detected in the early stages. The most common symptom is the appearance of a hard nodule about the size of a pea, which does not cause pain.

Carrying out a testicular exam step by step:

1. Self-examination should be carried out once a month, after a warm shower, as the heat makes the skin of the scrotum relax, enabling one to locate any irregularity in the testicles.
2. The man should stand in front of the mirror and examine each testicle with both hands. The index and middle finger should be placed on the lower part of the testicles and the thumb on the upper part.
3. The man should gently rotate each testicle between the thumb and the index finger, checking to see if they are smooth and firm. It is important to palpate also the epididymis, a type of soft tube at the back of the testicle.
4. One should check the size of each testicle to verify that they are their normal size. It is common for one of them to be slightly larger than the other.
5. Should one find any lumps, it is important to see a doctor at once. The lumps are generally located on the side of the testicles but can also be found on the front. Not every lump is cancerous, but when it is, the disease can spread rapidly if not treated.



Resource Sheet III: Preventive exam for cancer of the penis

Lack of hygiene is one of the greatest causes of cancer of the penis. Thus, the first step to prevent this disease is to wash the penis daily with soap and water and after sexual relations and masturbation. When discovered in the earlier stages, cancer of the penis can be cured and easily treated. If left untreated or caught late, it can spread to internal areas such as ganglions and cause mutilation or death.

Self-examination of the penis

Once a month, the man should carefully examine his penis, looking for any of these signs: wounds that do not heal after medical treatment; lumps that do not disappear after treatment and which present secretion and a bad smell; persons with phimosis who, even after succeeding in baring the glans, have inflammation (redness and itching) for long periods; whitish stains

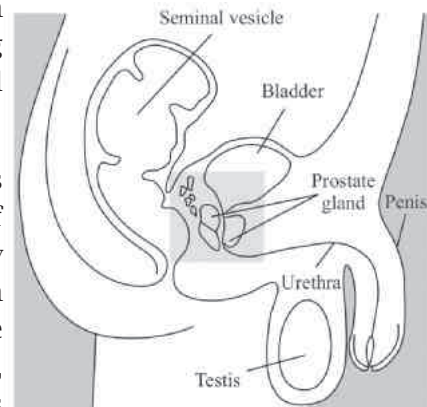
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or loss of pigmentation; the appearance of bulbous tissues in the groin. These symptoms are more common in adults, and if any of them appear, it is necessary to consult a doctor immediately. Another important precaution is to be examined by a urologist once a year.

Preventive exam for prostate cancer

Liquid produced by the prostate gland is responsible for 30% of a man's sperm volume. After the age of 40, all men should have regular exams for prostate cancer. About half the men in their fifties exhibit symptoms associated with prostate cancer, such as difficulty in urinating, the need to go to the bathroom frequently, a weak urine stream and a feeling that the bladder is always full. These alterations appear as a consequence of the increase in size of the prostate and the increase in its muscular portion, which presses against the urethra and hinders the elimination of the urine stored in the bladder. These symptoms are known as benign prostate hiperplasia (BPH) and, at present, there is no efficient way of preventing it. But there are various treatments: medication, local heat therapy, vaporization, laser and conventional surgery through the urethra. A urologist (a doctor specialized in the male sexual organs) can recommend the best treatment. Left untreated, inflammation of the prostate can lead to serious complications including urinary infections, total interruption of the flow of urine and even renal insufficiency.

Cancer of the prostate is the uncontrolled growth of cells in the prostate. It affects 1 in every 12 men over the age of 50. In general, it only produces symptoms when it is already in a more advanced stage (such as pain and blood when urinating). When the disease is diagnosed will determine whether it can be controlled or not. When diagnosed early, prostate cancer has a high cure rate. There are three types of exams for prostate cancer prevention: rectal touch, ultra- sound and the PSA (a protein released by the prostate itself and which increases considerably when the organ is affected by cancer) dosage in the blood. The rectal touch examination is the simplest. It consists of the doctor introducing a finger in the anus to examine the consistency and size of the prostate.



Activity 5b: Contraception

1. Divide the participants into 6 groups. Distribute the **Resource Sheet on Contraceptives**, samples and other specific information about each method to each of the groups:

Group 1 - Hormonal Methods

Group 2 - Intrauterine Device (IUD)

Group 3 - Barrier Methods

Group 4 - Rhythm Methods

Group 5 - Tubal Ligation and Vasectomy

Group 6 - Emergency Contraception

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2. Ask each group to try to answer the following questions about the methods they have received:

How does this method prevent pregnancy and how is it used?

What are the myths and facts about this method?

What are its advantages and disadvantages?

What would you like to know about contraception and its methods?

3. Reconvene and ask each group to share briefly their responses and findings. Respond to questions from each group. Using the Resource Sheet and other information brochures, provide clarification and additional information about the contraception and its methods.

4. Close this activity with a discussion using the following questions:

Who has to think and talk about contraception? Man or woman or both? Why?

Why is it important to seek medical advice when starting one's sexual life?

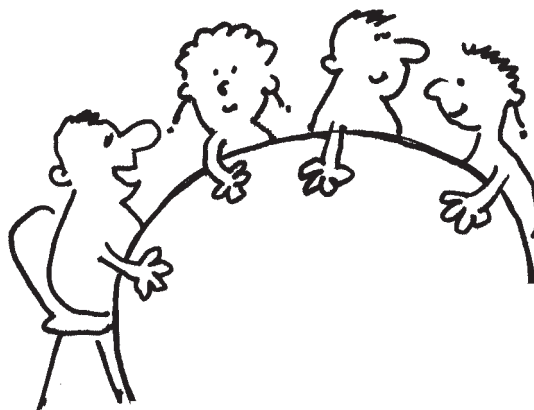
How should the couple choose the contraceptive method they are to use?

What are the main precautions that should be used with the condom?

What is the only method that prevents pregnancy and protects against sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and HIV and AIDS?

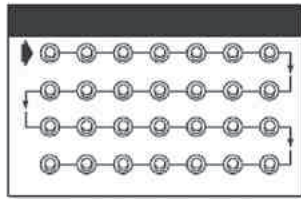
If you forget to use a condom, or the condom breaks, what can you do?

Remind participants that contraception is a responsibility that should be shared. If neither of the partners want sexual intercourse to result in pregnancy, it is essential that both take precautions so that this does not happen.



Resource Sheet III: Contraceptives

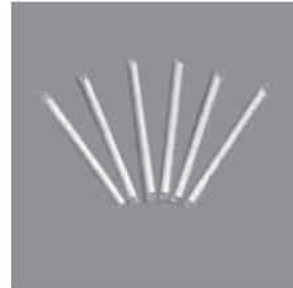
Methods of Contraception



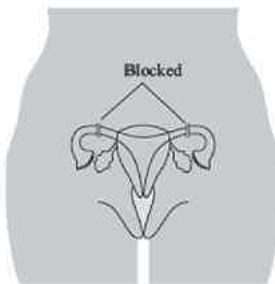
Oral pills



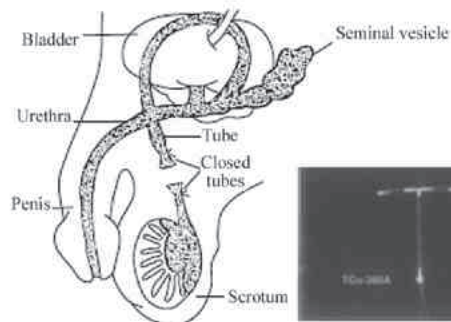
Injection method



Norplant



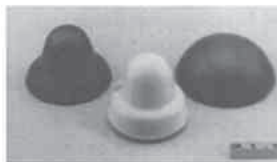
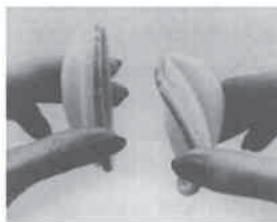
Female Sterilization



Male Sterilization



IUD



Diaphragm



Inserting Diaphragm



Spermicides

Conclusion:

- ✎ Highlight key points and possible ways, in which participants may dig deeper and try to understand sexuality and spiritual wholeness. Point out the importance of sex education for men and women, boys and girls.
- ✎ Ask them to suggest concrete follow up steps for churches.
- ✎ Close with a song and prayer.

RESOURCE SHEET: THE EROTIC BODY

Every part of the human body can produce pleasure when touched but, generally speaking, people have certain areas that are more sensitive to caressing than others. These are called erogenous zones (breasts, anus, vulva, clitoris, vagina, penis, mouth, ears, neck, etc.). They vary from person to person, thus, only by talking or experimenting will you know what excites your partner (be they male or female) most.

The human body is much more than its biological functions. Unlike most male animals, who become sexually aroused merely by the smell of a female when they are in heat, human male excitation depends on social and psychological factors that are closely interlinked, which influence each other and which depend on each other. For a woman, sexual desire does not depend on being in her fertile period. How does human sexual desire work?

There are four stages to human sexual desire: desire, excitation, orgasm, relaxation.

1. **Sexual desire** is when one feels like having sex. It occurs through the activation of the brain when confronted with a sexually exciting stimulus. It should be remembered that a certain stimulus can be exciting in a certain culture and not in another. For example, a certain standard of beauty can arouse sexual desire in one place and not in another. Anxiety, depression, the feeling of danger and fear of rejection can affect a person's sexual desire. On the other hand, when a person feels relaxed, secure and has intimacy with his or her partner, this greatly facilitates the desire to have sexual relations.
2. **Sexual excitation** is involuntary, that is to say, it occurs independently of a person's will. What man has not had the embarrassment of having an erection at the wrong moment? We know that a man is excited because his penis becomes hard and his testicles rise or feel tighter. We know a woman is sexually excited when her vagina becomes wet and her clitoris swells and becomes harder. Physiologically, the excitation results from the increased flow of blood into certain tissues (such as the penis, the vagina, the breasts) and from the muscular tension of the whole body during sexual activity. During this phase, respiratory movements and heartbeat increase. More important than knowing all this, however, is knowing that caressing and touching between partners is important in this stage. In the case of most man, all it takes is an erotic image for him to have an erection; for a woman to become excited requires more time, and more caressing and kissing.
3. **Orgasm** is the stage of greatest sexual intensity and is difficult to describe objectively because the feeling of pleasure is personal – so much so that descriptions of orgasm are just as varied as people themselves. During orgasm, most individuals feel that the body builds up enormous muscular tension and then suddenly relaxes, accompanied by an intense feeling of pleasure. Furthermore, not all orgasms are the same. As the orgasm depends on sexual excitation; the same person can have orgasms of different intensities at different times. It is during the male orgasm that ejaculation occurs, that is, sperm is ejected through the urethra.
4. **Relaxation** is the stage when the man relaxes and needs some time to get excited again. In young men this period is short (around 20 to 30 minutes); in adults, particularly those over 50, it can take longer. Women do not need this interval, which explains why they can have more than one orgasm during sexual intercourse, or multiple orgasms.

MODULE V

REAL MEN AND MASCULINITIES

Introduction

Philip Vinod Peacock

For some time now, Raymond's, a textile company in India has been running advertisements for suits using the term 'a real man'. The concept of the 'real man' has been around for a while now actually and it is interesting that the concept is even being appropriated and co-modified by the market for the ends of profit. The question that we must ask, however, is how do we understand the whole idea of masculinity? Or to put it in other words, how do we understand what it means to be a man today?

At the outset what has to be taken note of is that until recently 'masculinity' has not really come under scrutiny. While there has been a tremendous amount of work done around the idea of 'gender', this has primarily been seen in terms of women and the idea of gender justice has been in a way reduced to only the women's question. This reductionism has been problematic on several fronts.

Gender studies have thus far only scrutinized women. In fact there has almost been an equation between the concepts of gender and women. However, if we are to understand gender roles and behavior, as a product of socialization, the concept of gender must also open us to scrutinize the socialization of men. Thus far men have also been very content to not open up themselves to the question of how their selves are constructed and what contributes to this. Moreover, if we are to construct an egalitarian and equitable society that is based on the idea of God's justice for all humans, the partnership of men is essential to this process. If this is the case the question we have to ask is how we understand masculinity and how are men and boys socialized in our contexts and cultures. What we must also further ask is whether these ways of socialization are healthy for boys and men and whether we can find alternative ways of creating positive masculinities that will contribute to gender justice. The question therefore really is how do we nurture the development of real men? Perhaps a starting point for our discussion would be for us to identify how men and masculinity is understood in our contexts today?

Mainly Men

While the term 'real man' is a rather popular one, the question that we have to ask is how do we choose to define it? Across several cultures, rites of passage initiate boys into manhood. These rites of passage mark a time when boys are taught literally, symbolically and ritually, not only what it means to be a man but also what is expected of men and manhood. These rites have their places within the context of a community that has certain expectations of its membership and they serve to contribute to the life and sustainability of the community. However,

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they are also constructed within a larger framework of patriarchy and though they are immersed within the context of the life of the community and have meaning within this, it cannot be denied that they offer both men and women a certain patriarchal paternalism.

With the transition into modernity that is being forced upon many communities around the world through the project of globalization, these teachings, symbols and rituals are being disconnected from the social community-based context in which they were initially embedded. This has fostered a male socialization that is disconnected from community and of which the community has little control. Therefore an understanding of masculinity that once had its place within the context of a particular community now stands disconnected and out of place. It is almost as though the socialization processes that many boys are going through are out of place in the demands of the world today. In India for example the socialization of boys to protect the honour of the household (which in itself is not necessarily a bad thing) has turned itself into being understood as the control of women. Further within the constructs of a caste based society the protection of honour has meant the murder of women who seek partners outside the rules of caste society by their fathers and brothers. In workshops that we have conducted around the world we have noticed that honour has meant aggression over other communities to validate a sense of loss that one community has perceived.

Manly Men

In many cultures around the world, masculinity and manhood is closely interconnected with the act of sex. While a girl becomes a 'woman' through the biological processes of either puberty or pregnancy or both, a boy in many cultures around the

world, is thought to have progressed into manhood through participation in the act of sex. It is no wonder then that many men seek to prove their masculinity through sexual prowess and/or having multiple sexual partners. A great emphasis is placed on the 'satisfaction' of women, where satisfaction is defined in only sexual terms. The deeper question that one has to ask is what does this manner of thinking do as far as gender relations are concerned? Are boys and men necessarily being socialized into seeing women and particularly women's bodies as objects through which they can prove their own masculinity?

Mainly Mean

Another aspect that men are socialized into is aggression. While many have attempted to redefine a positive masculinity in terms of whether men are 'in touch with their feelings' and whether real men can cry, the issues go deeper. The fact is that men and women are socialized differently into understanding the dynamics of power and, of how power is distributed. Both men and women are socialized into understanding that power can only be used in two ways, that one can either use power to dominate others or that power has to be subordinated to.

In this sense men are brought up to use power to dominate others and are therefore socialized into aggression. Worse still, in several of our cultures and contexts violence is valorized and glorified, manhood is described in terms of conquest, victory and triumph over others. This not only has effects on those who are victims of this violence but it also dehumanizes the perpetrators.

Looking at power this way also means that men are socialized into 'being in charge' of taking control of a situation - that men are socialized into leadership. It is not only

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a matter that all men may not want this leadership thrust on them, or that women are not socialized into this, but it also means that if we are to create an alternative society we need to re-conceptualize our view of power itself and how we wish to see power and its use in a new community that is built on the principle of life for all.

Really Men

Yet having said this we also know that men are also socialized into being care-givers and providers for the family and community. While this is done in a patriarchal structure and has its own paternalistic implications, the fact is that care-giving and providing are positive values that need to be encouraged and oriented towards the support of all of life in a way that does not take away the independence or the dignity of others. What is meant here is that men, males and masculinity are not completely lost, but that there are already existing redemptive aspects of masculinity that need to be lifted up. Perhaps we need to move away from the demonizing of men to constructively search for how men can be empowered into masculinities that positively contribute to gender justice and thereby to their own well-being.

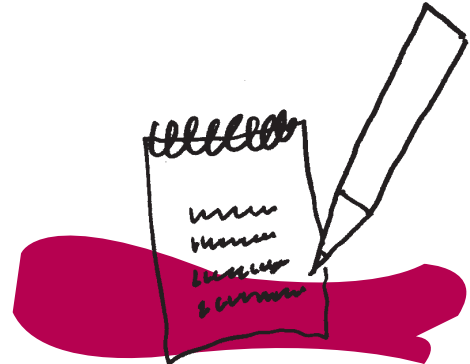
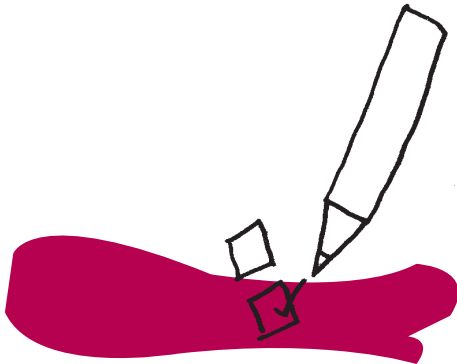


Description






This module builds on Modules II, III and IV – Sense of Self, Understanding Gender and Sexuality. It is designed to provide space for masculinities (in its various forms) to be critically examined and to propose ways to address the consequences for men, women and the community. There is no one type or form of masculinity, thus we use it in its plurality, “masculinities”, recognizing the diversity of socially constructed definitions, which are not static but are changeable and vary according to different social, religious, economic and cultural contexts. Masculinities relates to perceptions, values, beliefs and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in a given setting.

Participants will share their experiences about how they learnt about manhood and examine this within the context of their history, identity and culture. They will make connections with key socialization agencies, religious teachings and the changing situation in their society.






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Objectives

-  To examine dominant forms of masculinities and their consequences for men, women and community
-  To share experiences about how manhood is defined and understood and what it means to be a “real man”
-  To explore the shaping of a man and the dynamics of this in a changing environment
-  To share stories of pain, crisis and difficulties facing men and boys
-  To re-define and re-orient masculinity in a process of building positive sense of manhood which is empowering to men and which facilitates healthy relationships.

Notes for the facilitator

-  Read the Introduction, “Real Men” by Philip V Peacock and note key points and questions for discussion.
-  Organise a panel discussion on the “Shaping of a Man” in your context. Try to get a good mix of various ethnic cultures and practices.
-  Prepare a quiz of stereotypes of masculine and feminine which are popular in your society.
-  Study the table in Activity 2 on “Characteristics and values of man and woman”. Contextualise in order to reflect the images of men and women in the given context.
-  Use the Bible Study on P/J/E Creation story” by Dale Bisnauth (page 172) and Sermon Notes on “The Joseph Model of Masculinity” by Solomuzi Mabuza and Nicole Ashwood (page 187).

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Activity 1:

1. Introduce the activity and share key points of Philip Vinod Peacock's Introduction, "Real Men" as well as Krysta Bisnauth's "Pick Up Artists: Young Men and Masculinity." (page 104)
2. Facilitate a brainstorm discussion on what is masculinity(ies) and the various forms of masculinities. You may share the definition of masculinity in the description above but ensure that the definition from this workshop resonates with the lived realities and critical understanding of participants.
3. Ask participants to organise themselves into buzz or table groups and discuss the following:

What in your understanding is manhood? What is this mostly connected with in your sense of self?

How do boys learn about their manhood? What are early messages, beliefs and values about being a man?

When and under what circumstance did you become aware of yourself as a gendered being? Share this experience?

What are some key societal expectations of the male gender - for boys and men?

4. Ask each group to briefly share key points.
5. Ask participants how they felt doing this activity

Activity 2: Male and female stereotypes – characteristics and social behaviour

1. Divide participants into groups and distribute the table below. The characteristics and social behaviour can be general as well as specific to a particular community. Please add or revise to make this relevant to the group.
2. Ask for three different responses by different groups:

Group 1 - complete the table reflecting on the current situation.

Group 2 - complete the table reflecting on the situation of your grand parents.

Group 3 - complete the table with your vision and dreams for a transformed situation.

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No.	Characteristics and social behaviour	MAN	WOMAN	Why/origins/new developments
1.	Main characteristics			
2.	Physical appearance/ attributes			
3.	Family responsibilities/ involvement			
4.	Main roles in family			
5.	Types of partnership/ union desired			
6.	Main social groups or socializing spaces			
7.	Main sources of validation			
8.	Spheres (public/private) where roles are carried out			
9.	Safety issues			
10.	Supportive structures or social networks			

3. Reconvene and ask each group to present its table. Allow for brief clarification and explanation. While this is being done ask for two volunteers to collate the information on 3 flipchart or large newsprint paper.
4. Facilitate a plenary exercise - making connections between the three situations and outlining the gaps.

Activity 3: Panel discussion on “What shapes a man in my context”

1. Brief presentations of about three diverse perspectives. Allow for very brief moments of clarification.
2. Facilitate a wrap- up session with presenters and participants on main points and interest drawn out by participants.
3. Note socialising agencies and other influences in the shaping of a man in your society and ways that these impact the construction of masculinities and expressions of manhood.
4. Divide participants into groups and distribute the following questions for discussion:

What are key socialising agencies in the shaping of a man in your society and in what ways do these impact the understanding of manhood in younger, middle aged and older men?

What are policies, practices and prejudices that contribute to gender disparities and those that address gender disparities and injustices? Discuss this at the levels of the state and church institution.

What roles do these play in the understanding and social expectations of masculinity that are problematic?

Identify key features in the changing economic, social and cultural situation. Discuss how these impact the situation of men, gender construction and society.

5. Point out key features and points in the article below by Krysta Bisnauth and briefly facilitate a discussion on similarities and differences for young men in your context.

“Pick up artists” - young men and masculinity

Krysta Sadhana Bisnauth

In Western Europe and North America, there seems to be a pervasive trend in the transition period between being a young adult and a full fledged *grown up* during which men (mostly in their early to mid twenties) must prove or explicitly demonstrate their manhood - by way of the bodies of women. Resulting from a combination of insecurity, uncertainty, social misconstructions and an overall poor understanding of humanity are the “lairs” of pick up artists. Pick up artists study, practice or teach ways to attract and seduce women. They exist in underground communities, called lairs, that get together online or in classes. Some are more casual than that, working individually or amongst friends with the use of books such as “The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pick Up

Artists”²³ They all have one thing in common however and that is, the view of woman as “The Other”. These are men who typically have not managed to have successful, if any, relationships with women. These are men who are afraid of, or, worse, angry with women. They see their failure with women as an indication of a lack of masculinity. Thus, they attempt to “be men” by being successful with women.

For the majority of these Pick Up Artists (PUAs), this translates to sleeping with women. It then turns into a competition between male friends to see who can sleep with the most women. For some PUAs, this translates to dating and relationships: if the PUA can get a woman to date him then he is a real man. Both ways involve some sort of *collecting of or measuring against* a passive conception of woman. The methods employed by PUAs are based on a simplistic pseudo psychological (for the most part, Darwinian) understanding of women: women are passive, women want to be desired by men and women are attracted by obvious and superfluous decoration. One of the most controversial methods is called

23 Neil Strauss, *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pick Up Artists*, (New York: Regan Books 2005).

“negging” (negative complimenting) in which man gives a backhanded compliment to a woman he is interested in causing her to feel confused and a little insecure. Another technique is to ignore the woman of interest and talk to everyone around her. This again leads to confusion and insecurity which supposedly makes it easier for him to later be “successful” with her.

The view of women as alien or other is further reinforced by another prevalent trend of the young man patriarchy known colloquially as “bros before hos”; “bros” being short of “brothers” and “hos” being short for “whores” but meaning women in general. The “bro code” serves to cement male friendship by implying supreme loyalty to one another while simultaneously alienating and degrading women exemplified by the following quote: *“Always remember, girlfriends come and go, but your boys are always there. Breaking this rule is to commit the cardinal sin against Team Testosterone.”*(JD Rebello, *The Golden Rules of Manhood*).²⁴ Underlying this obviously unethical practice is a need to define themselves as men and a quest for self confidence. Instead of interacting honestly with women, however, they plot amongst themselves and define women with their limited means of understanding, buying into a very popular idea in today’s global society that men and women are fundamentally different and unknowable to each other. One hopes that men, with age, grow out of some of their insecurities and juvenile definitions of manhood, at least so that they are willing to know women as human beings like themselves.

The following are some thoughts on masculinity shared by a male friend.

Contemporary example of young men and masculinity in today’s society and their perception and interaction with women

An interesting example of the way men define themselves is how they express themselves emotionally. Guys typically process things internally. This means that in general they are less prone to verbal communication. The more “masculine” a guy is, the more likely he is to keep his emotions locked up and not express them verbally. It’s a stupid thing, but look at Clint Eastwood in any of his films, the guy shows no emotion...pretty much ever. The only time that emotions are valid in these scenarios, is when the action hero’s loved one dies, and thus the hero goes on a vengeance trip. It’s not reality, but the idea of it *does* come through into life.

An example of this emotional response is that in the whole of the 14yrs or so that I’ve been in the UK, I have seen two male strangers cry. One, I found out, had lost his father that day, the other I think had lost his wife that day. I regarded both of these as completely legitimate in terms of masculinity. When I moved to Italy, I saw two male strangers balling their eyes out within a month! Their girlfriends were standing over them basically telling them to “man up”. These I automatically regarded as extremely feminine, basically in a derogatory way.

In terms of how it effects the way they perceive and interact with women, it is really interesting. I remember that both of the guys in the UK were comforted by other men. It’s like their reason for showing emotions was considered masculine and therefore other men were absolutely willing to comfort them. The two in Italy were extremely feminine,

²⁴ J. D. Rebello, http://www.pointsincase.com/articles/im_golden_rules.htm

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partially because they were apparently crying and no-one close to them had died, but also because they were being comforted by women. It subconsciously says to me that their reason for crying is not good enough to get another masculine guy to comfort them. Guys look to girls for comfort when they don't think their reason for expressing emotion is good enough to go to other guys. This is absolutely true in my life. Whenever something genuinely terrible had happened, I sought the comfort of my Dad, or my closest friends that were guys, not women. It's like, when they reciprocate emotions I know that it validates my masculinity. I can cry and still be a guy, because they show me that it's ok. Crying to women doesn't affirm that.

Defining masculinity

Masculinity is comprised of multiple things; the sliding scale that men put themselves on, a description of physical features, emotional response and social expectations.

Men use masculinity to place themselves amongst other guys. Asking the question, "how manly am I?" It's a sliding scale all the way from feminine to practically Neanderthalic. This starts really in high school. The guys that hit puberty quicker became more athletic have greater prowess and more interest in girls. So basically it becomes established pretty quickly that the more "masculine" a man is, the better. These guys do actually get girls at that age (maybe because they appear older), so you can't really help but think that being more masculine must be a positive thing.

In terms of physical features it denotes muscle, jaw line and facial features that make people masculine or not. This is actually pretty interesting because this is among the real reasons why some guys want to gain a lot of muscle, so **other guys** will assume that

they are more masculine. It's not actually directed towards getting women to think they are more attractive.

The social element of how guys express feelings is addressed in the first three paragraphs above. All these things are true in my life to an extent, but I'm different from most guys in that I passionately believe in the concept of honour. So for me masculinity reflects an acceptance of responsibility, making the hard decisions that make you "a man". Making sacrifices for the good of others, not because anyone asked me to, but because I choose to. My experience with how this is reflected in women is, to be honest, pretty negative. Most of the women that I have expressed this to, find it a very difficult concept to grasp - they have either reacted flippantly or have been offended. Somehow thinking that it means men don't think women can take care of themselves, or need their battles fought for them. It's actually not about that at all. It's about the man's choice to be masculine in terms of honour and has fairly little to do with her.





If it helps, the "bro code" is basically a guidebook to masculinity (was a NY Times best seller). It's a short comedy book that was written from a sitcom, but I read it and to be honest it's pretty accurate in terms of the unsaid rules that most guys live by. It gives a whole list of things that make you masculine.

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Activity 4: Connecting with stories and issues

1. Divide participants into small groups and distribute the 4 stories (below) to different groups.
2. Ask each group to read the stories and reflect silently for 1 minute.
3. Ask each person to share his/her feeling as the stories were read.
4. What are the main issues in the stories and how do they impact on the main characters - men, women, children and the community?
5. What facilities are available to help men in difficult situations? What role does the church and its men's organisation play?
6. Reconvene in plenary and ask for each group to share main points and questions raised in the groups.

Activity 5: Strategies for moving forward

1. Bring forward the flipchart or newsprint papers from **Activity 2** above. Recap and note the gaps clearly.
2. Divide participants into table groups and ask the group to identify where change needs to take place and to list each change under **Opportunities or Challenges**. Assign each group as follows:
 -  Group 1 - identify strategies for social and cultural change
 -  Group 2 - identify strategies for theological and Bible Study
 -  Group 3 - identify strategies for educational and religious institutions
 -  You may also suggest other areas or agencies which are important in gender construction.
3. Reconvene and ask each group to present their work.
4. Make connections and facilitate a brief discussion on how to use opportunities and also how to address challenges.
5. Identify three important first steps and ask participants to continue this as an assignment.

Conclusion:

Conclude session by asking for a brief assessment and what follow up steps are needed.

Close with song and prayer.

Story 1

The street-fight

by Philip Vinod Peacock

There is a significant incident that happened in my life, when I was a young man that shaped my understanding of what it means to be a man. It happened while I was doing my post-graduate studies. I was around 22 or 23 at the time and was part of a wider group of young men and women who were also studying at the same seminary as I was. One evening, three of us, Andrew, Preethi and I, were walking back after having visited some friends. It was around 6 pm and the streets were busy with people who were returning from work.

Since it was difficult to walk three abreast on the road, Preethi had walked on ahead and Andrew and I were walking behind her, talking. Suddenly a man on a motorbike passed by and shouted out to Preethi. It was an obvious attempt at eve-teasing which is just another word for sexual harassment. As an immediate response to what the man on the motorbike said, I shouted back at him. He immediately stopped his bike and an argument ensued between the two of us. The man on the motorbike was from the area and we knew him because there had been such incidents between him and his friends and some women from our college before as well.

The argument grew into a shouting match and it drew the attention of some of his friends from the neighbourhood who gathered around to his aid. Unfortunately the shouting match escalated into a fist fight, Andrew and I on the one side, the man on the motorbike with his friends on the other. In the ensuing melee I have to confess that Andrew and I got the worst of it, and between the two of us, it was I who got the most hurt. Like most street fights in India, the two groups were separated by passersby and we were left to go on our way. Bruised more in ego than in flesh we made our way back to our college campus, stopping at a doctor to get some medical attention first.

The matter did not end here however, both Andrew and I, genuinely believing that street-fighting was not the Christian way of resolving conflict, went back later that night to look for those men and see whether we could resolve the issue in another way. Moreover we were concerned that this could be the first in many conflicts between the students of our college and the locals, a conflict that we wanted to avoid.

We did find the men, and their first response to our approach was aggressive. However we felt that adopting an aggressive stand ourselves would be counter-productive and we said that we had come to apologize. The men were taken aback by this and we were able to break the ice towards a time when we were able to reconcile the issue. What was interesting for us though, was that through out the process of reconciliation the men argued that it was 'natural' for them to tease women, because they were 'men'.

Even more interesting was the response of my father. Being severely traumatized by the

incident, I called my parents a few days later to narrate what had happened and broke down on the phone while speaking to them. My father however only seemed to be interested in why I was unable to get the better of my opponents in the street fight!

The story of course raises several questions at many levels and perhaps we should take some time to look at what these questions are.

1. I have told this same story several times but always feel the need to present myself and Andrew (to a lesser extent) as the heroes of the plot. I somehow have to insert words or phrases to show that we were the good guys. Why do you think I have this need? What does it say about my understanding of masculinity?
2. Why do you think that those men said that it was natural for them to tease women as they were men? What does it say about their understanding of gender relationships? What does it say about their understanding of themselves as men? How did they acquire such an understanding?
3. Moving deeper we must ask why did I feel a need to respond when Preethi was being eve-teased. Preethi herself later told me that I needn't have done so, that women have their own ways of handling such matters. Moreover what were my motives for responding, were they because a travesty had occurred or because I felt that some 'other men' had tried to take advantage of Preethi who I was somehow responsible for? Did I respond because my male role of being the protector of the women around me had somehow been brought into question? Did I respond because the incident of eve-teasing made me feel like less of a man?
4. Lastly how would we analyze the response of my father? What does this say about his masculinity and how it was constructed? Did he feel he was less of a man because he had not taught me to fight?

Story 2

How men handle stress

by Michael St. A. Miller

I was asked to reflect on men in general, but quickly recognized that this could easily encourage debate about whether or not I could legitimately speak that generally. Such a debate would only detract from the intention of my contribution. Therefore, I will share on my own challenges in handling stress.

Growing up in a household characterized by “disciplined turbulence” made me susceptible to the view promoted in some quarters that an important feature of being a man was appearing to be in control and on top of things. As I heard someone represent this attitude recently: “never let

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them see you sweat.” Without trying very hard I developed the capacity to appear “cool,” and I worked hard at muting the impact of emotions that would gnaw at me on the inside. I became good at both repression and suppression, that is, some things were kept from rising into conscious awareness, and others I would push out of conscious awareness.

Not surprisingly, over time I became less able to recognize warning signs that pointed to a looming crisis. I am now confident that this diminished capacity contributed to the bouts of depression I experienced as a teen—simply put, I spiraled into emotional collapse on a regular basis. In those years, I told myself that my periods of descent into “the purple” were influenced by the surge of hormones that came with adolescence. I went beyond that basic explanation in trying to make sense of the depth to which I would go. It was, I claimed, the hallmark of a sensitive soul and the stuff that generated great literature and philosophy.

As correct as the first might have been and as

glamorous as the second appeared, they certainly could not explain why at 18 years old the doctor indicated that I was on my way to an ulcer. At nineteen I moved to a new level of commitment in my Christian faith and offered myself to be trained for the pastoral ministry of the church. This opened the way for me to enter an interesting phase of denial—I could now tell myself that I had cast all my burdens on Jesus. Actually, I hadn’t cast them anywhere; only covered them over with pious talk.

As I moved into my twenties and embraced the general demands of adulthood, along with responsibilities of pastoral leadership and the challenge of marriage and family life, my instinct for denial fostered a new strategy. I now relativized my “issues” when they would come to the fore by claiming that my calling required that I esteem others (with their concerns) over myself. What I did not recognize was that my increased efficiency at distancing myself from the accumulated and unattended stressors in my life involved a kind of separation from myself that turned me into what I now label “the abstracted self.” In this state I blocked emotions that threatened to spark a chain-reaction and bring the repressed and suppressed “issues” to the surface and cause chaos. The most sophisticated means employed was translating feelings into conceptual considerations.

Without going into the gory details, the time came when my life hit a wall and the well-constructed system of defense collapsed. I developed weird health problems and my family life fell apart. The unattended issues were pulled up from the deep well in which they had been

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putrefying, and I was overtaken by shame, an overwhelming sense of failure, and despair. For a period I was consumed by an intense anger that made my belly boil and my blood pressure rise to astronomical levels. Neither pious talk nor persistent prayer would make them go away. It was when for the second time in five years I was told by a doctor that I was committing suicide, that is, I was operating in a way that would probably lead to a stroke, that I finally accepted that radical change was necessary.

Since then I have been on a quest for a new way of life; a new way of being a man. I have accepted that I am more fragile than I thought. This is not because I am a weak man, but because I am a human being - on the one hand, fearfully and wonderfully made; on the other hand, very much like grass. There is nothing heroic in carrying the accumulated burdens of life locked-up in one's chest, hiding from unpleasant features of life by sanitizing and intellectualizing them. These strategies will not make the threats go away - they will only fester and corrupt the soul. There comes a time when any virtue there might be in the capacity to suffer in silence disappears and what one is left with is the vice-grip of disease.

I have accepted that an important way to honor the claim to be made in the Image of God is to care for myself and to make myself available to be cared for by others. This involves the recognition that sometimes trusting God means making use of the help that has been provided in professional counselors and therapists. It also means learning to accept the gift of friendship that others offer. Where the matter of friendship is concerned, I have become very conscious about a particular danger. Some men, having learned how to talk about sensitive matters, have made women their dumping ground. I have accepted the challenge of nurturing new types of relationships with other men that enable the freedom to be vulnerable in their presence. Finally, I have come to accept that there are those moments when the best thing to do is to let the tears flow.

Story 3

Dinesh and Diya

by Daphne Martin-Gnanadason

This is a story about Dinesh and Diya who grew up in a progressive environment. Diya was raised in a city and true to her name, which is light, and indeed she became a beacon light in her family, school and in the community. Dinesh was born in an urban setting, went to a local co-education school. The social context of Dinesh's upbringing and his value formation was set in a predominantly patriarchal culture. This meant that girls could go to school along with boys but were always conditioned with severe stereotypes. These meant that women were subject to roles in the family and society which were subservient to the male.

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After secondary school, Dinesh found an opportunity to go to a career oriented setting to pursue his college education. After completing his studies, he was offered a good position through campus recruitment. Dinesh and Diya met in this context.

Diya had everything going for her. With excellent school education, she continued her career progress and grew immeasurably in stature and maturity. She was seen as an epitome of dignity and excellence. With the community environment at home which pointed towards equality and responsibility, she expected her friends to also be sensitive to issues of inclusion. For her, it was common sense that both genders recognized each other as equals and perceived life in a very practical way which meant that working couples shared responsibilities of providing and caring.

Dinesh and Diya crossed paths on a busy Monday morning as both were a bit lost trying to find directions to the same orientation room to start their new jobs. The connection was instantaneous as they were two opposites and they felt a tinge of attraction. They became friends and soon lovers. Working in the same office, they got to spend a lot of time together in trying to getting to know each other, to grab coffee during breaks and enjoyed a bit of “work gossip”. They then decided to get married which was opposed by both parents due to issues of caste and other diversities. Diya and Dinesh later married in a civil court with a few good friends present as witnesses.

Life was good and the initial stages of marriage proved to be extremely blissful. Diya being a social person would go out with her friends occasionally and Dinesh would join them too. At a certain point, Dinesh stopped going out as he did not enjoy these outings anymore as Diya was more popular among their friends and jealousy crept in. He expected that Diya would also stop going out once he did but she continued to socialize and this upset him. This triggered a lot of anger and frustration and he started questioning his role as the “man”.

The quarrels began when Dinesh started expressing his wishes against Diya going out. Diya understood his insecurities and tried to make Dinesh understand that she had a life and mind of her own and that she should have the freedom to meet her friends but he was obstinate that she stopped going out without him. Conversations were short and curt from then on. Dinesh left home earlier than Diya in the mornings and they would see more of each other at work rather than at home.

The incident that made the situation worse and questioned their relationship was when Diya was offered a promotion in the company they worked in. Dinesh was shocked and found it extremely hard to accept the fact that his wife became more successful than him. This brought more frustrations into his life and he told himself that he had made a huge mistake in marrying a career-driven woman. He had asked himself this question before they married but he expected her to become compliant after marriage. But, this did not happen and he was left with a mind clouded by insecurities and jealousy. On the other hand, Diya was shattered that she did not have a friend in her husband, someone who would be proud of her achievements or someone who would be happy that she excelled. This is the story of Dinesh and Diya.

Story 4

Brian's story: what's in it for me?

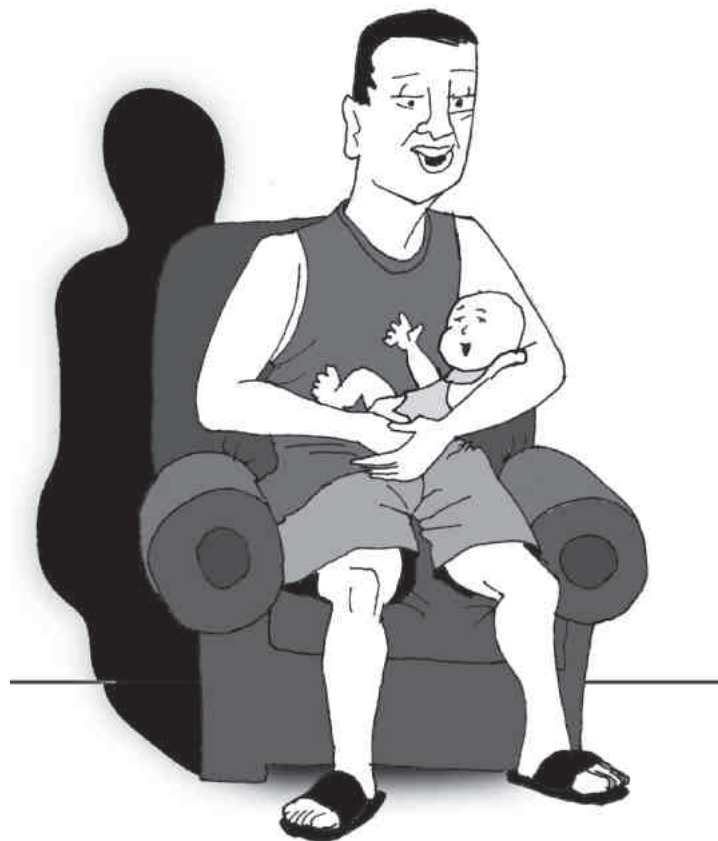
(Anonymous)

I lie on my bed all alone, howling, really howling out loud, like a dog - I'm in pain. I feel hemmed in, with no-where to go, no-one to turn to. Why? Because I lost my job five years ago.

I was restructured out of society after years of working for high profile companies in a top position. I tried to get another job, but my age was a major setback; more often than not my CV ended up in the bin as soon as my year of birth was read. I didn't want to go on the dole, too humiliating. My wife forced me to. She was working full-time with a modest income and thought anything coming in was better than nothing, especially as we had to pay the kids' schooling and the mortgage on the new house we moved into on the day I was told I was a past item.

I had to go meet a counselor once a week to report and give proof that I was actively searching

for a job. He advised me on how to apply for a position and write a CV - thanks to him I rewrote my CV without mentioning dates and lost the only good opportunity I had for a job interview. So much for that! Then after a year and a half I was told that was it, no more dole because the state had to cut funds due to the crisis. So, instead of the two year's expected: nothing. I called friends, I was promised help, but nothing was done. I would hope and get all excited, meet with them for lunch, promises were made to introduce me and give my CV in for an upcoming job; then after months, "Oh sorry, just send in your CV to the personnel department". Then, not even an answer.



I don't want to see anyone, its too humiliating. I can't face my wife, so I lash out at her. I want to humiliate her, put her down, make her suffer, feel my pain. I drink to forget. I take too many sleeping pills during the

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day to knock myself out; to escape my brain running around in circles. Then I don't want to sleep but totter around wanting to be useful in the only way I know: I can cook, so I do. But I make a mess, I fall down in the kitchen, break things, leave it all, drink some more and flop onto my bed. My wife comes back from work and has to clean it all up. She sleeps on the couch because I hog the bed and am snoring and if she wakes me up I get all emotional and start telling her made up stories and repeat myself and go on and on. Other times I take the car to go shopping and I crash it. Or I threaten to commit suicide.

My wife and the kids walked out and made me go to the doctor. He gave me pills to steady my mood swings. They came back. It is okay for a week, then I start again. I make promises, "I won't do it again". I lie and say I don't drink, then my wife finds the bottles I hide. I take too many of the pills the doctor gave me. I won't see him again. I can't speak to him, I can't tell anyone what a failure I am. I see no-one. My wife has stopped inviting friends, the kids don't want to see me anymore. They go on holidays alone with her. I preach to them. I criticize them no-stop to my wife as soon as she comes back from work and to their faces. Yet they are doing well and are wonderful kids.

My wife says she doesn't care that I am not earning. That I can help in other ways: by helping in the house, doing the gardening, driving the kids to doctor appointments, paying the bills at the post office. I went to pick up my daughter at a friend's party. I was so drunk the friend's parents did not let her go with me. I had crashed the car. I didn't remember a thing afterwards. I never do. My wife doesn't trust me with the kids anymore. She does it all, the driving and the rest. I don't do anything - I lie around reading or spend hours on the internet. I drink, I sleep, I snore, I cry, I get aggressive, I harass. We sold the house. I drive up bills on my mobile, phoning old friends when I am drunk. I call my sister; she doesn't want to have anything to do with me. My wife ignores me or screams at me. I can't face myself. I can't look at myself in a mirror. Who can I turn to, who will help? I'm afraid all the time, really afraid. My stomach aches all the time, my muscles spasm. I can't relax, enjoy my free time. I am too afraid. Will I end up alone on the street? I'm scared, scared, scared.

So I howl, real loud, out loud - like a dog. Will someone hear?

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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Introduction

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

Gender based violence remains one of the most pressing issues in the world. Until recently, violence in families has been considered a private or personal matter, and has not been taken seriously by society in general, including the churches or the courts, even when it was brought to their attention. The legacy of the secrecy associated with this kind of violence and the lack of attention it has received is immense. It is a legacy of pain, shame and fear. As a result, violence and abusive behaviour continue to place a heavy burden on too many families, homes and communities. A significant outcome from recent decades of struggle has been to name and bring the issue of gender based violence into the open. The Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–1998) highlighted violence against women as a key issue for the churches and called upon them to break the silence. This has helped the churches to recognise violence against women as a common concern for all of them and to take steps to overcome the violence.

Notwithstanding the accomplishments made, there is still a high rate of male violence against women. Our societies continue to produce far too many men who assault, abuse and kill women. The home is an unsafe place for many women and children; and even in churches, the shame and injustice of clergy abuse remains hidden and unchallenged.

Gender-based violence refers to domestic, sexual and all types of partner violence. It takes many forms - physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, restricted freedoms, coercion and threats - occurring in both the public and private spheres. It includes domestic violence, rape (including marital rape), sexual harassment, forced prostitution, verbal abuse, humiliation, female infanticide, female genital mutilation and dowry-related violence. While men, women and children all fall prey to this form of violence, it is recognised that gender-based violence is predominantly male violence against women, and how men exercise violence on women to maintain their gender privileges of male authority.

The concept of “gender based violence” is helpful in analysing violence in broader terms, with the understanding that the causes and solutions to violence are personal, political and structural. Gender-based violence is affected by prescribed behaviour, norms and attitudes which are based on gender and sexuality. It has its basis in patriarchy - a system that positions men over women (and also some men over other men) and instills a sense of entitlement and privilege in many men. Patriarchy also institutionalizes the social, cultural and legal contexts that permit gender violence. In many societies it is related to the construction of masculinities, for example how a society defines what it means to be a man. In many societies it is acceptable for boys to exercise controlling behaviour and for girls to be less assertive.

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Gender violence is also based on the pressures, fears and stifled emotions that underlie dominant masculinity or other dominant forms of manhood embraced by many cultures around the world. Many men have difficulties trying to live up to the macho images which are popular in their societies. They sometimes suffer from insecurities and low self esteem. This relates to the burdens carried by boys and men from the ways that societies have defined men's power and raised boys to be men. "Boys often deny their humanity in search of an armor-plated masculinity. Young men and boys are sacrificed as cannon fodder in war for those men of political, economic, and religious power who demand conquest and domination at any cost. Many men cause terrible harm to themselves because they deny their own needs for physical and mental care or lack services when they are in need."

"Too many men suffer because our male-dominated world is not only one of power of men over women, but of some groups of men over others. Too many men, like too many women, live in terrible poverty, in degradation, or are forced to do body- or soul-destroying work to put food on the table. Too many men carry the deep scars of trying to live up to the impossible demands of manhood and find terrible solace in risk-taking, violence, self-destruction or the drink and drugs sold to make a profit for others. Too many men experience violence at the hands of other men."²⁵

In addressing the issue of gender based violence, it is also important to examine personal experiences of violence, especially for persons who have been socialised in a culture of violence. The social messages which children receive play a significant role in their response to violence. Factors such as the society, family, church, media, school and the community are important influences. A tendency to accept the stereotype that "boys will be boys" and that females are the "weaker sex" too often means not questioning negative aspects of every day gender relations. Young men are pressured to behave with machismo - to act as though they always know what they are doing and are "in charge". Some cultures promote the idea of young men being "in charge of" or responsible for grown women, including their mothers. The media, music industry and other aspects of popular culture also promote a culture of violence and disrespect for self and others.

Gender based violence can no longer be treated as a marginal issue. It is a frightening epidemic affecting many communities throughout the world. Churches need to seriously consider this issue as a priority and to address it at every opportunity - in sermons, prayers, litanies, liturgical dances, songs and mission priorities. Church leaders must challenge theology which legitimises male dominance over women. They need to organise Christian education material and widespread re-reading of the Bible, especially texts found in Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Corinthians and Colossians which churches often misuse to teach about marriage and family life. These are just a few examples of texts which have often been misinterpreted to prescribe male control over the family and submission of women, even to the point of submitting to abuse.

Men must be involved in significant ways, taking action to end violence against women. An inclusive approach requires the involvement of men in finding ways to transform gender

²⁵ Report of a Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys on Achieving Gender Equality, Rio de Janeiro, March 29- April 3, 2009

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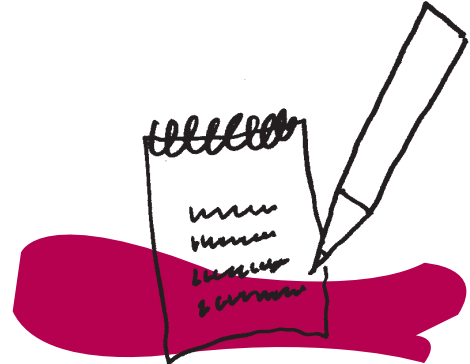


relations which produces male violence. It is time to see men as a vital part of the solution in ending gender based violence. It is time for them to take a public stance - in giving voice, presence and action on overcoming violence. Men need to redefine masculinity and create a social climate, in male peer culture, in which the abuse of women is seen as completely unacceptable. A comprehensive strategy involving wide-scale discussions of the underlying social causes of men's violence is needed. Strategies need to take into account that violence is learned behavior, and boys and men need to be re-educated on how to be men in ways that do not involve abusing girls and women - physically, sexually, or emotionally. It is time for the church to say "NO TO VIOLENCE" and for men to be at the forefront of this campaign.

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Description

This module will help participants to deepen their understanding of gender based violence. They will examine the nature, scope and causes of this type of violence and the role of socializing forces in creating a culture of acceptance of gender-based domestic violence. Participants will also engage in discussions aimed at developing strategies and plans for the church to take action.

Notes to the facilitator

- *♀ In preparation it is important that you do some research to become familiar with gender-based violence and its impact within the local context.
- *♀ Find out what provisions in the various sectors are available to address this type of violence. Collect brochures and other information to share with participants.
- *♀ It must be taken into account that some participants may be experiencing violence in their lives. Care, sensitivity and understanding of how the session may affect them are therefore vital. You may need to take breaks to allow people to deal with emotional reaction to what is being said. Be prepared to deal with this. It would be helpful to organize for counseling to be available.
- *♀ Remind participants of the ground rules they developed earlier and post these on the wall. Emphasize the need for confidentiality and respect.

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Activity 1: Understanding gender-based domestic violence

1. Introduce the activity. Lead a brainstorming session of about 15 minutes in the large group on what is meant by gender-based violence.
 -  Ask participants to describe this as it relates to their communities. Ask for specific words that describe it. Write these words on the flipchart.
 -  Using the definition from the introduction, ask participants to add examples from their experiences.
2. Ask participants to respond to the following questions:
 -  Who is affected by gender-based violence?
 -  Who perpetuates this kind of violence?
 -  Where does this kind of violence generally take place?
 -  How does it affect families?
 -  How does it affect communities?
 -  How does it affect the churches?
3. Divide participants into small groups and ask them to discuss the following:
 -  Myths, stories, beliefs and values associated with gender-based domestic violence.
 -  Responses of women and men to the abuser and to the victim.
 -  Responses of the church to the issue of gender-based violence.
 -  What are the provisions of the law, social services, education sector and non-governmental organisations for survivors?
 -  What is the role of the churches, including your congregations?
4. Reconvene the large group for group reports and discussion.

Bible Study on violence against women - Dale A Bisnauth

Read Judges: 19:1-30 (Judges chapters 11-28 are all relevant and important to study)

Background to the text

The Book of Judges comprises stories from the period of Israel's history between the invasion of Canaan by the Israelites till the establishment of the monarchy. During this period, the tribes were led by charismatic leaders who were called "judges", such as Deborah, Samson, Gideon, Jephthah, etc. Their jurisdiction did not extend beyond their own tribe, although, in

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times of crisis, a leader like Deborah, might summon a few neighbouring tribes to do battle against a common foe. Ordinarily, the “judge” settled disputes among his/her people. It was not unknown for tribes to war among themselves as in the case of the Benjaminites and the other tribes (Judges 19- 20). The “insult” of the Levite of our story is the pretext for the engagement of the “Israelites” and the Benjaminites.

The Biblical story that is the basis of our study does not quite fit the classification of domestic violence since the violence was not perpetrated against the women. One of the women was a concubine (a “common- law” wife), and the other was a daughter. The act was all the more heinous because it was done with the active permission of the husband in the one case, and the father in the other.

But the story tells of violence against women nonetheless and is well within the definition of gender based violence. In keeping with the patriarchal bias of the Bible, the story is reported as an episode in the life of a man (the Levite) and the insult to that man, as the cause of war between Israelite tribes. The violation of the women is incidental to the story. As the Levite reported to the tribal chiefs of Israel: the men of Gibeah rose against *me...* they meant to kill me! (20:5)

Comments

The wife was the spouse of “a certain Levite” from the country of Ephraim. She and the Levite had a spat over the accusation that she had “played the harlot”. She went away to her father’s house in Bethel- in- Judah. After four months, the Levite went to “sweet talk” her into returning home, much to the delight of her father, who feted him for five days. Finally, against the pleas of the woman’s father, the Levite decided to return home. We take up the story at verse 11.

Read the text

1. The first point that I wish to bring to your attention is that at verse 28, the woman could not respond because she was dead. It was not only the case, because as in verse 25 we read: “and they knew her (the Biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse), and abused her all night until the morning”. It is a fact that they raped her to death (the word used in the Bible is ‘outraged’). The Jerusalem Bible renders v.25 this way, “They had intercourse with her and outraged her all night till morning”. Had it not been for the inclusion of “abused” (GNB) and “outraged” (JB) the savagery of this multiple gang rape, might well not have been masked.
2. Commentators describe this episode as the “Outrage at Gibeah”, perpetrated against the man (described as “her master” in verse 26). The point has been made that the wickedness of Gibeah was aggravated by the fact that the outrage was perpetrated against a Levite, i.e. against a “man of the cloth” who was doubly protected by law as a Levite and a sojourner. This was “the infamy” that would become the justification for the invasion and conquest of Benjamin by the other tribes of Israel. There is an interesting parallel story found in Genesis, chapter 34, in which political capital is made of the rape of a woman. In that

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episode, Dinah, Jacob's daughter by Leah, is abducted and raped by Shechem. This led to a political alliance between the town of Shechem in Canaanite territory and Jacob's tribe.

3. One gets the distinct impression that the stories of the violent abuse of the women would not have been told had it not been for the fact that the episodes provided the pretexts for larger issues of a political nature. It is made to sound as if the rape of the woman was merely an unfortunate and unpleasant side incident, in each case.
4. The Levite, according to verse 25, "seized his concubine, and put her out to them" i.e. to the base fellows, who raped her all night. Later, he would tell the tribal chiefs of Israel: "And the men of Gibeah rose against *me*... they meant to kill *me*, and they ravished my concubine and she is dead" (20:5). He omitted to indicate that it was he, who in order to save himself, had sacrificed his wife's honour, dignity and life. They violently abused her body; he simply cut it into twelve pieces and sent them to the twelve tribes as evidence of the wickedness that was perpetrated against him.
5. The invitation to muster against Benjamin worked. But no man emerges from this story with honour.
6. To the host, the violation of the sacred duty of hospitality to a man was a graver infamy than the abusive rape of women. As host he would have been disgraced if his guest was dis-honoured so he voluntarily offered his own virgin daughter and the wife of his guest to satisfy the bestial sexual appetites of the gang. He did not even attempt to remind them of the penalties attached to sodomy at that time, or of the special status of Levites among the Israelites. They might not have listened to him. But, the abrupt offering of verse 25 indicates the lowly and chattel status of women in that society.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you think was the real outrage at Gibeah? Why?
2. Give concrete examples in which women/girls are sacrificed in the interest of the welfare of boys/men.
3. The abuse of the women was but a single manifestation of the violence of the culture at that time. Discuss and apply to your community.

Activity 2: Connecting with stories of gender based violence

Case study 1 At Chateau Margot (*Stabroek News, December 19, 2007*)

Years of verbal and physical abuse ended on Tuesday night for a 40-year-old mother of two, when her husband committed suicide but not before brutally chopping her about the body. Due to the savagery of the attack, Sheermattie Vivekanand may lose her hand which was hanging by the skin at the end of the 15-minute ordeal. Vivekanand is presently a patient in the Intensive Care Unit of the Georgetown Hospital and although conscious, she is in a serious condition and having a blood infusion. She sustained knife wounds to both of her hands, head, neck and back.

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Her husband Robert Kumar Jhagru consumed a poisonous substance before Vivekanand could be rescued. He died at the hospital around 4:30 yesterday morning. Stabroek News understands that Jhagru flew into a rage just after 9 pm and started throwing accusations at his wife. From all appearances, Vivekanand was sitting on the bed when her husband locked the bedroom door and started hacking at her with a chopper. The chopper was used by Vivekanand in her fish vending business.

The couple's 16- year- old daughter could only listen to her mother's screams and plead with her father to stop hurting her mother. Vivekanand's sister later managed to kick open the door and several members of the community policing group also went to the woman's aid. When Stabroek News visited the couple's Lot 21 Chateau Margot, South, East Coast home, several of Vivekanand's relatives were cleaning the bloody bedroom.

A resident who wanted to be unnamed told this newspaper that Jhagru was unemployed and for the five years that she has been living in the area, Vivekanand was a fish vendor and would support him and their two children. The woman added that Jhagru drank a lot and she had cause to speak to him about his behaviour several times.

According to the woman, other residents also spoke to him about his behaviour but to no avail. She recounted that at around 9:30 pm she heard Vivekanand screaming but thought it was another neighbour. Minutes later, Vivekanand's sister ran out of her house which is located in front of the couple's home and started shouting for help. The resident told Stabroek News that it was only then that she realized that the woman was in trouble. She added that the sister managed to gain entry into the couple's home but the locked bedroom door barred any rescue attempts. "De woman deh hollering, help me, help me. He gon kill me", the woman said still visibly shaken.

She said that by then the couple's daughter was awake and was standing at the door pleading with her father to stop. "They use to fight plenty. He envy her and was very insecure", she said adding that he had threatened to kill the woman on several occasions.

The woman informed this newspaper that two months ago, Jhagru had kept ready hot oil to throw on her and the police had to get involved. Prior to that, she said, he was in prison for wounding her but with the help of his brother, he was freed. She recounted that when she saw Vivekanand she was drenched in blood and was wrapped in a sheet.

The neighbour said that while the members of the community policing group were waiting for the police, Jhagru said that he would die before he reached the station and that he should be taken to the hospital instead. He then began asking for a cigarette and water but shortly after he vomited a noxious substance, she said, adding that it was then they realized he had consumed poison. A drink bottle with the suspected poison was later retrieved from the bedroom.

The woman expressed concern over the impact the incident will have on the couple's daughter who will be writing the CSEC exams in May. The couple's teenage daughter Melissa told this

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newspaper that every day her parents quarreled. She said that the arguments were mostly started by her father. “She threatened to report him to the police so that he could spend Christmas in jail”, she added.

This incident has sent shock waves throughout the entire East Coast community and many are still struggling to come to grips with the tragedy. Vivekanand also leaves behind a son who lives in Trinidad.

Article taken Stabroek News Guyana, December 19, 2007: <http://www.stabroeknews.com>



After eight years scarred domestic abuse survivor starts over (*Stabroek News, June 13, 2010*)

Norma Adrian believed she was weak and with this misconception, she lived for eight years cowering in fear at the hands of an abusive husband who beat her almost every day without fail. The days he did not hit her were those when he was sober and she recalled that they were few.

Norma finds it difficult to recall exactly when the beatings started, but it was soon after she had moved in with him and he decided she would be the breadwinner. A school dropout due to financial struggles in her family, she lived by the saying “a husband is like God”, well at least that was what her family made her believe and she did for many years.

The slaps, cuffs, beat-downs and knife-point assaults she suffered for eight years stripped her of her dignity and reduced her to a woman who was helpless and fearful and believed she had no options. Silently she wept inside the humble home they shared praying for a way out and an end to the physical assaults, she eventually decided to run away from everything including three young children.

She is a scarred woman literally and figuratively. The countless marks on her body appear tattooed on as if placed there purposefully. She has no real understanding of what it means to trust a man, but if it has anything to do with having him talk to her as if he owns her then she admits to being clueless about the word.

She feels as if the system has also let her down; the resentment she feels towards the authorities for failing to follow up on her reports is equal to what she feels, at times for her family. The family which Norma said encouraged her to hang onto the relationship because it meant security, and she remembers even now the words of her mother when she ran away from her home seeking shelter; her mother said women had to learn how to forgive. Call her a conservative woman and mother since she obeyed her husband throughout the union until the day she fled. She told her survival story with an angry look on her face because “it

brought back ugly memories". She continued saying, "I woulda been a dead woman if I de stay with da man. Sometimes we woman want to leave, we want to go, but family is always there telling us not to run and to go back home. Is kill they want dem men kill we," Norma said, her voice rising. Her pain and anger is visible and even now she fears for her life. Norma has been separated from her abuser for eight years but he lives in her village.

Police refused to act

Her ex- husband was brazen enough to beat her at the bus park a stone's throw away from the Human Services Ministry just after she had left a meeting with a welfare officer. No one went to her assistance. She said he told people she was deranged and he continued hitting her publicly for about fifteen minutes. She said justice was just a word to her because she never got any after years of reporting the abuse to the police. One night she slept at a police station after running away from home, but was told that she had to seek help at a shelter because the station could not keep her there longer than the night. Norma said she was not expecting the station to offer her long- term accommodation, she wanted the police to pick up her husband, but it never happened. "I never get justice. I wanted them to pick he up and let we go to de court and hear what de magistrate had to say, but it never happen," she stated. During the Christmas season one year she went to report the abuse and the officers told her to return in January. "Can you believe dem telling me to come back what if he de kill me before then?" the woman asked. She sneaked out one night and never looked back; her only regret was that the children could not go with her and she eventually lost them to her husband.

"The closer I get to he and these children he could do me anything," she said. The children know where she is and she would see them occasionally. She knows that they are well and takes comfort in that. However, she is concerned that they are not attending school regularly and she has also found out that the oldest child is hanging out at a corner shop in the village, drinking with his father.

She said family tried persuading her to go back home saying he would change, but she said no. She is adamant that returning is not the answer saying people should not tell women to go back. She identified family support as well as from the authorities as being part a crucial part of the response, adding that many women need that support to move on and get out of abusive relationships.

The relationship, she recalled, was a dream in the early months. She was 23 years old when they met and he seemed liked the ideal partner. He showed her love and respect and appeared hard- working and also had professed to be a non- smoker and drinker, but six months into the common- law union he changed. He quit his job and was at home sitting around all day doing nothing while she worked two jobs as a domestic. She believed that he was going to find work but the months turned into years and they had three children; Norma was the sole breadwinner the whole time. She fears her ex- husband because he has threatened to end her life. He has moved on and she has too but she said he is still interested in hurting her; she can feel it. She was awarded a plot of land a few years ago and it happened to be in the same area where he got land and when she pointed this out to the ministry the people there said










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it was out of their hands. She was forced to accept the land, but in the one year she has been in the village she has only seen him once. Norma stays indoors and hardly goes out. She has joined a Domestic Violence Self- Help group and is sharing her experience with other women. She said the group has strengthened her and has made her a better woman. "I have changed and though I still have some fear I am in control of my life now, no one is there beating me either," she said.

(Article taken from *Stabroek News*, *New Guyana*:

(<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2010/stories/06/13/after-eight-years-scarred-domestic-abuse-survivor-starts-over.>)



1. Divide participants into small groups and distribute to each group the 2 stories from *Stabroek News*. You may use the following questions as guidelines for discussion, giving each group a different focus:
 -  Ask them to read the stories, after which they silently reflect for 1 minute.
 -  Ask them to share their feelings as the stories were being read.
 -  What are the main issues in the case study and how do they impact on the main characters - women, men, children, extended family and community?
 -  In your reading what are the causes of the violence?
 -  What messages are given to men and women that contribute to domestic violence?
 -  What messages are given about the use of power and control? To men and boys? To women and girls?
 -  What part do local cultural norms, traditional values, customs and social factors play in this kind of abusive behaviour?
 -  What impact does this behaviour have on women and men, the community and society? What are the costs associated with such behaviour?
 -  What strategies would cultivate and shape relationships based on respect and care?
2. Reconvene the large group for group reports. Encourage questions, comments and make a brief summary.

Activity 3: What does it take to be a man? Bongani's story Fulata L. Moyo

Objectives:

- To create a safe space where men can share stories and listen to each other.
- To analyze some of the reasons why some men abuse women.
- To assess ways of deconstructing violent masculinities.
- To identify some alternative socialization in positive masculinity for partnership.

The story of Bongani

(Read the following story and discuss the questions given below)

I grew up in apartheid South Africa where violence was an integral part of everyday life. Different political parties fought with each other in verbal as well as physical abuse. As a product of such a context, I grew up believing that violence was a necessary part of life. In the home front, my father was usually drunk. Every time he was in that drunken state, he used to abuse my mother. Though, as children, we knew that what he was doing was bad, as a boy, I started believing that beating up women was necessary to the understanding of what it means to be a man. As I grew up, I started behaving likewise to girls.

This continued even after I got married. I would beat up my wife for whatever reason that I could find. After all, my mother used to be beaten so why my wife should be spared? However, in 2005 my wife decided to leave me because she could not take my abuse anymore. When



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she left, I was in utter despair. I realized that I had to do something about my life, especially about how I understood being a man in relationship to women. I joined the Men's Forum run in my community by Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA). Together with other men, we wrestled with the gender stereotypical understanding of being men and women that most of us were socialized into from very young ages. Through PACSA gender workshops, we had to rethink what it means to be a man. We embarked on deconstructing such conceptions so as to be re-socialized into positive images of being man. We had to start thinking ourselves in terms of being part of the solution especially to violence against women. One of PACSA's policies is that after you get such a training, to enhance your own change, you have to embark on sharing what you have learnt with other men in your own community. The question I have been dealing with while working in my own community has been: How can I contribute to building a mutual community of men and women where there is gender justice and peace?

Group discussions:

In age groups (for example: 18- 30, 31- 45, 46- 56, 57 above), discuss the following questions:

1. Does Bongani's story sound familiar? Discuss.
2. Do you have men like Bongani in your communities?
3. Who are they? What are their stories?
4. What reasons do such men give for their abuse of women?
5. What role did your father/uncle/older brother play in shaping your conception of masculinity?
6. Did the church play any role in shaping your understanding of being a man?
7. Share Biblical verses that have influenced your gender identity.
8. What role are you playing in the shaping the boys and young men in your life?

Closing silent prayer ritual

Make a circle and in the middle put a round container with some sand in it to act as an altar. Distribute a candle to each participant. Give an opportunity to each participant to go to the centre of the circle, light their candle and plant it in a heap of sand while saying a silent prayer of healing for someone they know who is a victim of male abuse. If anyone in the group is able to remember their own contribution to abuse, they can also offer a silent prayer of confession.

The facilitator can ask someone in the group to offer a loud prayer of healing in closing.

Activity 4: Analyzing the spiral of violence: the fish bowl method - Maake Masango

The issue of gender based violence has reached such proportions that women and children are no longer safe, this issue needs to be addressed urgently and adequately by churches, leaders of the community and therapists. One way of discussing the issue of gender based violence is by using the fish bowl method. The fish bowl method begins by the offering of a case study. For the purposes of this manual we offer the case study of Mrs. Masianga.

1. Read the following case study:

I write as a male who was raised in a culture that regarded women as secondary, a culture in which the dominance of men and patriarchy were upheld strongly. The case study that I offer below is an actual story that took place in my life, it is an incident that took place when I was a little boy and it deeply affected me

Mrs. Masianga was the third wife of Mr. Masianga and she lived in a violent, humiliating and shameful relationship. Although it was well known that she was a victim of domestic violence the members of her community and family kept telling her to stick it out. Mrs. Masianga herself constantly lived in fear she did not talk much to the other women of her community and was always in a hurry.

One afternoon I saw her walking very slowly (which was unusual) towards the tap where she was going to wash dishes. As I looked at her I noticed that her face was sad and swollen and that she was talking softly to herself. I noticed that she knelt down with some difficulty under the shade of a tree to wash some of the dirty dishes in a big bowl. It was evident that she was in pain and so I went over to help.

On drawing close to her I realized that she was unable to see properly because her eyes were swollen due to the blows she had received from her husband. I asked her what happened but she was silent. After a while she said something that I could not hear clearly. As I looked up to see what was happening I noticed that tears mixed with blood were rolling down her face. She then struggled to say something to me but I was only able to hear the last few words... "God bless you...thank you."

As I was washing up the last plate, she took a deep breath and said, "Don't you ever beat a woman when you grow up."²⁶ I was frightened as I left her and never said a word. That evening asked my parents a lot of questions about MmSabeni, as I would call her. I wanted to know why she was being beaten. Why didn't she leave that place? Why did we not take her away from that terrible man? I think I also wanted to know if she was the only woman being beaten. Finally I remember saying "I hate men!" It was also my experience as a child that the world does not make sense. Later I came to understand why it was that women were seen to be "out of place", and why they were treated as if they did not matter and did not have power to define and change the world in such a way that it corresponded with their experience of self-worth, and their image of how the world should be. Little did I know that this was the starting point

²⁶ Her words stayed with me as I grew up. I made a vow to myself, never to treat women in the way men were doing. I also think her words influenced me to enter ministry.

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of my exploration of women's experiences of oppression, abuse, violence and discrimination in both church and society.

A year later MmSabeni was severely beaten by her husband. He used a big stick and beat her all over her body. We saw this while we were coming back from church and my father and two other men helped to stop the beating. We learnt that the cause of the beating was a dog that had stolen some meat. MmSabeni was blamed for the incident and was accused by her husband of being lazy, stupid, uncaring and unmindful of how expensive food was.

Even while Mr. Masianga was beating MmSabeni, one woman had already run to a police station for some help. Soon an ambulance arrived but Mr. Masianga refused to let his wife go to hospital. However, the police intervened and she was taken to the hospital. A few weeks later she came back from hospital with both her arms in casts. The villagers were upset about the incident and reported the matter to the '*lekgotla*'²⁷.

South African communities often use shame and punishment as a means of setting limits on behavior and emphasizing social bonds and this is implemented through the '*lekgotla*'. The '*lekgotla*' used various kinds of rituals in which the usual hierarchical relationships between husband and wife or youth and adults were temporarily inverted. This was used as a means of reducing tension felt by subordinates, in case of violence. The ritual ensured that tensions and antagonisms were channeled into carefully structured ceremonies that did not form any real challenge to the relationship itself. One of the rituals is the use of mockery by the weak towards the strong. It is especially used in marital relationships. This is done publicly where a man, for instance is subjected to public ridicule for beating his wife. Women are allowed by the '*lekgotla*' to stand in front of the abuser's house in order to express the community's dissatisfaction with the man's action and to shame him into conforming to the approved patterns of behaviour.

When the beating is severe, the '*lekgotla*' may take other measures to solve the problem. In case of MmSabeni, they arranged a meeting on a Saturday afternoon to discuss her severe beating. Mr. Masigana's family, MmSabeni's family and all the elders (both men and women)²⁸ gathered under the same tree where MmSabeni had been trying to wash the dishes.

The discussion took a long time. The group decided that Mr. Mmasigana needed to feel the pain of what it means to be beaten. The children were asked to leave. As we were leaving we saw men stripping off Mr Masigana's clothes. He was then tied between two poles his body was waxed with oil. They then continued with their discussions and went back to listen to Mrs Mmasigana as she struggled to explain her pain of living with an abusive man. For the first time she was allowed to speak. Several hours passed by as villagers continued to discuss the problem.

Later I heard a scream and peeping through the window I saw a man lashing Mr. Mmasigana. The man then went back to join the others to drink beer, and another one would come and say a few words to Mr. Mmasigana, and then give him a lash. He was screaming so loud that I was frightened and I ran to my aunt's place. This process made me so frightened that I felt I could not abuse someone.

²⁷ *Lekgotla* is a community forum that discusses village problems. It consists of men only.

²⁸ For the first time, women were allowed to be present, but could not talk or participate in debate.

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While this was intended to be a means of addressing the violence faced by MmaSabeni the problem I have with the process is that it addressed violence through violence, it did not focus on MmaSabeni whose dignity had been violated. Wimberly, when addressing issue of sanctification that restores people's dignity, as a way of restoration says: "The process of sanctification begins with a renewed relationship with God through the power of grace. From this relationship the Image of God is restored in us, and we begin to take on the character of God as well as Godlikeness."²⁹ The process of *lekgotla*, did not achieve what Wimberly is talking about. It stopped violence, but did not restore MmaSabeni's dignity.

2. With the above story in mind, let us now analyze how we will use the fishbowl process, in order to educate men on gender justice issues.

The fishbowl method

The narrative above is used in order to sensitize men about abuse, violence and gender justice.

The facilitator should ask the group to sit in two circles, one within the other.

The women should be asked to sit in the inner circle and the men should be asked to sit in the outer circle. The women should be seated in a way that they are facing each other. This will give them a sense of safety because they can talk to each other even though they can be overheard by the men.







When all are seated the facilitator should read the story of Mrs. Masianga to the whole group.

3. At the end of the reading the facilitator should allow silence so that the members can reflect on the issues in the story.

The women are first asked to discuss the story and the issues it raises among themselves. During this time the men are not allowed to speak or ask questions. Their role is to listen to the women as they reflect on the story of Mmasabeni.



29 Wimberly Charles F., *Is the Devil a Myth*, CD Rom, 2003: 29

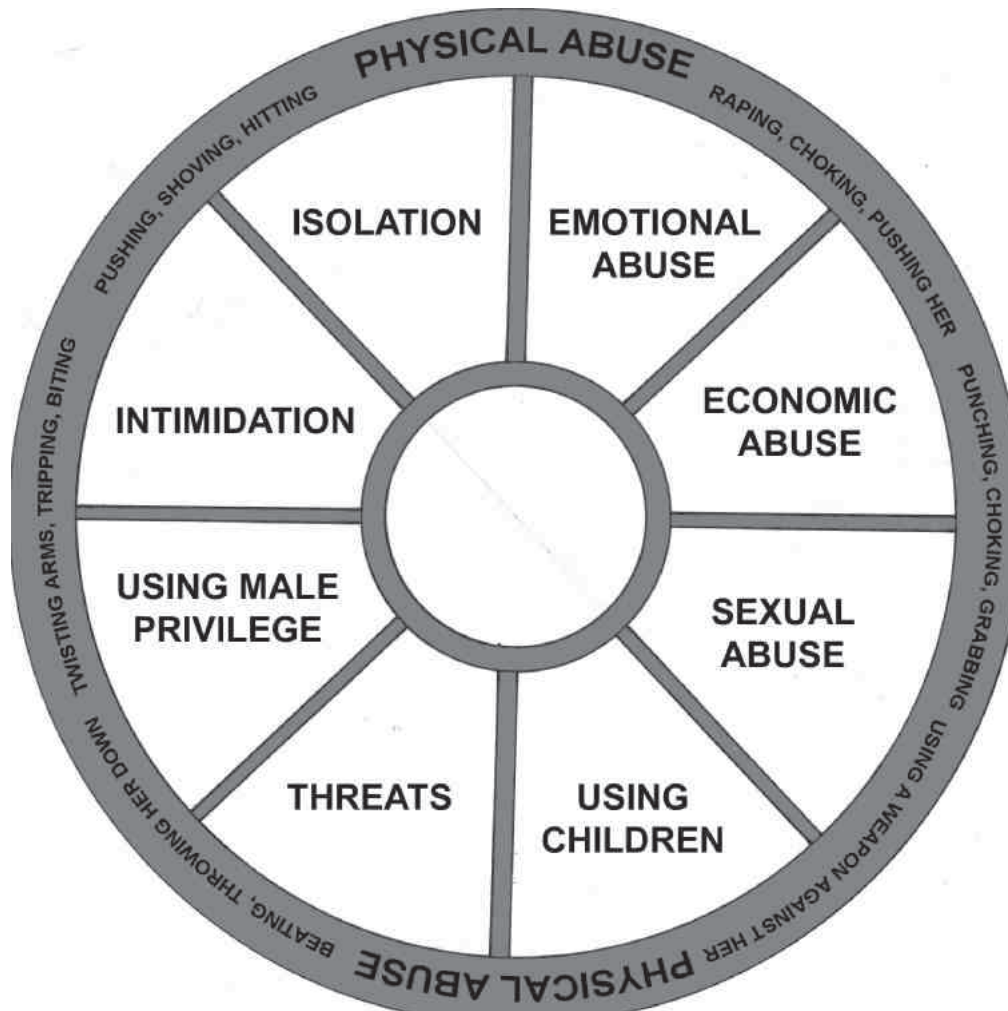
-  The woman will take their time and they will finish when they finish.
 -  Through this process the outer circle is to become more aware of the problems faced by women by listening carefully to the inner circle and learn about their life experiences.
4. The facilitator will then asks everyone to accept the ground rule of confidentiality (**One can share the lessons learnt from the fishbowl but one cannot link any information with the one who offered it**).
-  The facilitator will then sit in the inner circle with the women and asks them to discuss the following questions: (The questions are designed to lead the participants in exploring the pain, violence, abuse and humiliation that are daily experienced by women.)
 - What were your feelings as the story was read?
 - What is your opinion of the villagers' response to Mr. Masianga's violence?
 - Is it right that the women took over in order to correct the beating of their own sister?
 - What is difficult or challenging about this story?
 - What would you like men to know in order that they could work with you better or be more supportive to women?
5. The facilitator needs to give enough time for discussion. As the conversation among the sisters flows, do not disturb the process. Be patient with the awkwardness they might feel in the beginning. The intention is for women to share from their personal experiences. Statistics and generalizations are not part of this process at this point.
6. When the women are finished, the facilitator should ask them to return to the larger circle.
-  Ask everyone to take a couple of moments of silence in order to digest what they've learned.
 -  Then ask them to turn to a person of the same gender in order to share immediate feelings. (You may need to name some of the feelings in order to remind them of examples such as nervousness, relief, sadness, anger, empathy, irritation, etc.)
 -  After a few minutes, ask them to return to the whole group so as to share their learning. Emphasize that this is not a time for debate, analysis or even disagreement.
7. Then ask the men to share briefly their feelings on what the inner circle discussed.
8. Finally ask all to share what they had discussed with the person of the same gender. (Note: Men can only share what they have learned/heard from this process. Men also have to ask permission from a sister who has shared her experience if they need clarification.)

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Activity 5: Analyzing through societal socializing agencies and messages or influences of power and control








1. Introduce the activity and ask participants to reflect on the previous activity, and the response to and causes given for gender-based domestic violence.

Ask participants to identify the societal socializing agencies which contribute to the responses to the violence identified in activity 1.





Prepare a flipchart with two columns headed Societal Socializing Agencies and Messages or Influences. In one column write the names of the societal socializing agencies which have been identified.

Ask participants to identify different messages, their sources and to whom they are directed and note these on the opposite column under “messages”. What particular messages come from the church to men, to women and to children? Write these in the appropriate column.

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-  Remind participants of the work on socialization they did in earlier modules and bring forward some of the key points.
2. On a flipchart draw the wheel of power and control. With help from participants complete the outer ring by identifying different forms of violence. In the inner circle write in the words **Power** and **Control**.
 -  Discuss with participants the connection between power and control and using force against women as means of control.
 -  Using the wheel of power and control, make visible the connection between power and control and the different forms of violence.
 -  Allow time for questions and comments.
 -  Review lessons learned during the activity.

Activity 6: Identifying strategies for the church

1. Introduce the activity and, using the flipchart from the previous two activities, note the main lessons learned. Point out the importance of men taking action to end gender-based violence. There should be no excuse for violence and abuse. Point out that the church has a particular role to play in communities.
2. Ask participants to work, where possible, with others from their communities.
 -  Share information on how your community is responding to the issue.
 -  Discuss what steps men are taking, giving examples from various countries. Include local initiatives of men.
 -  Ask them to identify two things which they can do at the personal level to take action against violence in their communities.
 -  Identify two strategies that the church and men's organizations need to take and the possibilities for networking with women. What resources, partnerships, etc would be required?
3. Reconvene the large group and ask each group to report. Encourage a few questions and brief discussion.
4. Develop list of key strategies for the church and another list of steps for men to take in ending violence.
5. Discuss how participants can promote these ideas within the church.
6. Review key points and lessons learned during the session on gender-based domestic violence. In conclusion the facilitators can summarize learning experiences.
7. Close with a song and prayer.

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Sexual harassment – myths and facts (add myths and facts from your own context)

Myths	Facts
Women enjoy 'eve-teasing'/ sexual harassment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eve-teasing/sexual harassment is humiliating, intimidating, painful and frightening.
'Eve-teasing' is harmless flirtation. Women who object have no sense of humour.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behaviour that is unwelcome cannot be considered harmless, or funny. 2. Sexual harassment is defined by its impact on the woman rather than the intent of the perpetrator.
Women ask for it - only women who are provocatively dressed are sexually harassed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is the classic way of shifting the blame from the harasser to the woman. 2. Women have the right to act, dress and move around freely without the threat of attack or harassment. 3. However we dress, where ever we go 4. 'Yes' means 'Yes' and 'No' means 'No'.
Women who say NO actually mean YES.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is a common myth used by men to justify sexual aggression and one sided sexual advances.
Sexual harassment is not really an issue. It doesn't hurt anyone.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Persons subjected to sexual harassment experience a wide range of physical and psychological ailments. 2. There are economic consequences for the victim's physical and mental well being and the organisation's productivity, efficiency and work-ethics.
Sexual harassment is only natural male behaviour. A man is a hunter and woman is a prey.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men are not born knowing how to sexually harass others. 2. It's learned within the context of a sexist and patriarchal environment that perpetuates control over women's sexuality, fertility and labour.
Women keep quiet: That means they like it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women keep quiet to avoid the stigma attached and retaliation from the harasser. 2. Women are afraid that they will be accused of provoking it, of being victimised, of being called liars and made the subject of gossip.
If women go to places where they are not welcome, they should expect sexual harassment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discriminatory behaviour and abuse is unlawful. 2. Women have equal access to all work facilities. 3. Safe work- place is women's legal right.

Module VII

MODULE VII

Gender, Leadership and Power

Introduction

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

There is little doubt that the current ethics of dominance and control, in which today's leaders prosper and find their power, are not only detrimental to the quality of life of women, but also for the majority of men and communities as a whole. Patterns of domination and control can be found in all types of relationships and in all areas of life - whether it is men over women, leaders over followers, large nations over small ones or in different forms of gender/age/race/tribe/caste/class supremacy. The impact of unequal power relations has resulted in widening inequality in relationships between women and men, and between young and middle-aged/older people and has been a major force in societal conflict. Even with all the advancements made in the world today, the status of the majority of women is still characterized by economic and political marginalization,

poverty, violence and their lack of power to make their own life choices.

Patriarchal power, which sustains sexism, racism, tribalism, casteism, xenophobia, homophobia and other related intolerance, continues to persist in pernicious ways. Gender and poverty, gender and HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence and a whole range of societal issues are rooted in or affected by power relations between women and men. It must be noted that while patriarchy manifests itself in the power of men over women, some men have more privileges than others, based on their socio-political and economic power, race, ethnicity and geo-political location. The disparities between rich and poor, north and south, black and white, Christian and Muslim, rural and urban and older and younger generations must be considered in understanding gender and power.

Current leadership models in church and society are limiting and erect barriers to fostering justice and peace, to sharing resources and building just and humane societies. They fail to model patterns of ministry that foster the partnership of women and men and the inclusion of young people. There is a need to seek new models of leadership built on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and his resistance to the ethics of domination and control. The word "leadership" can be found in Paul's list about the gifts of the church (Romans 12:8), and referring to Moses and Aaron (Number 33) and Miriam (Exodus 15:19 - 21). The biblical understanding of leadership is not individualistic. On the contrary it is closely related to the gifts of the Spirit for the good of the community.

It is important for leadership and power to be critically analyzed with gender justice perspectives. Most churches are constrained

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by current hierarchical structural models, which mirror authoritative and political leadership styles. These models usually promote male leadership and exclude women and young people. However, it is important to note that hierarchy is not confined to male- female relations alone. Women can also inhabit and imbibe models of leadership and power in ways that undermine other women. To assume that only men use dominant power is to overlook the consequences of power. Women are also known to exert control, based on their race, ethnicity, class or based on their husband's position of authority in church or society. Differences in status, education, economic resources and even denominational heritage become steps in the ladder of hierarchy.

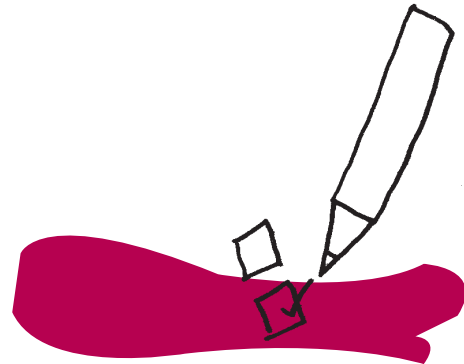
Breaking barriers of customs, traditional beliefs and theology, which debilitate and limit participation in leadership, is a challenge for most churches. The "glass ceiling" in churches and also in the ecumenical movement is still very much intact as women are significantly missing from the ordained ministry and in other leadership positions. Women are sometimes dismissed and intimidated in synods, presbyteries and seminaries. For the few women who succeed in reaching positions of power and decision- making, surviving in what is seen as a "man's world" can be extremely stressful and sometimes impossible without a network of support. Women are usually relegated to roles and responsibilities within the private sphere of their home, where their contributions are undervalued and largely unrecognized. Despite the fact that they make significant contributions to family, church and society, they are considered to have little value or ability to hold leadership and decision- making positions in the public sphere, including churches.

Power based on patriarchy needs to be reconceived and reconstructed. There is need for analysis, which digs into the fundamental bases of power relations, which are inherent in leadership. The vision of critical principles of caring, sharing, consensus- building, creativity and partnership are important in unraveling power based on patriarchy and in dismantling its systems and structures. Building partnership of women and men requires an examination of issues of power as they are understood and practiced in the church. Many churches (including the ecumenical movement) have failed to address gender, power and leadership in prophetic ways, because this is deemed as 'dangerous ground' which can have negative effects on church unity. Yet, avoiding or hesitating to deal with this issue results in the continuous marginalization and dehumanization of women.

So, how do we move from the current models of human relationships and their accompanying limitations? How can leadership be valued and honoured so that it truly serves people?

Building the capacity of leaders to model patterns of ministry that foster partnership based on principles of justice, calls for a fundamental shift in how we view leadership. The church has an important role to play in building the partnership of women and men and in finding ways that further peace- building and create a valuable contribution to bring about social justice. The church must begin from the very basis of socializing processes, such as how to respond to boys and girls within its community, the roles it assigns to them and teachings that show examples of both boys and girls as equal and worthy. The messages and practice of the church through ministry must demonstrate equality and partnership of women and men as a model for society to follow.

Module VII









Description

The module is designed to explore the concept of leadership and power from a gender perspective, with a critical self-examination of male power. Characteristics, qualities and styles of leaders, sources and use of power, and the relationship between gender, leadership and power are explored, using a variety of interactive activities.

These activities are developed to help participants ground their exploration and analysis in the context of their social locations - at home, in church and community - and to envision more enabling models of leadership based on a biblical vision and Christian values.

Objectives

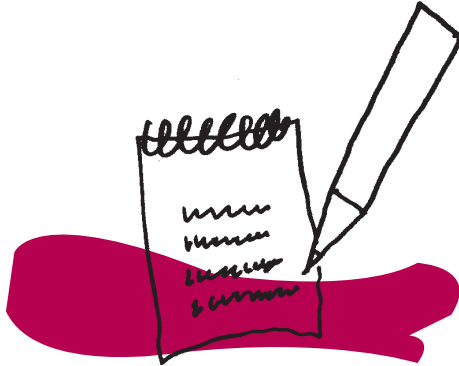
-  To describe the concept, nature and purpose of leadership
-  To identify different types/styles of leadership
-  To examine different kinds of power (including gender specific), its use and misuse
-  To determine sources of power and the relationship between power, authority and leadership
-  To make connections between gender, leadership and power
-  To identify strategies to strengthen leadership capacity.

Description of this session: This session is designed to help participants explore the purpose and characteristics of leadership. It is intended to stimulate reflection on qualities of leaders and leadership within the church and community.

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Notes to the facilitator

- ✚ Obtain quotes on leadership from leaders, including those from the church, country and/or region, etc. Mount these on the wall and add others from participants.
- ✚ Encourage participants to use their own experience to give names of male and female leaders who have inspired them.
- ✚ Make sure that words such as characteristics and qualities are clearly understood, as well as the distinction between leader and leadership. Many people interchange the two.
- ✚ Raise the question of the difference between leaders and managers and note these differences for all to see.
- ✚ Prepare a flipchart with the list of questions in step 4 before the activity.



Activity 1: Exploring the nature and purpose of leadership

1. Introduce the activity and ask participants to reflect on leaders in the local community, church, nation, and international community.
 -  Ask each participant to share their example with the large group. List the reasons given on the flipchart. Group together similar reasons and eliminate duplications. Ask the group for other characteristics that are not already listed and add these to the list.
2. Put up the list with the following questions and ask participants to form groups of about five persons to discuss the first question on the list and an additional question of their choice.
 -  How are these characteristics reflected in leaders you see around you today - in the church and in society? Give examples.
 -  Would the characteristics you have identified apply equally to women and men? What are the differences?
 -  Do all leaders lead in the same way? Are there differences between the way women and men lead? If there are differences, what are these and what accounts for the differences?
 -  Is there a difference between a manager and a leader? Give examples.
 -  Reflect on the concept of “leadership as service”. How is it practised in the church today? What is its impact on women? What is its impact on men?
 -  How do you, as a leader, exemplify the qualities you admire?
3. Reconvene the large group and ask each small group to report on their discussions. Follow this by asking participants to reflect on and discuss the following:
 -  The purpose of leadership
 -  The main qualities of a gender- sensitive leader
 -  The relationship between leadership and power.
4. Ask the group to define “leadership”. Use the list of characteristics developed at the beginning of the activity and the results of group discussions to help in this exercise. Work towards reaching a consensus and write the definition of leadership on the flipchart. Ask for final comments and complete the activity by summarizing the main lessons learned.

Bible Study: A story of power and leadership - Aruna Gnanadason

Read I Samuel Chapter 25:2-39

The Bible has always held a central place in the lives of women and men in the Church – it has been a source of comfort and of liberation when one is cowed down by the struggles of this world. It has particularly given freedom to women to take on leadership roles as they draw strength from the Jesus community. Jesus, in all his encounters with women, affirms them and gives them the power to resist all they have to confront in the society and in the world.

However, liberation in the Bible is not only about an individual experience of freedom - liberation is usually understood as the power to lead the whole community of women and men, to a life of justice and freedom. Liberation means freedom from patriarchal social, political and economic structures so that women can play a leadership role, in partnership with men, in the creation of a just and peaceful world for themselves and for their people. To understand this further I have chosen a text from the Old Testament which describes a woman's courageous actions to restore peace. She breaks many accepted norms and expectations in order to stand for what she believes - the liberation of her people. She uses her power to lead her people to peace. The story of Abigail, a lesser known woman in the Bible, (I Samuel 25), summarises well the theme of this Bible Study.

To understand this text fully I first refer to an incident in India - a story of courage and perseverance. It was about a decade ago, when the fishing community in India organised a national struggle against the mechanisation of fishing, the introduction of fishing boats and trawlers and other technology. This has seriously affected the life and livelihood of traditional fisher folk, and it affects the healthy environment of the sea. In one part of the country 5000 fisher folk were taking out a non-violent protest march as part of the national struggle. An over-zealous and brutal police officer decided that the protest must be stopped and gave orders to his men to shoot at the protesters. This disturbed the orderly march and there was confusion as the fisher men began to retaliate violently. The women among the fisher folk intervened to stop the chaos and violence. A few of them fell at the feet of the policemen and clung to their feet and begged them to stop the shooting. They did manage to stop the shooting (though it is important to note that it is not always so easy to stop the brutality of policemen who are trained to be ruthless and "trigger-happy"). But in this case the action of the women worked - the women demonstrated that their vulnerability is indeed their power - they took the leadership into their own hands, they stopped the violence. At the same time they taught their men to also recognise that violence does not get anyone anywhere it only leads to death and carnage.

Abigail's story is similar. She is described in v.3 as "clever and beautiful" - she is named as being both beautiful and wise. Her husband Nabal, on the other hand, is described as "surlly and mean" (v.3). We are told that he is a Calebite, a descendent of one of the tribes of Israel who are referred to in the Bible as an ill-mannered people.

The story goes that David sends his men to Nabal to get from him all that is necessary for the celebration of the feast, as they were in the middle of the wilderness and did not have access

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to what was needed for the celebration. The request to Nabal from David is polite and certainly not unreasonable. The servants remind Nabal of the time when his men had met with no harm from David when they were in Carmel. (v.6- 8). Nabal's response is surprising and un-neighbourly (v.10). He refuses David's request and goes to the extent of even challenging the integrity of David - "Who is David?" he asks, dismissively.

On hearing this David's response is impulsive and extreme. He calls on his men to prepare for war (v.13). His male ego is hurt and he prepares to retaliate in the only way he knows i.e. militaristically. 400 men march towards Nabal, with their swords drawn - fully prepared for war.

A young man, a servant of Nabal, runs to Abigail with this news. He asks her to intervene, as they know that Nabal cannot be approached, "he is so ill-natured that no one can speak to him" (v.17b) he says, and appeals to Abigail. The servants remember just how kind David's men had been to them when they were in his fields, they consider Nabal's denial of the request as unjust, and they suspect that this action of Nabal is only going to lead to violence.

Abigail acts swiftly and prepares to act to avert this crisis. She takes with her all that is necessary for David and his men to celebrate the feast (v.18) and goes to meet him. She does this without telling her husband Nabal. (v.19b). Many women till today, find it difficult to understand this verse, as they have been nurtured to follow how the church has interpreted the Pauline text in Roman's (Ephesians 5: 22- 24) demanding the "obedience" of women to the authority of the husband as the final word. Here we read that Abigail decides to intervene, "But she did not tell her husband, Nabal". Abigail is breaking traditionally expected regulations of her society too. (We remember what happened to Queen Vashti for disobeying her husband in Esther Chapter 1). But then, I am sure that the fisher women, who stopped the police firing, did not wait to get their husband's permission either! Women, over the centuries have been silenced by patriarchal concepts of obedience to the authority of men, however corrupt, inefficient or even violent, they may be - their husbands, the state, leadership of the church etc. Very often women do not have the courage to take leadership because they know that this could demand breaking through patriarchal boundaries.

In this case, Abigail believes that she must act for the sake of justice, in spite of her husband, and she goes out with all that is required for the feast, to meet the mighty David who is marching with great anger to meet Nabal. David is so angry that his plan is to kill all the males (v.22) - it is total war that he is prepared for! Abigail falls at the feet of David and with very strong words pleads with him to desist from the senseless violence. She goes to the extent of taking the blame for her husband's behaviour (v.25). She plays at David's guilt by warning him that the blood of the victims will be on his hands. David's anger against Nabal is going to take the life of many innocent people, she reminds him. Then, she goes on to bless David, (vs.28-31), if he will avoid the violence. A simple, powerless and most importantly, unarmed woman blessing the mighty David. We know that he is still not crowned king but she takes it on herself to let David know that the Lord is going to bless him with a strong kingdom. She blesses David with long life in God's protection - the words she uses are "the life of my Lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living under the care of the Lord your God" (v.29). The bundle of the living

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being used here, in this context, is a powerful image of the mothering womb of God - God as mother, will protect David in God's womb.

David is converted by the "good sense" (v.32) of Abigail. She has managed to deflect his anger and his determination to be senselessly revengeful (v.33). He commends her for her foolish courage - coming to confront him unarmed and alone, when he and his 400 men were marching with swords drawn, ready to kill. David learns a great lesson from this beautiful and wise woman. (Later in vs.39- 42 we read that he marries her - her wisdom and courage, which must have been the qualities that made her beautiful are noticed by the mighty David).

Abigail finds Nabal feasting and drunk, as if he was unaware of the grave danger he was in. (vs.36- 38). Here too Abigail uses her wisdom and does not speak to him when he is drunk - it is no use to do that, she realises. When on the next day, he hears from Abigail what she has done "his heart died within him and he became like a stone" (v.37), and about 10 days later he dies. He dies because he cannot accept that his wife, a powerless simple woman, had intervened on his behalf - his male ego is hurt. He would have preferred to have a war to prove his physical prowess - it is too humiliating for him that a woman, with no armaments, no power should have done this. Perhaps he was thinking of what people will say about him and his authority. Again I remind you of what happens in Queen Vashti's story (Esther 1:16- 22) - the king had to order that "every man should be master in his own house." Is it not this great desire to prove physical and military power that is causing all these wars in the world, this empire building, this desire to possess more and more by whatever means? There is no space for peaceful negotiation, for sharing, for vulnerability - both sides in times of conflict want to prove that they can win, that they are the more powerful - so much of innocent life is lost in the process.

What does this teach us about gender, leadership and power? What kind of power do we seek? Should this not be our purpose to acquire the power, as women and men to intervene at the right moment, to challenge all forms of oppression and to work for justice and peace among us, and within societies and between countries? Are not just and equitable relationships between genders, between peoples and nations more valuable than all this war, violence, hatred and conflict that are tearing the world apart? In this context what is our role as Christian women and men? Diaconal ministries of the church in which women are the backbone are indeed important in such times as these and just as Abigail did (v.18) we need to prepare ourselves for this - but then is there not a greater demand on us? Do we not as women and men draw strength from our Biblical faith that leads us into a liberated existence so that we can together challenge the forces of death that still exist in our world? These are the challenges before us as we as women and men continue together in the struggle for right relationships, for justice and transformation in our churches, societies and in the world.

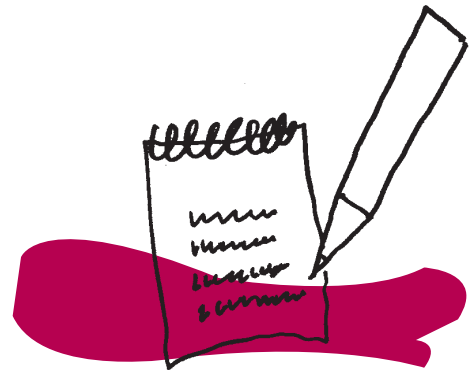
Discuss the following:

1. What are the similarities and differences between David and Nabal in their use of power?
2. What are the similarities and differences between how the men use power and how Abigail uses power?

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3. What are the interconnections between violence and power that you see in the text?
4. Why do you think that men are more likely to use violence rather than negotiatory skills to make their point?
5. What can we learn from Abigail about the use of power/powerlessness for creative leadership?

Activity 2: Identifying sources and uses of power – using the power flower



Description

The Power Flower was developed especially with anti-racism education in mind. It is helpful in examining issues of gender and its intersection with other sources of power or powerlessness. This exercise is intended to help participants to identify and examine sources of power and their location and relationship within such sources, and to assess what can and cannot be changed.

The activity is designed to help participants become aware of their personal power and the intersection of different sources of power and powerlessness. It will also help them examine different kinds of power and identify elements of a gender-sensitive use of power.

Notes to the facilitator

- *♀ Distribute the power flower handout and let participants know that they need to study the document in preparation for the session.
- *♀ Prepare a drawing of a large Power Flower with some additional empty petals on a flipchart. Use the sample and appropriate it in the light of your local context.
- *♀ While the groups that hold power may vary from society to society, if you are working with people from different nations or regions, seek some agreement on what groups tend to have power in a given community.
- *♀ The social location of participants in relation to the group with power is important as well as the identification of the different social identities with which one can be assigned.

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1. Introduce the activity as one which will enable participants to examine different sources of power.

Begin by asking four participants to take on attributes of power as men and women

Ask the others to interpret their position

Note the difference between the way women and men are seen to demonstrate power

Use this demonstration to stimulate a brief discussion on power.

2. Introduce the power flower as a tool to illustrate the multiple sources of power. Explain that, in using this tool, we can identify who has or does not have access to power, in what context we have or do not have access to it and to see clearly the intersections between identities that can result in access to power or in powerlessness.

3. Provide the following instructions:

Point out that the sources of power listed in the inner circle of the power flower are the most common and acceptable ones. Add others suggested by the group, e.g. caste, urban, rural, etc.

Working with the large group, complete the outer petals of the flower by filling in the name of the group perceived to have power in society in relation to the source listed on the inner petal.

Ask participants to locate themselves in the middle layer of the petals of the flower.

Ask participants to make a basic sketch of a power flower showing where they are positioned in relation to sex, age, race, tribe, class, profession/occupation etc.

4. Review the completed power flower. Lead a group discussion and ask participants to share the following observations. Note responses on the power flower drawn on the flipchart.

My social location in relation to power: Identify the factors you have as an individual that are different from the group with power. Identify the factors that you have which are similar to the group with power. Note which of these factors can and cannot be changed.

Different forms of social identification, e.g. our different social identities: Explain how these intersect to influence our access to power.

5. Ask participants to discuss the relationship between power, leadership and change. Remind them about their definition of leadership in the previous activity.

Reflect on the qualities of the leaders you admire in relation to their use of power. What kind of power do they use?

What are other kinds of power?

- ♂️ What kind of power can facilitate partnership between women and men and transform gender relations?
- ♂️ What are the costs and what are the gains of using such power in today's world - at home, in church and society?

Activity 3: Gender and power

Description: This activity will help examine similarities and differences in how women and men view and access power and how women and men use power to support or hinder others accessing power and will identify different types of power. It will facilitate the examination of what are specific values and expression of power by women and men.

1. Introduce the activity and highlight the objectives. Note discussions in the previous activity on power.
 - ♂️ Do you agree with the belief that power and being a man go together? Give five reasons for replying “yes/no”.
 - ♂️ Are there differences in the way men access and use power from the way women do? Provide examples.
 - ♂️ How do you view women who have positions of power? How does this make you feel?
2. Reflect on power as a means of transforming unequal gender relations. What is necessary for this to happen in relation to the following:
 - ♂️ our beliefs, values and principles?
 - ♂️ our theology, structure of the church and related organizations?
 - ♂️ our family structures and norms within society?



Activity 4: Leadership styles – options for transformation

Description: Is there one “best” leadership style? How can we tell when leadership is effective and when it is not? What is its impact on those being led? This activity will help participants examine different leadership styles and their impact on others. It will also identify styles and skills that are likely to facilitate gender-sensitive transformation.

1. Read aloud “**BASIC PRINCIPLES IN LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION**” (see box below)
2. Ask the group to think of the different types of leadership styles they have observed, experienced and practiced at home, in church and society. Ask participants to write these on strips of paper provided and hang them up on the “clothes line”.
3. Discuss the impact of these different styles on families, church workers and congregations, and on society as a whole. Identify positive and negative impacts of the various styles.
4. Ask participants to highlight the following:
 - Leadership styles that are gender-sensitive and are likely to facilitate equal partnership at home, in church and society
 - The dynamics of power associated with the style of leadership being discussed
 - Particular styles of leadership that could be more effective for both men and women
5. Ask for volunteers to select the styles that have been identified as enabling partnership and place these at one end of the “clothes line”. Place the styles that are not gender-sensitive at the opposite end.
6. Ask the volunteers to work with the large group and place the selected styles in order of priority on a new flipchart under the heading: **Leadership styles for transformation.**
7. Lead a large group discussion on the following:
 - The benefits and costs of promoting leadership styles for transformation today
 - The ways in which participants can strengthen their leadership styles and capacities at home, in church and community.

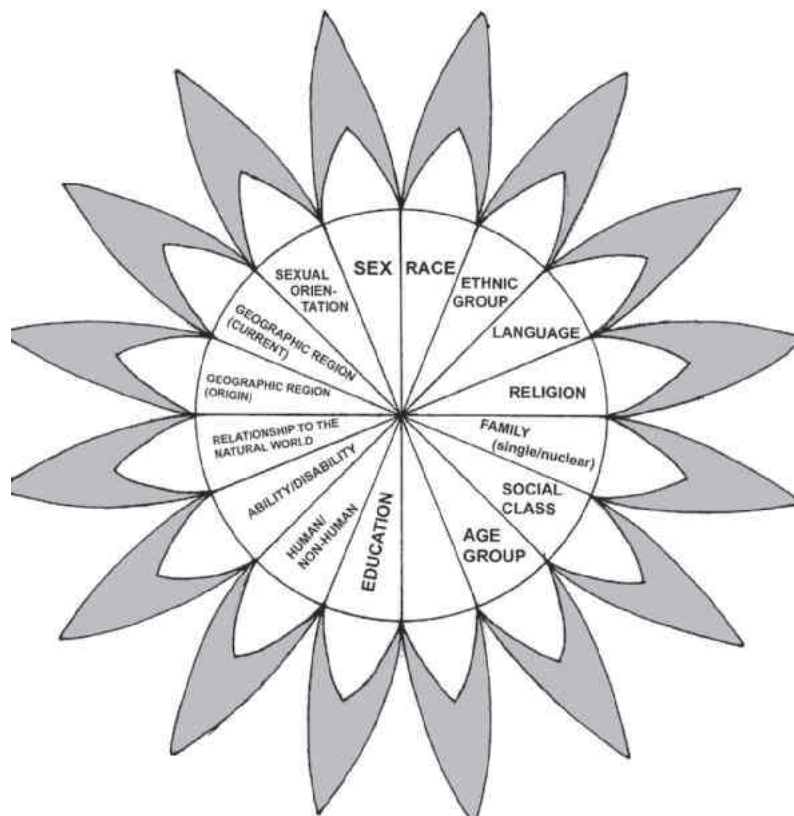
Conclude by summarizing the key lessons learned from the activity.

Close with a song and prayer.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION

The transformational leader is a change agent who seeks to transform the institution through realigning its structure, culture and norms with the new vision. Such a leader is committed to a shared vision and purpose and understands that working with others is essential to achieving established goals. Some elements of transformational leadership are:

- **Shared leadership** promotes leadership as a shared responsibility and understands that the role of the leader is one of facilitating the leadership ability and potential of all group members, women and men.
- **Cooperation vs. competition** understands that the more people in a group cooperate with each other, the more commitment they are likely to feel to the group and its objectives.
- **People's involvement in setting their own course** develops power sharing techniques and encourages commitment and responsibility for the group's wellbeing and for members' own participation.
- **People's opinions and active participation** are encouraged until group members become used to participating. This allows for few arbitrary decisions.
- **Cooperative processes** such as consensus decision-making are incorporated and the group is encouraged to think along these lines.
- **Striking a balance** between friendly cooperation (members trust each other and work well together) and freedom to be critical, speak out and disagree (promotes interest, develops new ideas and challenges group members to "think outside the box").



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MODULE VIII

TOWARDS PARTNERSHIP OF WOMEN AND MEN

Introduction

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

How do we break the chains of gender injustices within our church and foster just and equal partnership of women and men? Partnership of women and men within church and society require transformation at multiple levels, as we have discussed in previous modules. This manual takes the approach that transformation needs to take place at the levels of the heart and mind and involves strategic structural, systemic, practical and life changes.

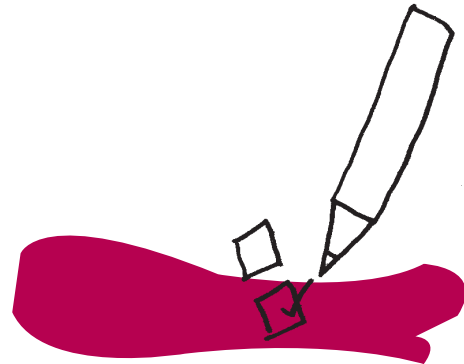
Change can be an exciting yet daunting venture - there is so much to do. Where does one start? The necessity of planning and strategizing become important elements in moving forward on a transformational agenda.

Planning and strategizing are not as difficult as they may first appear to be. We plan, strategize and make choices often in our own lives, for small and not so small things, within the home, church, circle of friends and community. Think about how you decide on a career, studies, a budget, voting in national elections, planning a workshop on men, gender and masculinity, etc. All of these decisions require access to critical information and resources, both human and financial, and assessment of this information to make good choices and to act upon them. However, planning and strategizing for an organisation is not the same as planning and strategizing for personal goals.

Planning for institutional changes, such as in the church, requires much of these same steps in decision-making, but calls for much more specific and detailed processes as well as multi-pronged approaches. Good planning of any initiative is important to its overall success and includes taking into consideration the activities, the careful use of human and financial resources, the expertise required and necessary partnerships and alliances. Careful planning requires that goals and objectives are clearly defined, so that the purpose of the initiative is clearly understood by all. Working out how you will achieve your goal is also important in planning. Strategizing is the "HOW" in achieving the objectives. It will make clearer what is necessary, including resources and time, and will also draw your attention to how realistic your plans are.

Philip Vinod Peacock's paper, "Towards a Theology of Partnership of Women and Men" on page 36 in Section II of this manual is a very good resource for this module. You need to read this paper and note key points for discussion and also to introduce the module.

Module VIII








Description

This module has been structured to help participants to move forward in developing plans to promote positive masculinities and men as partners with women. It will pick up on Module V on Masculinity and Real Men and use the outcomes to strategise and plan ways to move forward. The module also includes a true story of a woman parish moderator and her parents and husband who were faced with a situation regarding social and religious barriers but overcame these by demonstrating the value of family, love, respect and solidarity.

The activities in this module are designed to help participants to apply gender-consciousness and skills acquired in the preceding modules, and to move forward in strategic thinking on how to break barriers and envision a plan for partnership. They will identify what changes are needed, what is possible, and will assess opportunities, challenges and how they can plan in a realistic and feasible way.

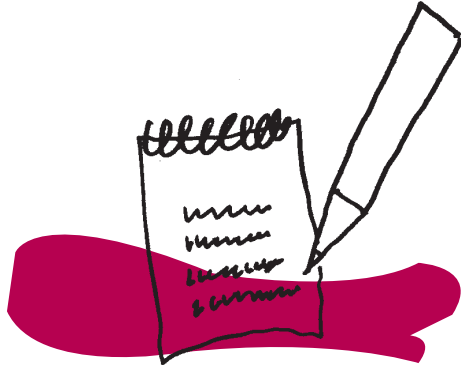
Objectives

-  To build on work done in previous modules and assess changes that are required within their churches
-  To identify and establish priorities on the range of changes identified
-  To assess challenges and opportunities associated with these choices and to develop responsive strategies
-  To develop realistic plans based on these priorities and strategies
-  To identify human and material resources to enable the realisation of the plans.





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Notes to the facilitator

-  This module provides participants the opportunity to reflect on and build realistic plans for action in their churches, organisations and communities.
-  Bring forward reviews of previous modules including key points of module V.
-  Preparation of materials is essential to provide a good start for the activities in this module. You should spend some time to prepare flipcharts/sheets of paper indicating the process so far - increasing gender-awareness, gender-based analysis; looking at the church, male/female relations, and issues through a gender-sensitive lens, the questions of power and leadership; and visioning the renewed church.
-  There are three activities in this module - two are long and may require more time than has been allocated here. Use your discretion to judge the amount of time needed.



Activity 1: Connecting with Sicily's story of gender in the church

1. Ask for volunteers to read the "Real life experience" by Sicily Muriithi (below). It would be more interesting for them to role play the story.
2. Ask for their initial reaction to the story and discuss the subordination of women in Sicily's cultural context.
3. Ask participants to organize themselves into buzz groups.
 - ♂ Ask for some groups to assess the situation from men's perspective, some from Sicily's perspective and some from the perspective of the church as a community of women and men.
 - ♂ Ask them to briefly share what they have learnt from Sicily's story and how they can connect with this for their situation at home.
4. Facilitate a brief discussion using the following questions as a guideline:
 - ♂ What role does the understanding of gender play in building a church community that reflects God's reign in the world?
 - ♂ How can leaders build wholeness in a church where difference and identity are used to polarize the community?
5. Ask participants to read and respond to the resource on "Steps Men Can Take to End Sexism" in the box below.
6. Ask them to develop steps that would work in their communities. (If there are persons from similar church and organizations, they may work together.)

Real life experience by Sicily Mbura Muriithi

Growing up as a woman in a patriarchal society is accompanied by a complex web of experiences resulting from male dominance and female subordination. It also includes discrimination, oppression, violence, and a range of issues that makes life challenging. In such a society, male ideals determine female ideals. This determines the roles women and men play in the church and society.

This affects leadership roles significantly. The trend has not spared church institutions. As a result many churches consider clerical duties as male, while women become participants as passive players in subordinate roles in the church. In many ways Christianity collaborates with African patriarchy to determine roles that are played by women and men.

I am a Minister in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (P.C.E.A), from the Mbeere community and am married into the Meru community. I have an experience that cuts across insubordination, discrimination, oppression, denial and disrespect. However I have interacted with men who work with women in respect and humility, and this has been a blessing.

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I once worked in a parish in Meru South District. The Parish was in Chogoria Presbytery then and today it is in the Chogoria North Presbytery. The parish I worked in, had 40 kirk session members - men and women elders. Out of forty kirk session members, six were women. Two were ministers' wives, one was an elder's wife, two were deacon's wives and one was a parish evangelist. While these women were elders in their own right, their voices were amazingly mute, needless to explain reasons for their silence.

Among these forty elders, a good number of them had problems due to cultural beliefs that the top leadership should be male. However, a few others were convinced that anyone with leadership abilities should be allowed to be leaders in their own right.

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I got married into this community, in April, 1995. In September that year, I was posted in the same home parish. It was difficult for me and I explained this to the leadership in the hope that the situation would change. I was going to be the Parish Moderator in a church where my father-in-law and his brother-in-law (my husband's uncle) were elders! Culturally these are all considered my parents and I have no permission to speak to them directly or to call them by their names.

On the other hand, being the moderator of the kirk session, it was impossible for me to avoid calling the names of these people. My fears were confirmed in one of the session meetings where in my view, some elders staged a situation that brought me to the position, as Moderator of the session, of having to order an elder (and that happened to be my father-in-law) out of the court. It was complex, but there was no space and time to make my father-in-law understand that I had to do this. As I ordered him out of the court, I knew that due to cultural beliefs this action could have been dangerous for my family life and for my relationship with my father-in-law but I had to do it anyway for the work of God to be done in the Parish. In obedience, he walked out of the court, but my heart was troubled.

When we arrived home, the situation was completely different from what I expected. Instead of being scolded, there was a wonderful affirmation of me! He requested me to prepare tea so that we may drink it together. Fellowship over tea was going to be the forum that shaped our working relationship henceforth. This other elder who accompanied him started the conversation by saying: "*Mami urorathimwa*" (mother, be blessed). He further said, the decision you took today was the most wise decision of your life, if you did it any other way it was going to ruin the church for ever. The Spirit of God surely guided you." Our fellowship continued and my father-in-law confirmed to me that he would do anything in his ability to support me in the work of God.

This was to be the beginning of a long struggle with demanding cultural requirements. My father-in-law had to carry the official brief case. My father-in-law argued that they were not carrying the case, as men carrying it for a woman, but as church elders carrying it for a church minister in his/her pastoral ministry. So he carried the brief case. He immediately received warnings from the elders for having not only carried a woman's bag but for having carried the bag of his daughter-in-law. The penalty for the "crime" was the slaughtering a goat for the clan elders. He firmly stated that he had done it as a church elder carrying the case for the church minister and he had no apology to make and no goat needed to be slaughtered!

It became difficult for him because the elders who made that demand as clan elders were the same ones who were elders in the church. But he stood firm on his decision. He was excommunicated from clan activities but he remained strong saying that he was fulfilling his duties as a church elder.

Out of this and other experiences in my parish ministry I wish to observe that there are a lot of cultural pressures on men and women. There is a very thin line, or no boundaries at all, between the cultural demands on individuals and Christian values, especially when they are in favour of patriarchal social systems. It is also a fact that there are in our churches and society men who are able to transcend their culturally socialized masculinities to embrace social values that recognize women and men as God's creation - as created in God's Image.

Bible Study on partnership; Text: Ruth 2 **Philip Vinod Peacock**

(Tip: If possible it will be beneficial for the participants to dramatically act out the text.)

Introduction

There are many ways of looking at the Bible, through the ages people have understood this wonderful book in many different ways. Yet throughout history there has always been an understanding that the Bible is a story, it is a story of God's work in the world and the story of God's liberating accompaniment with those struggling for justice.

However as Christians who are concerned with the world around us today, we also have our own stories of God's liberating work to proclaim. We approach the Bible to not only learn from those many wonderful stories but also see how those stories engage with our own. As one wonderful African American woman once said, the Bible is not only a book we read but also a book that reads us. It is with this openness to let the Bible read us that we enter into this Bible Study.

The book of Ruth is in many ways an intriguing book. I say this for two reasons. The first intriguing point about the book is the place where the book is placed within the context of the Bible. The book is found immediately after the book of Judges, a book which often describes brutal violence. This description of brutal violence is found in the last three chapters of the book of Judges that tells the horrible story of how a Levite's concubine is raped and murdered and the cycle of violence that follows. The story is particularly brutal because at the end of the day it is the women who are the victims of this violence, whether it is the concubine or the daughters, sisters and mothers of Benjamin. The book of Judges ends with a phrase that is often repeated in the book, that in those days there was no king and each one did what was right in their own eyes.

Yet though there is almost a pleading for a king for Israel, the Bible does not immediately lead us to I Samuel where a king is to be found. It is also apparent that when there was a king the same violence continued in Israel. Those who placed the books of the Bible in the order that they did, have placed Ruth between Judges and Samuel - this seems to be an indication that the story of Ruth invites us to think about an alternative route to peace and justice, a route that does not involve the abuse of power, but rather one of concern for one another.

This takes us to the second intriguing point about the book of Ruth. Ruth is written in a very different way than from most literature we find. The normal way of telling a story is to introduce a hero and a villain and an element of conflict between them. Thus most stories seem to be about resolving the binary between good and evil, a struggle in which most times good conquers. The book of Ruth is different in the sense that this binary between good and evil is done away with. None of the characters in Ruth are evil, they are all good. There are no bad characters at all in this story. This is one of the many reasons why the book of Ruth offers some possibilities for rethinking partnership of women and men towards gender justice.





Module VIII

Having offered this background to the book of Ruth, let us together explore if it has any value for us who are discussing redemptive masculinities today.

Questions for group discussions:

1. What kinds of role models exist for boys and youngsters in your context? What are the sources for these role models?
2. Who are the characters in the story and what do we know about them?
3. Boaz is introduced to us as a 'man of substance'. What do you think it means to be a 'man of substance'? Then? And now?
4. How would you characterize Boaz's relationship with Ruth? What are the negative points and what is redemptive?
5. What lessons can we learn from Ruth and Boaz with regards to a partnership of women and men?
6. Specify five things that your church can change to enable a partnership of women and men.

Activity 2: Preparation for the session

1. Prepare flipcharts with main lessons learned from Modules II to IV. You may be able to use the daily reviews if these have captured sufficiently the main lessons learned in these modules.
2. Introduce the activity as an important step to bring forward and remind us of lessons learned from previous modules in order to enable us to move on to making realistic plans for change. Take participants through the process so far, using the following guidelines:
 -  Raising awareness of the importance of promoting positive masculinities;
 -  What are key issues for men and how are these being addressed;
 -  Analysing the church through gender-sensitive lenses and envisioning the new church built on a renewed perspective of partnership;
 -  Identifying key challenges and opportunities of such partnerships;
3. Ask participants for questions, clarifications and comments. Allow time for discussion. Point out that clarification of key lessons learned is important for the next activities, which will require knowledge and skills acquired in previous modules.

Activity 3: Strategies for moving forward

1. Bring forward the following from **Module V, Activity 4** and the “Steps Men Can Take to End Sexism” which they have developed in **Activity 1.6 of this module**.

the flipchart paper on **Challenges and Opportunities**

the three important steps which participants were asked to develop as an assignment.

2. Review all this and ask for further input from participants.
3. Divide participants into table groups and assign the following tasks to different groups:

In what ways will the opportunities support the strategy for change? Can these opportunities be enhanced for more effective support? What will this entail?

In what ways will the challenges hinder implementation of the strategy for change? How can the impact of these challenges be diminished or managed? What would this entail?

How will they put feet on the key steps? What is necessary for this?

4. Reconvene the large group and ask each small group to report on the result of their group's work and the process to implement change.

Activity 4: Making realistic plans and identifying resources

1. Introduce the activity and ask participants to continue working in the same groups as in the previous activity.
2. Read the resource paper below on “**Setting Goals and Objectives**”. Feel free to revise and appropriate this paper for your suitability.
3. Develop goals and objectives. The objectives must be realistic and should include how, when and where they will be implemented.
4. Once goals and objectives are established, participants continue developing their action plans. The following suggestions should guide this process:

Outline action steps to be taken to achieve the goals and objectives established.

Include steps to be taken to obtain commitment from the church or your organisation.






Develop strategies to identify and access human, financial and other material support.

Develop measures to ensure accountability.

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Reconvene the large group, and ask each small group to present their plans. Allow enough time for this. You may encourage questions and comments at the end of each presentation or you can wait until all presentations have been made.

Conclusion:

-  With the help of group rapporteurs, recap the main points of the discussion and the plan that has been developed.
-  Discuss possibilities for networking and supporting each other.
-  Provide an opportunity for evaluation, feedback and making very brief critical remarks.
-  Organise a time for appreciating each other with symbols and few words.
-  Close with a Eucharist worship or with songs and prayers. You may use one of the sermon resources in Section IV.

STEPS MEN CAN TAKE TO END SEXISM

1. Don't interrupt women when they speak, control their space, or assume they need your protection. Focus on the effect of your actions, rather than on the intent.
2. Support women's leadership and help elect progressive women to political office.
3. Support women's equality in education, sports, and in the workplace.
4. Don't condone, laugh at, or tell sexist (racist or homophobic) jokes or stories.
5. Don't make fun of or invalidate anyone's emotional reactions.
6. Listen, believe, and be accountable to women and their stories. When confronted on your own sexism (racism, homophobia etc.) listen instead of getting defensive.
7. Tell the women and men in your life that you love them, out loud.
8. Be the kind of father you always wanted to have.
9. Be the kind of partner you would want your children's partner to be.
10. Share responsibility for birth control and reproductive health and safety.
11. Speak up when you see violence or abuse directed at women or children, in real life, or in the media. Donate to a local rape crisis, sexual assault, and domestic violence programme.
12. Oppose pornography and the sex industry.

(The National Organization for Men Against Sexism - NOMAS, USA)

Setting goals and objectives for a project

Defining the goal

A project should clearly state its goals or aims, so that it can be clearly understood. Goals are broad, general statements about what you want to do in response to the problems you have identified.

How do you develop and define a goal or aim for a project? The goal of a project should be to solve the problem or problems described. For example, if one of the options you have identified is to enable the church to work effectively with community groups on HIV/AIDS, this particular goal could read:

“to develop a gender-sensitive strategy for the church to work effectively with community groups on the issue of Gender Based Violence.”

A goal is the broad and long-range accomplishment that you wish to achieve. To determine your goal you must answer the question “Who are you trying to reach and what are you trying to accomplish?”

Developing objectives

Objectives are what the project expects to do in order to attain its goal. An objective is like a compass – it points the way to achieving the goal. Objectives provide specific directions or actions that will make your goal statements a reality.

Objectives are expressed in terms of expected outcomes or results – what will be the result and how long this take will – and clearly state the connection to the project goal.

Objectives should be **clear, specific, measurable and observable** so that you know when you have achieved them. Well-defined objectives should describe clearly and concisely what you want to accomplish: what will be done how it will be measured, and when it will be completed.

Remember that good objectives are:

- S* *Specific actions to help accomplish the project goal*
- M* *Measurable or observable*
- A* *Answers to the questions of who, what, when, where and how*
- R* *Realistic in recognizing the concrete things a project can actually accomplish*
- T* *Time-limited*

SECTION 4

BIBLE STUDIES AND COMMENTARIES

Bible Study on Sexuality

Bible Study on Male-Female Equality in Christ

Bible Study on the P/J/E Creation Story

Bible Study on Marriage - "Subordination and Equality in Conversation"

Bible Study on Luke 8: 40 – 56 - "What If?"

SERMON NOTES

Gleaning With Ruth: The Search for Redemptive Masculinities

The Joseph Model of Masculinity

Violence Begets Violence

"Blessed and Highly Favoured"

LITURGICAL RESOURCE

Towards Awareness Healing and Reconciliation

GLOSSARY

REFERENCES

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BIBLE STUDY

SEXUALITY

Genesis 19: 1-38

Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon

In many parts of the world, the Bible has been used to drive a wedge between the spirit and the body. This dichotomy has been ingrained into the thinking and practice of human society creating problems with how individuals view and treat their own bodies and those of others, particularly those of women. Our lives, bodies and our spirituality, our understanding of God are all intricately interwoven and inseparable. Human beings, both male and female are all created in the Image of God. Thus, gender is not a mere biological accident or social construction. The contrast and complementarity between the man and the woman reveal that gender is part of the goodness of God's creation. Efforts to redefine or redesign gender are directly contrary to the Bible's affirmation of maleness and femaleness as proper distinctions. God's glory is seen in the maleness of the man and the femaleness of the woman. Embedded within creation is also the fundamental desire for connection and longing to be in relationship with another. The biblical writers affirm sexuality as a part of our embodied existence. As human beings we are sexual creatures, and as sexual creatures we are called to honour God with our bodies.

Given the controversies over same-sex marriage, homosexuality, and gender-bending³⁰ now raging in our cultures, what is the biblical pattern for human sexuality? Before we proceed any further, we need to acknowledge that the hermeneutical issues surrounding the current debate about human sexuality are related, not to the exegesis of individual passages, but to the approach that participants to the debate have taken to the Bible as a whole. That the Bible is the primary source for theology is undisputed. But because of sharply differing approaches, understandings and interpretations, the resulting theological weavings are varied. Hence, a primary point of departure in how we think about sexuality and respond to the many issues related to it stems from this fundamental disagreement. We disagree as to which insights from the Bible should be applied to a

³⁰ Gender bending is an informal term used to refer to the active transgressing, or "bending," expected gender roles.

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particular social issue and further disagree about the nature of Biblical authority and how the Bible ought to be interpreted and applied to social concerns. Consequently, one must recognize one's own presuppositions in interpreting the Bible and the basis on which one chooses Biblical passages to inform thinking.

What is your approach or attitude towards the authority of Scripture? Consider for example Lev. 15:16- 24; Lev. 18:19; 15:18- 24; Deut. 25:5- 10; to what extent are these texts considered binding? If 'yes' why? If 'not' why not? How do we choose what is binding and what is not? Discuss.

Genesis chapter 19 is a controversial text and raises many issues related to sexual relations, homosexuality and incest.

The context of the narrative

The narrative in Genesis 19 is a part of the larger Abraham cycle of stories. The central character in this chapter is Lot whose story begins when he accompanies Abraham from Ur to Canaan (Gen 11: 31- 12:9). In due course, they realize that the land cannot support both of their herds and hence they decide to part ways. While Abraham chooses to settle in Canaan, Lot decides to settle "among the cities of the plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom³¹ (Gen 13: 12). The Sodomites are already at this point identified as "wicked, great sinners against the Lord." (Gen 13:13). In chapter 18 we are informed that Abraham and Sarah were visited by two messengers who reveal that there was an "outcry" that had come to the Lord (Gen 18: 21) and hence Sodom and Gomorrah were going to be destroyed. Abraham appeals on behalf of Sodom and convinces the Lord (*notice the apparent integration of the 'messengers' and the 'Lord' by the narrator*), that the city must be spared even if there are ten righteous people found in Sodom (Gen 18: 32). Genesis 20 picks up again the story of Abraham and his attempt to pass his wife off as his sister while residing as an alien in the region of the Negeb (Gen 20:1ff).

Read Genesis 19:1- 38: Share and discuss your impressions. What have you heard about this narrative? What are the main issues arising of the text? What are the questions? List these. What aspects of the narrative energize you or elate you? If so which and why? Do any features of the story disturb you? What in particular upsets you? Why?

Let us now study the text a little more closely.

Divide into 5 groups and each group is assigned a portion of the text:

Group 1: Gen 19:1- 3a; and 19: 3b- 11

Group 2: Gen 19: 12- 14 and 15- 16

Group 3: Gen 19: 17- 23 and 24- 26

Group 4: Gen 19: 27- 29 and 30- 33

Group 5: Gen 19: 34- 36 and 37- 38

31 Sodom and Gomorrah are cities located in the plain west of the Dead Sea in the Jordan valley.

Each group will study the portion of the text assigned to them and seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the setting of each section? Where is the action located? Where to and from where do the characters move? When does the event take place? How long does it last? What are the social circumstances of the protagonists?
2. What is happening here? Why does it happen? And how does it happen?
3. Is there a problem? What is causing the complication? How is the issue resolved?
4. What issues related to sexuality—male or female, does the section address?

Each group in order will share their findings and reflections with the larger group.

The story and the many gaps/silences

Lot is the central figure (*the only named character!*) in this chapter, although in the rest of Genesis he is portrayed as secondary to Abraham. Here he is a well intentioned man, authoritative and active. But the chapter ends by describing him in a rather pathetic state.

The two messengers arrive in Sodom in the evening and find Lot at the gate (*Was Lot just relaxing by the gate? Was he expecting them? The text does not mention that there was anyone else at the gate*). Despite their hesitance, Lot insists that they accept his hospitality and upon arrival in his home sets out to prepare a hurried meal (*compare this with the meal prepared by Abraham in the previous chapter*) for his guests (*Who did the cooking? Did Lot do the actual cooking or was it his wife and children? Why does the text speak as though Lot prepared the meal?*). They are then disturbed by a mob, in fact the entire male population, “the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house” (Gen 19:4) and (*Does this include the sons-in-law?*) demanded that the two men be brought out (*How did the men come to know of these visitors in Lot’s house?*) so that they “may know them” (*‘know’ here is often understood as sexual knowledge. Do you agree?*). Lot begs the mob (*By addressing the mob as ‘my brothers’, Lot claims a position of legal equality, and appeals to their sense of responsibility*), to spare the messengers who were “under the shelter of his roof” and offers in their stead his two daughters (*No names mentioned! Why? Give them names. Discuss the significance of naming or having a name.*), “who have not known a man” (*Could the daughters and the wife hear this? How might the daughters and the wife react to this? Why did the messengers {Lord} not express any objection to this? What might the reaction of the sons in law be if they were part of the mob?*). But the people of Sodom are enraged that Lot, a sojourner, an alien was playing judge (*to play ‘judge’ - What does this mean? Lot as an alien or ‘ger’ was not allowed to host strangers or visitors without permission - an expectation of every ‘ger’ for reasons of security. Was Lot not aware of this rule?*). They pushed him against the door which Lot shut behind him (*why did he do this?*) and while attempting to break the door, the messengers who were inside, pulled Lot also inside and shut the door. They struck the men outside with blindness that they were no longer able to find the door (Gen 19: 10- 11).

The messengers declare the destruction of Sodom—“because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord” (v 13). Lot tries to warn his sons- in- law (*they were only betrothed*

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and yet already considered as sons in law. They were obviously local men but their names are not given either. But sons in law are significant, perhaps even more important than daughters since they guarantee acceptance of Lot in the community of the Sodomites. The daughters are only incidental). The fact that he does not give them an explanation as to why this will happen may have contributed to his sons-in-law not taking him too seriously. In the morning, Lot leaves with his daughters and his wife (Again no name is given! If you were to name her - what would it be and why?), albeit with some hesitancy. He 'lingered' (understandable; natural reaction?) and the messengers had to "seize" them all and bring them outside the city (Gen 19: 16) (Why was Lot hesitant?).

Lot expresses thanks but refuses to fully obey the instructions given to him. He suggests instead that he go to a little city close by - eventually named Zoar (Notice how he speaks for himself - "Let me escape there...and my life will be saved." Are these the words of a righteous man? Did Lot even attempt to plead on behalf of Sodom - the place that gave him hospitality and shelter? Perhaps the messengers were rather overbearing and hence Lot could do little). The messengers comply. On the journey, Lot's wife looked back and is turned into a pillar of salt (Why did she turn back? Did she not hear the instruction? Was her looking back an act of rebellion and subversion or was it foolishness? Why a pillar of salt? What is the significance of 'salt' here?).

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed and Abraham, from a distance, watched them burn. It was on account of Abraham's intercession (chapter 18) that Lot was spared (suggesting that Lot was the righteous one? Was he? Was Lot rescued on his own merit or because of Abraham's loyalty to God? The text gives us no clues to Lot's or his daughters' reaction to the losses they have suffered - of life, of property and of community).

Lot and his daughters left Zoar out of fear (Reason for fear unknown. Were the people at Zoar suspicious of Lot? After all, he and his daughters were the only survivors from Sodom! How did they escape the fate?), and settled in the hills, in fact, in a cave! The two daughters, (silent until this point and only objects of others' actions and words until now), hatch a plan to seduce their father. (Were they angry with their father for bringing them to this state? Did the experience make them realize that their father neither respected nor cared for them?). The plan voiced by the older one, (Obviously more skilled than the younger - thoughtful, perhaps cunning, and determined in deducing and in executing of the plan. She has been identified as a 'trickster'!), provides the reason for the seduction—"there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the world...we will lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father" (vs. 31- 32) and the younger daughter agrees (silent, passive and non-resistant or is she equally active to the older one?).

Each daughter seduces the father over two nights respectively, after getting him drunk on wine and on neither occasion did Lot "know when she lay down or when she rose" (What resolve on the part of the daughters! Was there really no man left besides Lot? Or did they think of themselves as women cursed (having escaped Sodom) whom no man would entertain? Was it need of sexual experience or progeny (descendants) or both that led to this plan? Why was preservation of progeny so important for the daughters? Was their concern for themselves, or the father or both? Was their act justified?). Both daughters become pregnant by the father

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(Imagine what Lot's reaction was when he found out that they were pregnant?) The older daughter bore Moab and the younger bore Benammi, the ancestors of the tribes of Moab and Ammon (vs. 37- 38).

What is Genesis 19 about?

There are several ways of understanding what this story is about: It is a story about Lot and his family; or a story of Sodom—its judgment and annihilation; or it is an etiological narrative (etiological refers to causes of various phenomenon) here to explain the origins of Moab and Ammon. The last has gained favor particularly when seen in relation to Abraham. As Abraham is the 'father of the nations,' the origin of all nations is somehow linked to Abraham or his family line (here to Lot, his nephew). It has also been suggested that the chapter is more a primeval story about 'new life after annihilation'—children are born and the line of the family is assured. Still others have proposed that this narrative seeks to highlight issues arising from urban living/city life over against nomadic/ unsettled living. Whatever the case may be, the many gaps and silences in the text stir the imaginations of the reader and interpreter which have led to multiple interpretations.

What is the sin of Sodom?

The text has been a primary text is condemning acts of homosexual behavior based on the assumption that the sin of Sodom is 'homosexuality'. Interpreters not in favor of such a selective reading, identify the sin of Sodom as 'inhospitality'. Sodom is condemned because of its inhospitality to the messengers/ guests of Lot. This latter reading too misses out on the implications of Lot's offer of his daughters to the enraged mob. Let us reconsider both these positions:

Both positions mentioned above are interpretations. Sodom is first introduced as "wicked, great sinners against the Lord" in Gen 13: 13 (compare 13: 10). It is targeted for punishment and destruction because of the "outcry against its people" and the gravity of their sin (Gen 18: 20; Gen 19: 13). Other than this general accusation against Sodom, the narrator gives no clues regarding the specificity of Sodom's sin³². What was the 'outcry' based on? Who is the one who is crying? There are no specific indications in the book of Genesis. Were the ones crying out, those living already in Sodom or someone from outside? If they were Sodomites, then they along with the oppressors were all decimated. But these rather ambiguous, generalized accusations in chapter 13 and 18 already influence us, the readers, and arouse negative impressions regarding Sodom by the time we arrive in Chapter 19. We are, along with the messengers, ready to see Sodom burn! Sodom's sin whether it is 'inhospitality' or 'homosexuality' is derived from the sequence of events in Genesis 19 and then "retrojected" into our interpretations of the references in chapter 13 and 18. What was the author/narrator's intention is projecting Sodom in this manner? To prepare us for events in Genesis 19? Was Sodom really an inhospitable city? Was everyone in Sodom really deserving of the fate meted out to them by YHWH?

Lot is living as an alien in Sodom. He is a *ger*, an alien resident, because of the differences in

³² Cf. Isaiah 1:10; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:49 which speak of the divine judgment upon cities. The crimes warranting divine judgment are varied.

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race and ethnicity between him and the people of Sodom. An individual becomes a *ger* usually on account of famine or war. But this was not the case with Lot. But as *ger* he had placed himself in the protective custody of the people of Sodom. His status as *ger* or resident alien and the privileges that come with it are dependent on the hospitality that the ancient West Asia was known for. He continues to be a *ger* despite offering his daughters in marriage to local men. Sodom offers him and his family hospitality. In response, he was expected to honor the rules and regulations of being a *ger*. He was not allowed to host visitors without the knowledge of the city. Yet, he does. The text does not inform us that there were others at the gate when the visitors arrived. Would the city have turned on the messengers had it been informed that there were guests requesting hospitality? Was it Lot's secretive behavior which incited the mob? Could Lot's behaviour have raised doubts or questions of security which thus enraged the mob? It is possible that the narrator wanted to stress that cities are inhospitable, filled with people suffering from multiple forms of insecurity, fear, suspicion, and violence including sexual violence. Fear compels people to do strange things. How else could Lot have dealt with the situation besides abandoning the sacred responsibility of protecting his daughters in favour of the sacred code of hospitality! He could have offered himself perhaps?

The notion that the men of the city wanted to have sex with the messengers is based on the interpretation of the Hebrew word *yada*, meaning 'know' (v. 5). That the mob was seeking sexual access is also derived from the fact that Lot, in response, offers his daughters. Since the mob rejects this offer, it has been construed that the mob was seeking exclusively, sex with males³³. This interpretation has held sway for decades, especially in Christian circles, and has been uncontested until recently.

One question still remains. Could Lot have contributed to arousing the sin of Sodom? Inhospitability to Lot was not the issue. The author of Genesis 19 does not identify Lot as a righteous man. His actions do not necessarily stand out as being 'righteous' or good³⁴. The questions that arise out of this suspicion are: Was Lot, even as *ger*, hospitable to the people of Sodom?' How did he acquire the land on which he pitched his tent (cf. Genesis 13:10, 13)? Was Lot unpopular? Did the people grow suspicious of him over time? Was this the cause for the very extreme action against his visitors? I have no answers. But I just wonder why a city that was hospitable to Lot was inhospitable towards his visitors? What might have triggered such a response? These questions do not in any way seek to justify the actions of the Sodomites.

Genesis 19 and issues related to sexuality

Our task here is to primarily address issues of sexuality arising from the text. Genesis 19 has been used as a key text in discussions on homosexuality—sex between males—at the expense of other equally important and significant issues such as Lot's offer of his virgin daughters, or the seduction of Lot by his daughters later in the narrative. Two issues related to sexuality stand out as central and crucial in this chapter and they involve perhaps the most vulnerable in any society.

³³ This is unlike the story in Judges 19 where the concubine is offered instead of the guest and she is accepted.

³⁴ See, Sirach 10:6; 1 Clement 11:1; 2 Peter 2:7-8 - all of which speak of Lot as a very righteous man.

A. The sexual and physical vulnerability of the 'stranger' or the 'other' and women

Traditional and popular interpretations of this chapter focus, as mentioned earlier, on the desire of the crowd to have sex with the males visiting Lot. Their lust for and fascination with the strangers is highlighted and the destruction that befalls Sodom is seen as the logical punishment for this 'sin' on the part of the Sodomites. The chapter and its interpretations are cited as a warning and have therefore worked against any efforts to include gay and lesbian people as full citizens in societies and in communities of faith. As queer interpreters would claim, 'this is a Christian homophobic myth.' Instead, what the chapter highlights is the sexual vulnerability of 'strangers' or those considered 'other' - whether male or female. Sodom's sin was its aggression towards the stranger. The assault of strangers without knowing fully if they pose any threat (in this case their fear was well founded I guess!) is condemned. Acts of violence and cruelty against the stranger, sexual rape and abuse are ways in which the dominant secure control and give vent to their fears. It has been suggested that the mob in Gen 19, by commanding Lot to 'stand back!' were actually intending to rape his daughters and the messengers. Lot was an alien, his daughters were therefore aliens and so also were his guests. Dishonoring his daughters and his guests was the ultimate form of dishonoring Lot. By raping and sexually violating the stranger, they warn those considered, 'other' to keep away from their territories. This was probably a way of ensuring that Lot left Sodom.

Lot offers his daughters to the mob in the place of the two male messengers who were equally under his protection. Lot fails in his duty as father and guardian, to safeguard the wellbeing of his unmarried daughters. If we are true to the text, we cannot but see the irony in his actions or words and the moral discrepancy between his respect for the messengers and the offer of his daughters to be raped. This begs the question, 'how is he different from the Sodomites?' The Sodomites saw no problem in violating the messengers and Lot saw no problem in a mob of men violating his daughters? He gives special attention to the masculinity and honour of his guests over against that of his daughters who by virtue of being women had no voice, rights or power to act at this point - they are only 'bargaining chips in a conflict among males.'

The rape of men is a way of 'feminizing them' which is unacceptable, for by penetrating a male, he is rendered emasculate, as a blurring of the line between male and female. Hence, the attention to this chapter³⁵ by those who uphold patriarchy, and the subjugation of the female in all its varied forms. There is enough evidence for the manner in which the 'stranger' is considered sexually appealing, attractive, exotic and this coupled with perhaps suspicion and fear, the need to dominate, contributes to sexual aggression by the perpetrator. Our societies today are full of examples of such experiences—of both women and men—experiencing violation in situations where they are considered the 'outsider'. Privileges and handicaps are heterogeneous, i.e. they are varied and distributed unevenly among categories of both men and women. Strange men are susceptible but not as much as women, particularly 'strange women', the 'foreign woman' who are all vulnerable to sexual abuse and constructions of sexuality that render them as dispensable, objects for pleasure and domination in a highly

³⁵ Judges 19 has the rape of a woman and her subsequent death but has not received as much attention as Genesis 19.

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misogynistic culture (hatred of women). What this chapter makes clear is that rape, or the intention to rape, is a metaphor, as the feared and fantasized possibility in the scenarios of all struggles. It is a manifestation of aggression, the index of social lawlessness.

B. Women's sexuality for survival

In the beginning of the chapter we learn that Lot offers his daughters to the mob and this is indicative of his position/stance on the sexuality of his daughters. It is certain that he considered himself as the owner and controller of his daughters' sexuality, a right given to him by the prevailing culture. In this last part of the chapter the daughters' take center stage. By giving the daughters center stage, it is possible that the author is trying to minimize Lot's role and therefore culpability in the incestuous act! There is little to stop one from wondering if a man who was ready to give up his daughters to be raped by a bunch of raving men, would not himself, consider the possibility of having sex with them. Maybe it was his own desire to have progeny (descendents) that led to his getting drunk and under the cover of intoxication rape his daughters? The narrator seems to protest a little too much when he repeats that Lot did not "know when she lay down or when she rose"! Could not the concerns which are voiced by the older daughter, crossed even his mind? His survival and the continuance of his name depended now on his daughters for sure!

The author seems to very cleverly place the recognition of this need in the minds and hearts and actions of the daughters and absolves Lot of any foul play. It is interesting that this need for progeny is always the agenda of women in the Hebrew Bible (Tamar in Gen 38, Ruth, Rebecca in Gen 27), as though men did not care about such things. This cannot be real for sure. But women seek to 'make seed live,' in the Hebrew Bible. This stems from their social construction as women in patriarchy, as baby making machines, as carriers of the seed of men. But in all cases the seed of men 'is the central theme of control and inheritance.' Although the culture often stresses that women had no control or initiative, in these instances alone, women are given voice, and agency. I believe that men were as aware of the need for children, their significance in life and even beyond death. But in situations when boundaries had to be transgressed, or customs/laws had to be subverted, in issues related to having children, women are projected as the protagonists.

The Hebrew text therefore always portrays women as those who think constantly about having children, particularly male children, for their own recognition in society and for the continuance of the family line. This is so intense a need that women engage in acts that revolt against prevailing standards of morality and customs, and this seems to be condoned on the grounds that it was for the sake of progeny and survival; and laws pertaining to incest are overlooked or ignored.

In any case, the daughters who were passive, silent, captive to their father's will, now become active in the text and assume a measure of subjectivity. The daughters come up with a plan in order to address a situation in which there is no other male who could give them a child, since all had died in the catastrophe; or because they were the survivors of the catastrophe and hence shunned; or because the father was too old to be remarried and could therefore have no descendants. They exercise initiative and use their sexuality for the purposes of their

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own survival and the continuance of their father's line using his own seed. They render him inebriated and in a sort of reversal, take control of events and have sex with their father. Many interpreters condemn these women for their action, as unbecoming, disgraceful, as being sexual offenders influenced by a sexually offending father, and the like. The text could give and reinforce the impression that daughters/women are to be blamed for cases of incest. This is far from reality, when it is often men who initiate incestuous acts. But similar indictments are not made against Tamar, or Ruth. The directness and the lack of finesse in the actions of the daughters seem to have hurt the sensibilities of commentators, men and women alike.

But one can read this part of the text liberatively for the sake of women since these daughters assert power, and eventually become the foremothers of two tribes namely, the Moabites and the Ammonites. Naamah, one of the wives of King Solomon is an Ammonite (cf. 1 Kings 14:12, 31; 2 Chron12:13), and she gives birth to Rehoboam who becomes king after Solomon and is placed in the line of the Messiah (through her son Rehoboam cf. Matt 1:7), along with Ruth the Moabitess (Matt 1:5). That is quite an achievement! These sons born to these daughters are identified as the fathers of the tribes, not Lot. Lot thereby fades from the story and is 'displaced by the daughters and by the sons he must have thought he would never have.' Intentionally or otherwise, these two daughters save Lot and his family line not very unlike the messengers saving Lot and his family.

Conclusion

Sexuality includes much more than sexual anatomy or sex- role attitudes. It is the recognition of the sacredness of the body and the totality of a person's identity and being for the good of the other. It has to do with our capacity for relationships unaffected by power, our desire to be connected, and our capacity and longing to be in meaningful relation with another irrespective of their sex and sexual orientation and the need to transcend one's separateness and be in community with others and with God. Genesis 19 provides the reader with the opportunity to reflect on the issues of human sexuality and the problems and injustices that are perpetuated by certain constructions of sexuality. Even though the destruction of Sodom is central to the narrative, the chapter reminds us that, relationships are important, between citizens and strangers, between fathers and daughters and mothers and daughters, and between the deity and the worshipper.

Questions for further reflection

1. What do you perceive to be the messengers' perception of female sexuality in the narrative?
2. Is there a construction/model of sexuality in the person of Lot's wife? If so what is it and how helpful is it?
3. How can we use this text to correct/counter prevailing attitudes to human sexuality?



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MALE-FEMALE EQUALITY IN CHRIST

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28 NIV)

Galatians 3: 23-29 (also read Genesis 1:26-28).

Dale Bisnauth

Introduction

The Epistle of Galatians is a passionate appeal to the Galatian Christians to hold fast to the gospel as it was communicated to them by St. Paul, as a vindication of his claim to be a genuine apostle of Jesus Christ. Later in Chapter 5:1 he summarizes this: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be bound again by a yoke of slavery”. Slavery was that of the Law which the Judaizing element in the Galatian congregation wanted to impose on the mainly Gentile congregation. It was within that general context that the apostle made the statement of 3:28 - a statement hailed as Paul’s finest on the issue of male- female relationships, the *Magna Carta* of this relationship according to some.

Male/female relationships

Elsewhere in his epistles, Paul seemed to have expressed other views on those relationships. In 1 Corinthians 11:2- 16, for example, in which he deals with the problem caused by women leading in worship with uncovered head, he all but says that the woman is subordinate to man, and for that reason should, in his presence, as a sign of her recognition of male superiority veil her head. But he does conclude, somewhat lamely: “In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman” (v.11).

In his epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians (assuming the Paul wrote those letters and that he did so while he was under house- arrest in Rome), he advises: “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church”. (Ephesians 5:15; Col. 3:18). But he also asks husbands to love their wives (Eph. 5:25, Col. 3:19), a thing unheard of at that time, in that culture.

Bible Study

Equality

But here in Galatians 3:28, the apostle writes: “ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NIV).

This was not intended as a general rule for all of humankind. At this time, the apostle’s concern was for those who have been baptized into Christ and, by that token, have put on Christ. Among them, he tells the Galatian church (and those of us who have been baptized into Christ - the Church today), that there is no longer any distinction, any notion of superiority/ inferiority between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Today for us, we could say that in the Church there is no difference among any of the members; they have all become children of God by the grace of God alone. All are equally debtors to that grace. Equality is grounded in the acceptance of that grace, through faith.

As far as the male- female relationship is concerned, there is resonance here in Paul with the Creation Story of Genesis 1:26f: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness’ ... So God created man in God’s own Image, in the Image of God, God created him; male and female God created them”. Simultaneously! Neither can claim superiority in status by virtue of primacy in creation.



THE CREATION STORY: P/J/E accounts

Genesis 2:18- 25 (also read Genesis 1: 26-28)

Dale Bisnauth

Any consideration of the theme: “Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities”, will have to address some of our biblical heritage which has been used to legitimize and reinforce masculine hegemony in the male- female relationship. The second Genesis story of creation (Genesis 2:18- 23), particularly, has been identified as part of the heritage that has been so used; so, too, have been some of the letters either written by St. Paul himself or have been ascribed to him. The discussion of the “Pauline” corpus is done elsewhere in this Manual. This article will restrict itself to the second creation story.

It may be useful to remind ourselves that Genesis does not pretend to represent a literal bit of historical reporting. Biblical scholars, including exegetes and theologians, classify much of Genesis (certainly up to chapter 11) as a collection of stories which purport to explain the genesis or origins of things, including the origins of man and woman, in a poetic form or in the form of a parable. Viewed like this, the alleged contradiction between Genesis 1:27 which speaks of the simultaneous creation of male and female, and Genesis 2:18- 25 which speaks of their successive creation, is rendered as inconsequential as indeed are the Creation Stories themselves. This provides the evidence in the ongoing debate on Creationism versus Evolution.

The question of authorship

Who wrote Genesis? Archaeologists, historians, philologists and biblical scholars tell us that the Genesis stories were collected during the period of the Babylonian captivity and written in the format with which we are familiar. They came from three sources which are represented by the letters P (for the Priestly source), J (for the Yahwist source) and E (for the Elohist source).

The Priestly (P) account of the Creation story (Gen. 1-2:4a):

- *👤 The original state of the earth is a watery chaos
- *👤 The work of creation is divided into six (6) separate operations, each assigned to one day.
- *👤 The order of creation is:
 - (a) Light
 - (b) The firmament - heaven
 - (c) The dry land - earth. Separation of the earth from the sea
 - (d) Vegetation - three orders
 - (e) The heavenly bodies - sun, moon and stars
 - (f) Birds and fishes
 - (g) Animals and man - male and female human, created simultaneously.

The Yahwist, Elohist (J-E) accounts (2:4b-25) is as follows:

- *👤 The original state of the earth is a waterless waste, without vegetation.
- *👤 This account has no reference to time
- *👤 The order of creation is:
 - a) Man, made of dust, with the breath of Yahweh blown into his nostrils
 - b) The Garden (Paradise) - to the east - in Eden
 - c) Trees of every kind, including the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - d) Animals, beasts and birds (no mention of fishes)
 - e) Woman, created out of man.

Comments on 2:18-25 the J-E Account of Creation

While the Priestly writer shows humans within the purpose of God, that is, what God meant him/her to be, the Yahwist proceeds to show, by way of symbols, constituents of man's nature. (Interestingly, while the Priestly writer uses the word *bara* for the divine activity in making man, the Yahwist uses the word *yasar* for the creative act. *Yasar* is a word which is used for the work of the potter). The Yahwist represents man as shaped by Yahweh in the way a potter shapes his vessel out of clay. As Paul was to say much later "the first man was from the earth, a man of dust" (1 Corinth. 15:47). Man is flesh with all the possibilities of knowledge, desire, and choice, and also with the possibilities of failure and error.

The Priestly writer depicts God as taking counsel with God's heavenly court about the creation of the human, "Let us make man" (Gen. 1:25) as part of God's divine plan. Then, God created in one act "male and female created he them and God called their name Adam". The Yahwist,

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however, represents man as at first “alone”, a state which Yahweh says is not good. Man in himself alone is incomplete, without his counterpart. He needs the woman to complete and complement him in a way none of the animals previously created could”. ..but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him. (2:20b).

So, in one of the most profound images in the Bible, according to the Yahwist, Yahweh builds woman out of man's essential stuff and, in the process, establishes the most intimate of human relationships with all its potential for good and evil. There is no suggestion here of superiority/inferiority; no possible indication that priority in creation equals superiority in status can be derived from the text. Only complementarity to make good the man's deficiency manifested in his loneliness.

In the text, the Yahwist paints a vivid picture of the man fulfilling his function as head of the created order by giving names to each of the living creatures who, like himself, were formed out of the dust of the earth. The act of naming is a very important symbol; it has about it the element of creative activity. In the Yahwist narrative, the man *ha'adham* gives two significant names to the woman *ishshah* whom Yahweh had made to be his counterpart. The name *ishshah* indicates her intimate relation to himself. She is *Ishshah* because she is taken out of *Isha* as the generic Adam names himself. Her second name is Eve given after the Fall and the break-up of the original divine order. It is a name of hope. The woman contains the seed of life; she is to be “the mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20). What is the precise significance of the “rib”? It may be futile to speculate. What is more important is that at this point in the story, the sexual factor recedes into the background. Woman is not a man without a penis, as Sigmund Freud was to crudely put it. The emphasis is not on their anatomical differences; it is on their essential relatedness. Woman is taken from the man in the sense that, being distinct from him, yet she is like him, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, an equal partner in the male-female relationship. The movement is from sex to gender.

The language (“bone”, “flesh”, “rib”) may be drawn from the physical realm indicating a bodily likeness between the man and woman, but this should not be understood that the woman is like the man only at the biological level. She is described by God, her Maker, as a “helper fit for him”; the preposition translated “for” meaning “corresponding to”, “equal and adequate to” or, to translate literally, “help of his like”. As soon as he sees her, the man recognized himself and rhapsodizes: At last one of my own kind. Or, as one woman theologian puts it: it is when he names her “woman” it is at that very moment that he names himself “man”.

In the story/narrative there is no suggestion that the woman is a helper in one particular way, either as house-keeper, or, as Augustine put it: the bearer of children. To suggest that the woman was made for child bearing in an exclusive way that bars her from the larger partnership of human life is an arrogant, chauvinistic conclusion that finds no support in the text. Note, also, that the word translated “help” in Genesis 2:18, 20 is not used here or elsewhere to designate a subordinate. The truth is that it is sometimes (as in Psalm 146:5) the word “help” is used to describe God who is humanity's help in times of need. A further note: in Genesis 1:26, God takes counsel with God-self before creating man, commending us to accept the dignity of our nature as human. Similarly, in Genesis 2:18 the Creator takes counsel

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of God- self in creating the woman in particular, commending to us the dignity of her nature as female.

The J-E account of the creation of humans is often contrasted with that of the P account. While Genesis 2:18- 23 speaks of the creation of the male and female as “successive”, Genesis 1:27 speaks of it as “simultaneous”. Whatever the alleged differences, these are neither irreconcilable nor great. As Jesus was to declare: the Creator made people male and female (Matt. 19:4). It is only when people argue that the prior creation of the male qualifies him to be ascribed a status of superiority in the male- female relationship, that the “differences” assume proportions unwarranted by the texts themselves.

Questions for discussion

1. How significant are the differences in the P account and the J- E account of the creation of the male and female in Genesis, 1 and 2?
2. In what sense(s) are we to understand the woman as a suitable companion to the man? (Genesis 2:20).



“SUBORDINATION AND EQUALITY IN CONVERSATION”

Ephesians 5:22 - 32

Norbert Stephens

There is little debate that the subject of marriage within Christian circles is a matter of great concern for a number of reasons. Demographic research done in my country Jamaica indicates that a marriage starting out today has a less than 60% chance of survival. Other research would indicate that this percentage is lower among committed Christians. This is supported by the strong emphasis within Christian circles on family life to include marriage preparation, marriage support and marital therapy.

The Bible is not silent on marriage between males and females, indeed there are over 500 references to marriage in the Old and New Testaments combined. There are a number of texts that are used by many in a number of cultures to offer guidance for couples, yet the major texts often appear out of step with our world today in terms of gender issues, including patriarchy, power and authority. A reading of the major biblical texts related to this topic suggests a dominant role for the man and a subordinate role for the woman. In Genesis 2:18, 21- 24 the woman is identified as the helper for the man, in 1 Peter 3: 1- 5, 7 the wife is told to accept the authority of her husband. In the passage of focus for this study, Ephesians 5: 22- 32, Paul declares that “the husband is the head of the wife.”

Background to Ephesians

This letter was written to a newly formed Christian community of Jews and Gentiles challenging them to maintain the gift of unity enabled by the ministry of Christ in the world. The first three chapters focus on theology outlining the role and purpose of Christ in redeeming the world and establishing divine unity. The last three chapters outline the ethical ways in which Christians must live out their newly found faith in Christ. Our text falls within the ethical portion of the letter.

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Chapter 5:22- 32 is basically a household code which borrows from Colossians 3:18- 4:1 and patterns similar codes as in 1 Peter 2: 18-3:7 and Titus 2:1- 10. This highlights the fact that in the eastern culture of the time a family was not confined to husband, wife and children but included servants and slaves as well. This code was probably borrowed from Hellenistic Jewish sources and was offered as response to tensions within the new community. All parties here are Christians, however, the subordinate party is usually addressed first (note that in 1 Peter there is no word to the slaves and in Colossians 3 there is a single sentence to each except the slaves). The parallel between the husband and Christ, both as heads of wife/Church, suggests an organization of subordination. The other codes invoke Christ as Lord to be obeyed or as a model of suffering in unjust treatment (Col. 3:23; 1 Pet. 2:18- 25).

The passage fits with the convention of the time where the topic of home management was addressed to the male so as to emphasize the connection between harmonious growing of households and the ability to rule. Verse 22 lacks a verb the participle being *subject* (v. 21). So verses 21 and 22 should read: *“Be subject one to another, wives to husbands...”*. This is the same verb used for subjection to authorities and masters or voluntary subordination on the part of those who might otherwise command respect (1 Peter 5.5). The statement, ‘the husband is the head of the wife’ indicates hierarchical subordination and reinforces this by comparing the husband’s role with Christ’s in relation to the Church. The question here is, how far should we take this metaphor? What is the meaning of “in everything”? How do we satisfy those who hold the view that the wife’s role is to ensure that she doesn’t lead her husband astray, a throwback to the fall recorded in Genesis?

The lengthy address to the husband, despite its seeming redemptive elements serves to reinforce the subordination of the wife to him. The husband is urged to love his wife but the text omits the Colossians 3:19 ‘never treat her harshly.’ The body of Christ motif points to Christ’s self- sacrifice as a model to be imitated. But if we examine this closer the idea promoted here is that of a church brought into being that is holy and unblemished – a bride prepared for her wedding. This elevates Christ’s self- giving love. We cannot escape the idea of a husband whose task is to improve his bride. The convention at the time was that the man’s role was that of provider and nourisher. But while it is clear that the husband is not the one who is responsible for his wife’s holiness; he is however given the responsibility for instructing her in holiness. What does this suggest regarding her state prior to marriage?

The marriage union (two shall become one flesh v. 19) is described as a ‘Great Mystery’. Mystery has been interpreted in a variety of ways: Gnostic Sacrament – bridal chamber – reparation of woman’s fallen state [Eve] or as Paul’s ethical correction of immoral Christians 1 Cor. 7:1- 31 reminding them that they belong to the body of Christ and should live as such). Ephesians however limits the term to the relationship between Christ and the Church, an organic relationship of unity which ought to be reflected in the marriage union. Modern translations offer the softer ‘respect’ instead of reverence or fear. The idea here however, is that of deferring to another in authority where subordination is required. The relationship between wives and husbands is different from that of husband/master and slave, for love is the basis of concern for the wife’s well- being. The code pits male power, control, authority (love, instruct, care) versus female subordination (submit, respect) nowhere is the wife told to love her husband.

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The body metaphor no longer reflects experience or ideals of marriage for many Christians. While conservatives argue that if these household codes are taken literally there would be less divorce and social disorder. Liberals on the other hand argue that the text is often used to exonerate abuse against women. Moderates hold the view that both share responsibility according to their gifts. The concept of a partnership offered by moderates is a more desirable principle in marriage.

Questions for discussion:

1. With what do we replace patriarchal hierarchy determined by gender? Is it complete reversal, economics, status or a model built on consensus and equity rooted in ongoing communication?
2. How are cultural norms understood in light of this text?
3. What is the grounding of marriage? Is it love, contract or commitment?
4. Is this text about marriage or about the church?
5. What are the evidences of positive masculinity in this text?



“What if?” GENDER LEADERSHIP AND POWER

LUKE 8: 40 – 56

Norbert Stephens

To speak of gender, power and leadership is about raising issues of justice in relationships, transformational authority and the ability to participate equally in life changes. These issues are located in Luke 8. Luke 8 explores the theme of Jesus' Word. In this chapter, the power of Jesus, expressed as the driving force for healing and renewal, is Jesus' Word. The first 21 verses cover 'hearing and doing' Jesus' word. The second half of Luke 8 exposes the power of Jesus exercised through His word. From verse 22 we see Jesus' mastery over nature through a word of rebuke (the stilling of the storm - Luke 8:22- 25); overcoming demons through a series of commands (the demoniac - 8:26- 39); and over sickness without a word (the woman with the flow of blood - 8: 40- 48) and defeating death through a command - (Jairus' daughter - 8: 49- 56).

We will focus on verses 40- 56, which surrounds Jesus' contact with two principal characters, a named man and an unnamed woman. We do not know her name but we know this woman. We know that she was in crisis. She not only suffered from hemorrhaging but she had other issues as well:

She was a **woman** - this had cultural limitations.

She was **impoverished** - all three gospel accounts indicate that for twelve years she had struggled with her condition. Matthew and Mark indicate that she had suffered at the hands of physicians. Luke, himself a physician softens this by omitting this detail. What is clear is that she had a financial crisis.

She was **isolated** - her condition was one which rendered her unclean in the eyes of the community, which as a consequence denied her community. Menstrual uncleanness meant

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separation (Lev 15:31). We are not told her nationality but in Jewish culture, mere contact with a woman, even after the flow of blood ceased was used to either assume or justify the early death of a man.

She had a **distorted identity** - from all appearances she was a healthy woman, yet her condition, certainly in her culture rendered her less than a woman. For her the natural had become unnatural, what gave her a unique identity had become for her a debilitating reality which led to discrimination and distortion. It was a literal as well as a symbolic draining away of her life; a condition of weakness and distress. Significantly, with this woman you could not tell her condition by simply looking at her.

What are the implications of this truth for the issues of gender, power and leadership?

Luke presents this woman as appearing in the middle of Jesus' journey to Jairus' house in response to Jairus' plea for help for his dying daughter. What is fascinating is that Luke's version of this story, though compact and very similar to Mark's and Matthew's versions, leaves out a seemingly insignificant detail. In each of the other gospels she had a mental conversation with herself about her intention, *if I but touch his clothes/cloak I will be made well* (Mark 5:30; Matthew 9:21).

I want to suggest, and Luke leaves the door open for speculation, that this woman asked herself some, *what if* questions. It did not include, *what if I touch his clothes/cloak*, I am sufficiently convinced that she knew her source of healing and renewal was rooted in Jesus - His track record and His evident power. However, we must not lose the contrast Luke makes between her and Jairus. Because of his status Jairus could and did ask Jesus openly for healing for his daughter. Because of her condition this unnamed woman could not ask for healing openly. She is reduced to secrecy and stealth.

I believe her mental conversation went like this:

If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well, but what if I do, what if he feels it, what if someone who is aware of my condition sees me, and given my condition, what if I am caught?

Her reluctance to own up initially gives room for these considerations. Her, *what if* was essentially the starting point of faith. It was an assessment of the risks involved in the movement towards her healing and renewal, in the reversal of her fortunes. But the critical principle highlighted by this impoverished, isolated and unidentified woman was her movement from *what if* to engagement and action. She did not engage in risk aversion but in risk-taking.

This is the starting point of renewed faith: A calculation of the risks as well as the odds but despite the risks and the odds a willingness to engage and to take action. This is further supported by the fact that Luke focuses not so much on the healing but the conversation with the woman and how her faith offered a paradigm for Jairus who is also in need.

This was a woman with conviction. All three gospel writers offer us the truth that she was convinced that Jesus was the answer for her condition. That in Jesus, even if only in His clothes, was the power to heal her condition and renew and restore her life. This affirms that

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real power comes from the divine. Some have described her actions as those not of faith but of fatalism. A kind of, “I don’t have anything to lose,” mentality. We can’t be certain but what is without doubt is that whatever it was, it was born out of a conviction which said, *I need to contribute something towards my own healing and renewal. I do not have the power but I must get to what I consider to be a source, if not the source of my healing and restoration and renewal.* This affirms the principle of leadership.

This was a woman of courage. This may be the trait of this nameless woman we usually highlight and celebrate. We know that she crossed boundaries – boundaries of ritual and culture. There were clear regulations for contact during a menstrual cycle. A woman was considered unclean for seven days during the cycle and as long as it continued, the impurity continued and could be transmitted to others. Ritual purity was understood as a sign of devotion. In addition, she was not permitted to defile a holy man, thus her fear at discovery.

Lest we forget, a woman, in rabbinic thought, was of relative value. Men were primary, women were seen as other. We claim that much has changed since then, but given the continued treatment and violence against women in today’s reality, I wonder. Jesus’ willingness to stop and deal with her touch was a radical reversal of the status quo and an indication of parity but also an indication of priority. This nameless woman, in Jesus’ eyes was just as important as the male synagogue leader who had a name and her need took priority over his...

Jesus’ question, *who touched me* - a seemingly ridiculous question at the time, was intended to make a significant distinction. This woman’s healing could have been interpreted as magic, (not far removed from those who in our age would encourage us to purchase items and icons with supposed power to heal and restore) but *who touched me* demanded a confrontation aimed at dispelling the notion that the real power of healing resided in his garment. In fact, in the hearing of those around Jesus declared ‘*your faith* has made you well.’

This idea of faith as a pre-requisite of healing is further extended to Jairus who is instructed by Jesus concerning his sick daughter, only *believe and she will be saved.* But Luke also intends to highlight the lesson of humility which along with faith, Jairus must also learn. A woman without name and without status, a woman who is ‘other’ and ritually unacceptable offers a model for a high-status man, a leader in the Synagogue; a named man; it is not just a model of faith but a reversal of social and relational priorities.

When confronted by Jesus’ *who touched me*, she eventually overcame her fear, identified herself and became a witness to her healing. Expecting a rebuke from Jesus, she instead received a threefold blessing:

She received a **divine identity** – daughter.

She received **divine confirmation** of her conviction and courage – your faith has made you well.

She received a **divine gift** – go in peace.

Jesus’ confrontation moved her from possible superstition to realized faith. His intention was not to shame or embarrass her but to recognize her faith and offer her a blessing.

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Is it significant that the text does not indicate that no one recognized her when she was healed, thus the transformation was instantaneous. When Jesus asks this question, no one pointed fingers at her – she had to CHOOSE to make herself known to a crowd which had every right to wish her dead as her passing through the crowd would have contaminated them all as well as Jesus, the one whom they all sought for a blessing.

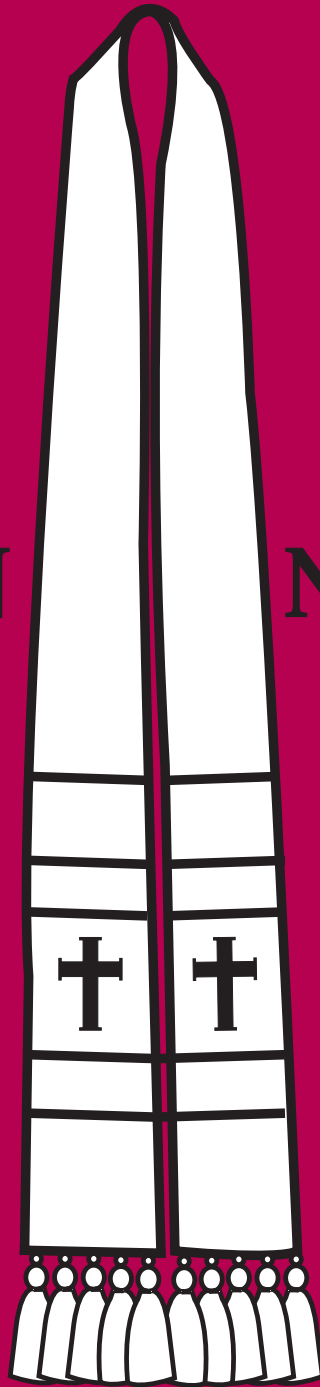
Note also that the humility experience of Jairus, has implications for his faith, as well as for his daughter's healing. Jesus' miraculous healing of the woman resulted in the little girl's death. Is this a biblical trend? Do women always have to be pitted against each other (Mary and Martha, Esther and Vashti)? The little girl lives – so is it that their futures were somewhat intertwined?

Questions for discussion:

1. What are the current norms regarding persons who are in need of specialized care?
2. What are the gender issues in this text?
3. What are the comparisons between this woman and Jairus.
4. What are the power issues in this text?
5. What are the leadership issues (determining life changes) in this text?



SERMON NOTES



GLEANNING WITH RUTH: THE SEARCH FOR REDEMPTIVE MASCULINITIES

Ruth 2

Philip Vinod Peacock

Possible focus: The focus for the sermon is searching for positive masculinities. For our study Boaz has been chosen.

Context: The fact is that boys do not have adequate male role models. This is true both in terms of quality as well as in quantity. The male heroes in society today are heroes precisely because of their aggression, domination of others or blatant machismo. Caring, nurturing male models do not seem to exist, or even if they do, there are just not enough of them. It is within this context that the search is to find Biblical models for a positive masculinity.

Background of the text: Ruth represents a literary tradition that is an alternative to the usual good versus evil stories that we have been used to. It is important that in the book of Ruth there is no villain. In fact no bad person exists at all, the story is about goodness and each of the characters is essentially good. Placed as it is, between Judges and I Samuel, the book represents an alternative tradition to the one that saw a king as the way for Israel's peace and prosperity. It is significant that although the book of Judges continuously moans the lack of a King in the context of the violence that the book speaks of, the next book is not I Samuel where Israel receives a King. Instead the narrative that calls for a king is interrupted by the book of Ruth which shows us a community of women who live differently as well as a man who genuinely loves his people as Boaz does. This sermon attempts to look at three qualities of Boaz that makes him a role model for an alternative masculinity.

Illustration: A very successful campaign for quitting smoking had a television advertisement showing a young boy imitating his father in whatever he did. When the father walked, the boy walked, when the father jumped the boy jumped, when the father sat down the boy sat down. And finally when the father lit up a cigarette the boy put a cigarette in his lips as well. As men

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we are role models to children, what we do is being watched and imitated. The call on us is to be good role models.

Sermon directions

If one were to be honest, the search for redemptive masculinities in the Bible is difficult. Most stories in the Bible, which are written by men in a patriarchal context, offer images of men that subscribe to this patriarchal understanding of men. In this context it is difficult to find positive male role models. Yet it is also possible to glean within the Bible, as Ruth gleaned, from within this patriarchal framework, images of men who are redemptive. In this sermon we seek to do this for Boaz.

Substance:

Boaz is introduced to us in 2:1 as a man of substance. While most English Bibles translate this as wealth, it can also be translated as virtue, valour or strength. In fact the name Boaz, though it has ambiguous origins could also mean strength. The issue is that Boaz is by virtue of this qualification given to him, is what in modern parlance can be called, 'a real man'. Today the term 'a real man' is often used for film and television heroes who get what they want, often through violence and intimidation. The term has become synonymous with aggression, dominance and machismo. In fact it is not uncommon to find people telling boys not to cry because 'real men don't cry'. It is within this context that we have to question; what were the characteristics of Boaz that made him a 'real man?' If we look at this text we can find two, kindness and protection.

Kindness:

The one thing that strikes us about Boaz is his kindness. He seems genuinely concerned about her well being and the well being of Naomi. So much so that he not only offers her the permission to glean in his fields (vs.2:8) but also offers her food and drink along with the reapers (vs.2:14). He further instructs the reapers to let her glean from among the sheaves and also that they should pull out some bundles for her (vs.2:16). Eventually we find that when Ruth goes home she has one *ephah*, a quantity for dry commodities that would equal 22 litres of grain today. Boaz was kind to Ruth not because he wanted something from her, but because he was impressed by her love for Naomi. Kindness is an important virtue because it challenges the systems of selfishness and self-interest. It calls us to consider the interest of others and in doing so enables us to treat the other as a human, rather than as an object. Kindness is an alternative to male aggression and hostility.

Protection:

Boaz is also protective of Ruth. This is not only seen in his instruction to the young men not to molest her (2:9) apparently a permissible activity for alien women. But he himself does not make any untoward advances over her. His protection over Ruth comes out even clearer when she lies at his feet (a euphemism is probably being employed here) and asks that he cover her with his skirt. The act of covering her with the skirt is a symbol of her asking for his protection and it is the same phrase that is employed by Boaz in 2:12 when he speaks of the protection

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of God. Even in this context of a potentially embarrassing situation Boaz deflects the situation by suggesting that Ruth is doing him a favour rather than the reverse, thereby recognizing her sense of self- dignity and self- worth.

The politics of protection is ambiguous in the context of gender justice. Protection comes with a sense of patriarchal paternalism that privileges the male over the female. However we find that Boaz seems to do it in a way that upholds the dignity and self- respect of Ruth. Further the movement in the relationship between Ruth and Boaz is from one of servant, to daughter and finally with the skirt covering incident to equal partner and it is within this changing relationship that the idea of protection has to be read.

Conclusion

We need positive role models from the Bible to show what 'real men' can actually be like. Boaz offers us one such possibility. Sure, there are difficulties in the text, but if we glean with Ruth, we can find some gems!

Questions

1. What can we learn about the masculinity of Boaz from his relationship with other men in the story of Ruth?
2. What are the intersections and interconnections between gender, ethnicity and economy that affect the relationship between Boaz and Ruth?



THE JOSEPH MODEL OF MASCULINITY

A Dialogue Sermon by Solomuzi Mabuza and Nicole Ashwood

Genesis 39

Joseph was a successful and a handsome man in Egypt. Everything he did and touched was blessed. This led to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, who bought him from the Ish'maelites, entrusting Joseph with managing the finer details of his household. This exposed Joseph to his master's wife who could not resist him. Many men who find themselves in Joseph's position often sing the song "...ride on brother, ride on..." sung by Clarence Carter. This response fashions a kind of masculinity that the church must engage constructively.

The release of the then deputy president (Mr. Jacob Zuma) from political office in June 15th, 2005 by former president (Mr. Thabo Mbeki) posed a very challenging situation to South Africa for a man who has since become the current president of the Republic of South Africa. Not only did Jacob Zuma face corruption charges but he had to deal with rape charges as well. It is his handling of the rape trial that we are interested here. Zuma presented himself as a profoundly traditional Zulu man in his rape court case. He resorted to his language in the cross-examination thereby confronting the court with another view to the unfolding of events on the night in question.

Zuma was accused of raping a 31 year old woman in April 2006. The victim was a close family friend whose father had connections with Zuma. This woman was diagnosed as HIV positive and lived openly with her condition. These facts were known to Zuma whom the victim referred to as 'uMalume' - an uncle. Zuma claimed that the young woman was wearing a kanga - revealing clothes - without panties. For Zuma this meant seduction and that the 'victim' wanted him to lie with her. When taken to task for his poor judgment and the accusation of rape - Zuma argued that he had to follow his "Zulu culture". The man of the people argued that "leaving a woman in that state of arousal" was the worst thing a man could do. According to Zuma's culture "she could even have you arrested and charged with rape". Zuma was acquitted of rape

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and got off with an admonition from Judge van der Merwe who said, "If you could control your sexual urges, then you are a man, my son". These were words of an old wise man whose culture is not Zulu.

Zuma offered a kind of masculinity that says it does not matter if you are a married man or not. When a man encounters a woman who is wearing 'revealing clothes' like a kanga with no underwear, in the comfort of her house, it is tacitly understood that he can have her. A man is not a man according to Zuma's culture if he does not lie with such a woman. Successful and influential men like Zuma have a greater role to play in shaping positive and liberating masculinities. Women should not fall prey to rapists simply because they are dressed in 'revealing clothes'. We need a different kind of response to this scourge in society.

The Bible offers us an alternative which is contrary to the commentaries of today. Joseph had already established himself as a shrewd and astute businessman and for all intents and purposes, his future was secure. It is easy to conceive that any man who was worth his salt had an affair or two, some to improve business and others simply to take care of business. Potiphar's wife was beautiful, and - in the words of President Zuma - she was '...in the state of arousal'. And, in most contexts worldwide, no self-respecting man worth his 'stripes' - no 'real' man would ignore such an opportunity!

If we examine the flurry of newscasts in recent times, we note that several high-profile leaders in the church have been accused - rightfully or wrongfully - of sexual impropriety. Is it possible that the church has gone the way of the world in believing that if no one catches us in the act, it is all right to be involved in sexual sin? Is it that our young men have bought into the notion that a man is only a man when he has several women in his harem, and should he desire another, he should have her - whether by force or by choice? But how are we encouraged to respond? How did Joseph respond?

Joseph understood that he had dominion over everything else in his master's household except his wife. This is a deeply principled man who follows a certain code of ethics. This is a man who understands that his professed commitment to God must be his lived reality, especially when no one seems to be watching. For Joseph, a married woman is a no go area. She belongs to her man and her man alone. Respecting her vows and the place her man plays in the covenant of marriage is higher than enjoying stolen waters. In a world where it is common for successful and handsome men to have many 'sexual conquests' Joseph presents us with an alternative masculinity. He charts a new way forward and is an example for men of all ages. It is not easy to follow his route which led to his imprisonment and ridicule in the house of his master.

Are men not able to be different? Can men not have dominion over their libido? Can men fail to see in a woman an Image of God?

James 4:7 advises that when we submit ourselves to God, we can resist the devil and he will flee from us. In submitting to God, Joseph resisted the temptation which came his way and seemed to have been punished for it. Yet, he did not depart from his faith, nor did he defile the reputation of Potiphar's wife. As a woman, this is critical to me, for there are so many men today who take great pleasure in bragging about his 'conquest' as if she were a notch on the door of his cave. In some instances, they fabricate the nature and extent of the relationship

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in order that they might seem 'macho'; but this is not what we are called to.

It is affirming for men to be counted amongst those who have had many sexual conquests in their lives. Most men enjoy such an experience especially in their teen years and early adulthood lives. This kind of behaviour presents problems later in the lives of men. When those men get married and are to lead clean lives it becomes difficult to suddenly stay committed to one woman. How men are brought up and raised can make a difference in the long run. If young men grow up knowing that it is not outdated or out of fashion to learn faithfulness at an early age, this can make the difference. Young men can grow respecting women no matter what they are wearing, doing or offering. There is no need to make excuses for raping and violating women who are also created in the Image of God.

In South Africa, a number of women recently have encountered the negative side of male violence. A young woman was stripped naked at a taxi rank in Johannesburg by taxi drivers and onlookers for wearing a mini skirt. This young woman was menstruating and she had to bear the humiliation of these men inserting their fingers on her vagina. In uMlazi, a young woman was stripped naked for wearing a trouser in a hostel wherein a 'rule' against such dress code was instituted. This young woman was then paraded in the community to teach others a lesson. And I am certain that these incidents are not restricted solely to South Africa.

No my brother, it is not. It is rather unfortunate that those men chose to represent themselves as beings incapable of possessing rational thought, as beings ruled solely by their baser instincts. For such actions are contrary to God's call for humanity to be partners and colleagues in the creation and restoration process here on earth. Men can change this situation. Together with women, we can change this reality! In the sentiment of the South African Judge, we can opt to

curb our sexual urges and our 'baser' impulses, and still be men.

When we recognise that we are all made in the Image of God, when we are able to recognise that respecting a woman is also about respecting yourselves as men; then will we begin to see human transformation and the reign of God before our very eyes. Joseph offers us an insight in the possibilities for the process of transformation. With God, it is possible for men to change. Let us begin the process today.



VIOLENCE BEGETS VIOLENCE

Judges Chapter 11

Philip Vinod Peacock

Possible Focus: The focus is on how our socialization affects our behaviour. The attempt is to look at how Jephthah's early experience of the violence of rejection socializes him into violence. The ultimate victim of this violence is his daughter.

Context: Bullying is also referred to as Ragging, Hazing. Though the term 'bullying' may have various names across various cultures, the experience is often the same. Bullying, the result of a perceived or real imbalance of power among children is often the cause of much psychological trauma for children. Bullying can be verbal, mental and physical and even emotional. In many cases bullying is a way of socializing children into hierarchical and violent behavior. The question that this sermon asks is whether the adult behavior of Jephthah was a result of his childhood experiences with his brothers?

Background of the text: Judges Chapter 11 is one of the more difficult texts of the Bible. It is a text that deals with the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter in order that a vow made by him to God would be maintained. This is indeed a difficult text to read for after all what is the text telling us, that the God we worship accepts human sacrifice? That God does not act to save Jephthah's daughter in the same manner that Isaac was saved? To ask a very blunt question, was Isaac saved because he was male and Jephthah's daughter allowed to die because she was a woman? Or was Isaac saved because he was part of the chosen line through whom Israel was to be saved? But then what about Jephthah's daughter, is she to be sacrificed because she is expendable, a non- entity on the pages of history? While this text does raise many difficult questions we shall only be looking at the question of socialization and see how Jephthah's own victimization as a child/young boy led to the victimization of his daughter.

Illustration: Adolf Hitler was the leader of the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party which is popularly known as a Nazi Party. He was the authoritarian leader whose anti- Semitic policies led to the genocide of six million Jews. What is little known however is the troubled

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relationship that Hitler had with his own father who was a traditional authoritarian who often beat his son. His father, Alois, wanted the young Adolf to grow up to be an Austrian customs official, just like himself and insisted that he attended a technical school. Adolf however wanted to grow up to be an artist and to have a classical high school education. The young Adolf even attempted to fail his first year in the hope that his father would relent. Unfortunately his father remained as stubborn as ever. It is said that Adolf developed the theory of German Nationalism as a means of rebellion against his father who was an Austrian loyalist. People who lived along the German- Austrian border considered themselves both German and Austrian, but Hitler, in protest against his father, considered only his German identity. While it is doubtful that it was only his experience of his father that had socialized Hitler into what he became, one cannot help but wonder whether an alternative experience of fatherhood would have enabled Hitler to look at things differently.

Sermon directions: It has been found that perpetrators of domestic violence are often those who have been abused as children or have grown up within the context of an abusive childhood. The point is that our childhood experiences affect us in our later life. The story of Jephthah is one in which we find that the experience of victimization by his brothers in childhood teaches him that power is used to gain one's own narrow selfish ends.

The circle of victimization: In the very first verse of the eleventh chapter we find that Jephthah is introduced to us as a son of a commercial sex worker. His father however acknowledging Jephthah as his son takes him into his household. While initially there seems to be no problem with this, as Jephthah's brothers grew up they do not want to include him in the inheritance and as a result they drive him away from home. Jephthah is driven away to the land of Tob and begins to live as an outlaw, raiding the surrounding areas. Jephthah learns from early childhood that the way to use power is to victimize others. He is socialized into learning that power is to be used to serve one's own ends and not for the sake of others.

Jephthah the powerful: Yet, the story of Jephthah does not end here. The text tells us that after a while the Ammonites made war against Israel, the Israelites needed a strong leader to lead them to overcome the Ammonites and therefore they turn to Jephthah, the local bandit to help them fight the war. The victimized Jephthah suddenly finds himself in a position of greater power over those who once victimized him. The Jephthah that we meet from verse 4 of the text onwards is a Jephthah that is different from the Jephthah in the first few verses. This is a Jephthah who is now in a powerful position. This is not the Jephthah that is running away from his brothers, but a Jephthah who has his brothers seeking him out because he is in a position to fight and defeat the Ammonites. Jephthah even makes a deal with his brothers that he will be their leader if he defeats the Ammonites, Jephthah has fully learnt to use power to meet his own narrow ends.

Victim of socialization: Probably connected to his early experience of victimization which leads to self doubt, coupled with a driving force to avenge his own early experiences, Jephthah is now ready to go to any lengths to defeat the Ammonites thereby asserting his leadership over his brothers. He makes a bargain with God that he will sacrifice the first person to come out of his house if he is granted victory. Unfortunately for him it is his daughter who comes out of the house to meet him. It is evident that Jephthah is extremely distressed by this, he

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probably hoped that it would be one of his brothers or maybe a slave who was 'expendable' who would come out of his house to first greet him. Fact remains that Jephthah's childhood experiences caused him to make choices that were costly for him and even more costly for his daughter. His nameless daughter becomes the nameless victim of his violent socialization. One can only wonder whether things would have turned out differently if Jephthah found acceptance as a child.

Questions

1. Who were the role models for Jephthah? Would it have been different if he had nurturing and caring male roles models?
2. Would Jephthah's life been any different if he had a mother- figure in his life?
3. What decisions could have Jephthah's taken himself so that he could have been a better father? What are the theological implications of this?



“BLESSED AND HIGHLY FAVOURED”

Luke 1: 26 – 45

Norbert Stephens

Introduction

Six months after appearing to Zechariah announcing God’s answer to their prayer for a child, the Angel Gabriel appears to Mary. The annunciation follows a well established biblical pattern – the messengers’ declaration, “do not be afraid,” the recipient of the news is called by name and is assured of God’s favor. The news is then shared, the child is named and the future role of the child is revealed using scriptural references/language. Each recipient asks a question and in response the messenger offers a sign for reassurance. The significant difference between the two annunciations in Luke is that in Elizabeth and Zechariah’s case the visitation is an answer to prayer. In Mary’s case it is totally unexpected.

Mary’s status and role

This is Luke’s annunciation story with Mary at its centre. We tend to romanticize it to the point where while we elevate the visible elements of faith and obedience we often miss the hidden nuances of gender, power, leadership and sexuality also located within the story. We elevate Mary and rightly so but often we fail to understand if not affirm the full extent of the critical role she played in the advent of Jesus Christ.

Mary was labeled as “blessed” by Elizabeth (vs. 45). A blessing speaks of God’s attitude towards us, a positive disposition. Blessing is tied up with grace and mercy which are both unearned gifts from God. The text also indicates that Mary was favoured (vs. 28). It is critical to understand that favour whether human or divine is earned or gained; it requires something from the recipient. Mary could not earn God’s blessing but she had earned the favour of God (vs. 30), whether as a consequence of her faith or her attitude both of which play pivotal roles in this story. From Mary’s story it seems that to be favoured is to be challenged by God for in effect her ‘favoured’ status was nothing less than a social scandal.

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Patriarchal interpretation of scriptures often reinforces stereotyped images of women. Women still suffer from the heavy expectation of modeling mother Mary, who is depicted in popular interpretations as a submissive, sacrificial, quiet, and contemplative young woman. Mary's confusion is confessed in this text but her willingness to accept the difficult and life changing task of bearing the promised messiah is often overlooked when we study or preach from this text.

It required from her faith, compliance, commitment and the leadership to participate in the determination of her future in a hostile and challenging situation. Rarely do we focus on Mary's autonomy in decision making in this text. Her acceptance to be the mother of God without consulting others, her courage to participate in God's mission for salvation despite the obvious social ostracization that might follow, her faith and her clear anticipation of the Messiah who would bring in God's reign are not often highlighted. In fact there tends to be more attention to addressing Joseph's acceptance of her version of events. Indeed he enjoys a high public approval rating for remaining committed to her and to the marriage. Her leadership in the process is often underplayed as she was not as passive as often portrayed by preachers and in re-enactments of the Nativity. The significance of her partnership with Joseph in pursuing God's agenda equally gets lost in the grandeur of the arrival of the expected messiah.

Critical issue

The understanding of Immaculate Conception raises an issue which must be dealt with in certain cultures. There is a tendency to use evasive language, half-truths and images in telling our children about sexuality including how women get pregnant and where babies come from. These often produce unhelpful and confusing ideas about human sexuality in the minds of our children. This Advent story has the potential to create even greater confusion, if not fear, in the minds of our young who are often the main characters in dramatic readings and portrayal of this significant portion of the divine story of Divine Good News. Care must be taken to ensure that this magical event does remain at the level of magic for some and the potential source of terror for others who are uninformed about reproduction and procreation. It offers the opportunity to develop a positive approach and model to teaching our young about human sexuality, an equally significant gift from God.

Mary as a woman in a very patriarchal setting by virtue of her faith, courage and leadership not only receives divine blessing but she earned and maintained divine favour as well.



LITURGY AND WORSHIP

Towards Awareness Healing and Reconciliation

Nicole Ashwood

Within the context of communal spirituality, the liturgical practices of the faithful have helped to shape the interplay between worshipping community, lived faith and shared witness. Formal worship has been framed by the movements in the liturgy which connect the elements of worship one to the other as the people gather for prayers, praise and proclamation. Though it is a product of the religious community, formal worship is a social construct, which reflects the daily experiences of the gathered community, their joys, sorrows, dreams, aspirations and successes. These are often reflected in intercessory prayers, hymns, choruses and song, the sermon, as well as the frames captured in the Call to Worship and the Benediction. It is the logic behind the inclusion of the names of sick and shut-in members on church bulletins, bringing them wholly into the corpus of the worshipping community. It is the catalyst which determines the establishment of special days outside of the formal liturgical cycle - funerals, weddings, and various commemorative events in the wider community; local, national and international.

When the community's needs are reflected in the worship and liturgy, there is scope for transformation, growth and empowerment for all. This must therefore be done in culturally relevant and contextually- appropriate liturgical language. There is need to include liturgies which give voice to the 'silenced'; comforts the abused, name their dehumanizing situation and confronts the abusive; is intentional in promoting advocacy and accompaniment in cases of gender- based violence, incest, family conflicts, child trafficking and other forms of abuse and conflict which affect the social milieu. It is incumbent upon the religious institution that it fulfills its role as change agent, and in the establishment of intentionally- constructed liturgical frames and worship spaces, the community has the opportunity to speak to issues which have been relegated to the 'closet'.

It becomes increasingly essential that liturgies and worship spaces sensitize the community to the need for involvement in combating gender- based violence. This is a very serious problem in all societies at all levels of the social continuum and affects the abuser; the abused, and the family members who sometimes feel obliged to 'take sides' as the drama unfolds. Gender- based violence often has long- term repercussions as it is often learnt and thus becomes a cycle which is hard to break without divine and direct intervention. As one prepares for a service of awareness and/or advocacy, the following questions must be answered by a worship planning team -

- What is the intended context and who are the constituents?
- What is the general level of conscientization and concern of the gathered community and what is 'taboo' in their context?
- What is the duration of the service and is there an expectation for reflection on the word?

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There is need also to assess the tools available for the shaping of the worship –

- Is there reliable equipment and what does this include?
- What are some common cultural symbols which could appropriately be utilized to enhance the worship service?
- Are there already existing frames – prayers, Calls to Worship, songs/hymns – which can be appropriated for the service?
- How may the visual and performing arts be used to make the service more meaningful?
- What are the non- negotiable elements of the worship?

- I. During *Ordinary Time*, it is possible to use the following liturgy as a means of sensitization of a community to the issue of Gender- based Violence:

I Liturgical order for ordinary time

Procession of Women, men & children in various stages of abuse; hands, mouth, ears or eyes also covered prohibiting their senses to work . . . a voice from the distance – ‘Jesus! Son of David, have mercy!’

ProceSSIONAL – ‘Lord, listen to your children praying’ in the background (or any other appropriate piece)

Call to Worship

Leader: Today God’s spirit compels me,
Men: To release those who are bound [persons whose hands are bound has them released]
Women: To rescue those who are endangered [tape taken from eyes]
Children: To seek help for those who have no help [dresses wounds]
All: To proclaim liberty for those who are abusive and have been abused [all bandages, etc removed]
Leader: This day God’s spirit reigns within and without
ALL: and becomes the fulfillment of God’s promises to us

Opening Hymn: ‘Come ye disconsolate’ (or any other appropriate hymn)

Prayers of Invitation and Adoration

Chorus: ‘Santo, Santo, Santo’ (Holy, Holy, Holy) (or any other appropriate chorus)

Litany of Confession

Leader: Lord, you are our dwelling place, and in you we have abundance and fullness of life. . . you have called us to share in Your creative and creating actions and to stewardship over all that you have placed at your disposal. Yet far too often we have failed you . . .

Response: Lord’s Prayer Kumbaya Version – verse 1

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*Father God in heaven, Lord Most High
Hear your children's prayer, Lord Most High
Hallowed be your name, Lord Most High
O Lord, hear our prayers*

Leader: We acknowledge that we have failed to appreciate the bounty of your generosity and often have taken your creation for granted.

Response: Lord's Prayer . . . verse 2
May your kingdom come, here on earth
May your will be done, here on earth
As it is in heaven, soon earth
O Lord, hear our prayer!

Leader: We have heard your voice calling to us to be your hands, your feet, your voice; and often failed to respond appropriately. Today we ask your forgiveness and say

Response: Lord's Prayer . . . verse 3
Give us daily bread, day by day
And forgive our sins, day by day
As we too forgive, day by day
O Lord, hear our prayer

Leader: Following in your way Lord, is not easy . . . we find it far easier to condemn, to ignore and to silence those who are practicing and are under the pressure of abuse and human bondage. We prefer to enjoy the luxuries of life, and have failed to ask the tough questions, and becoming advocates for those whose lives are lost as collateral damage in the non-war waged against gender-based violence.

Response: Lord's Prayer . . . verse 4
Lead us in your way, make us strong
When temptations come, make us strong
Save us from our sin, keep us strong
O Lord, hear our prayer

Leader: We acknowledge our sins - as we know that in time past, we have crucified and martyred those who have been caught up in the struggle, those whose lives have been needlessly lost, and those who have felt powerless, desperate, lonely and forsaken. Forgive us Lord! Rescue us from ourselves, and empower us to rescue others!

Response: Lord's Prayer ... verse 5

All things come from you, all are yours
Kingdom, glory, power, all are yours

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Take our lives and gifts, all are yours
O Lord, hear our prayer!

Leader: Often we have failed you Lord, and we seek your mercy, as today we do declare that we are the voices who cry in the wilderness, we are the labourers in your vineyard, we will no longer stand aside and be silent; we offer ourselves as instruments of your liberative acts. We seek to go forth as ones who advocate for life in its fullness that only you can give. May we allow your will free reign in our lives today and always . . . Amen

Assurance of Pardon

Hymn of awareness 'Open the eyes of my heart Lord' (or any other appropriate hymn)

Responsive Reading Ps 89:1- 2, 9- 18

Offertory

Special Item Dance - To Wounded Soldier/'No! Woman, no cry'/or any other appropriate music OR Video or drama highlighting abusive situations (try not to 'name names')

Lesson John 8:1- 11

Call to Reflection 'Jesus, Friend of the Wounded Heart' (or any other appropriate hymn)

Sermon

Call to commitment - (Before singing, invite potential advocates forward)

'Mayenziwe' (Your will be done in me O Lord)

Mayenziwe, Thando Yako (x2)

Mayen (mayen) ziwe (ziwe) Thando (thando) Yako

Mayenziwe Thando Yako (x2)

Intercessory Prayers

(Please include and invite persons who need accompaniment and/or advocacy)

Closing Hymn 'Here I am Lord' (or any other appropriate hymn)

Benediction

Note:

At the end of the worship, it is helpful if persons who are already involved in the advocacy and sensitization processes to avail themselves to provide information, support in various forms to those who would have made a commitment or an appeal for help during the Call to Commitment and the Prayers of Intercession.

There have been instances where a worship context is not the most appropriate and religious institutions have used the theatrical arts to raise awareness or create spaces for healing and

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confess our sins against you and those others we have wronged [*pause to allow people to confess*] . . . We repent of our actions and thoughts and pray your renewal upon our lives. Forgive us we pray and breathe new life in us, in Jesus' name we pray.
Amen

Assurance of Pardon Hear God's promise to us: When creation finally steps away from pride and arrogance by leaving behind the sins of the past and seeking God's face in prayer; our prayers will be answered, our sins forgiven and God's shalom restored to us. We have confessed our sins in earnestness, God hears our prayers and God will restore. Thanks be to God!

Lord's Prayer (Abana in Heaven from Egypt or any other version of the Lord's Prayer)

Hymn 'There is a Balm' or any other appropriate hymn.

Responsive Lesson Ps 138, OR Eccl. 3:1- 12; 4:1- 3; OR Lev. 4:27- 5:1

Time of Praise [Praise choruses, or hymn singing]

Learning & Growing with our Children

[Say an appropriate story of healing *or use the Liberian Bullet Cross as a testimony of hope - the crosses are made from actual bullets used in the war in Liberia and serve now as a reminder of God's redemptive/healing power*). *Or use a story of unity from your own context. Keep the story short and perhaps ask the children to respond with questions of their own. Close with a prayer and a song of hope/love*]

Hymn of Thanksgiving 'You are Holy, You are Whole' or 'Gloria a Dios' (or any other appropriate hymn)

Offertory

Prayers of Intercession [For community, sick, shut-in, nation, etc.]

Ministry of the Word (May be dramatized)

OT Genesis 13:1- 9; OR Gen. 31:43- 32:1; OR Gen. 45:1- 15 OR Josh 20:1- 9

NT Acts 9:1- 5; OR Gal. 6:1- 9; OR Eph. 4:1- 7, 21- 32;

Gospel St. John 15:1- 19; OR St. Luke 15:11- 32; OR St. Matt. 5:21- 25, 43- 48

Special Item [Perhaps a combined choir from either group, or a choir anthem which speaks to unity]

Sermon

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Response [One may use this opportunity to open the altar or may simply invite congregation to join in the repetition of one of the Creeds]

Healing Ceremony 'El Dios de Paz', 'O- So- So' or another hymn may be sung to call people to this segment of the worship. As the song is sung, the minister or the liturgist gives a brief history of the conflict and reminds the congregation that God is a god of peace, not war.

Testimony 1 [*Two persons, one from either side, are invited to share their stories of transformation as they moved from hostility to peace through God's shalom,*

OR Dance/Drama portraying reconciliation performed; children's prayers could also be included here]

Testimony 2

Reading *Luke 5:30-32*

Interlude 'For each child that's born' (Sweet Honey on the Rock) or 'Creation' (Peter Tosh) or any other appropriate music.

Reading *James 5:15-17*

Prayers of Repentance

Liturgist/Minister The Word of God declares that it is a good thing for us to live together in unity. We believe and affirm God's declaration. There has been disunity in our community/nation for (include as appropriate the years/months of the conflict), and today representatives come from either side to declare that as of this moment, we resolve to work together, not apart; we resolve to trust each other, not to destroy, we seek to build bridges of hope and reconciliation, not walls of deceit, destruction and devilment. I invite the representatives from each group to join us at the altar - a place of forgiveness, healing, restoration and hope; a place of covenants, where promises are made and kept, where there is room for love, as Christ has loved us.

[Representatives come forward]

Do you solemnly declare that you will endeavour to restore community, build and promote family values and help in the restoration of one people for the sake of those who have died, and more so for the future generations?

Do you promise that your people will commit to forgiving past grievances as we move toward becoming one people under God's peace? If so, please indicate by saying 'With the help of God, we will!'

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[When this is said, the representatives will each select a candle or bottle of olive oil as they prepare to ratify their covenant]

Lighting of the candle/Pouring oil over troubling waters & Signing of Peace Accord

[Liturgist continues] As the representatives join in lighting the peace candle/pouring oil upon the waters, they symbolically declare their commitment to the movement towards peace. They commit to rebuilding community through (lists measures which will be taken by each group) and their commitment to the business of restoration. May we all be witnesses in the sharing of this peace, and may God be with us as we move toward experiencing Shalom in this place. Let us continue in prayer:-

Spontaneous prayers, for the community, for healing and reconciliation/

Sharing of Peace

'Let there be Peace on Earth' or 'Prayer of St. Francis' or Unity of the Spirit

We celebrate the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace (x2)

In the bonds of peace, we share unity, and in unity, we will be a light to the world!

Love Feast

Baskets of bread and juice are passed to be shared between persons from formerly opposing groups. They are invited to feed each other as a symbol of the newly constructed unity in Christ as they offer Christ's peace to each other. 'Let us Talents and Tongues employ' and 'Walls mark our boundaries' (or other appropriate song) may be sung during this time.

Prayer of the People

Closing Hymn

'We shall go out with hope of Resurrection' (or any other appropriate hymn)

Benediction

Note:

As was recommended for the ***Service of Ordinary Time***, it is best if there are persons in place to provide the requisite pastoral care after the service. Efforts ought to be made to collaborate with the community to ensure that as many people as possible own this process and are involved in the worship. The effects might not be immediate, but one will see change as time passes. This should include development programmes, peace accords, healing of mind and spirits, healing of communities and a resistance to agents of wanton destruction and depravity. To this we have been called and we seek to create the spaces for renewal and transformation in this world.



GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND TERMS

Androgynous - biologically being both male and female.

Annunciation - Christian celebration of the announcement by the angel http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel_Gabriel to Mary that she would become the Theotokos (God- bearer). Despite being a virgin, Mary would miraculously conceive a child who would be called the Son of God. Gabriel told Mary to name her son Jesus, meaning "YAHWEH delivers". Most of Christianity observes this event with the Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March, nine full months before Christmas. According to the Bible (Luke 1:26), the Annunciation occurred in "the sixth month" of Elizabeth's pregnancy with the child who would later become known as John the Baptist.

Anti-semitic - being prejudiced against the Jews and is often rooted in hatred towards Jewish culture, history etc.

Archetype - the original a prototype on the other hand is an earlier model from which others are modified or even bettered.

Authoritarian - characteristic of an absolute ruler or regime.

Axiom - generally accepted as being true.

Baha'i faith - a religious movement originating in Iran in the 19th century and emphasizing the spiritual unity of men and women.

Conscientization - a type of learning which is focused on perceiving and exposing social and political contradictions. Conscientization also includes taking action against oppressive elements in one's life as part of that learning.

Creationism - doctrine that believes that creation took place as is recorded in Genesis in the Bible, and not by Evolution.

Dalits - those communities that were considered untouchable in the Indian caste system.

Glossary

Darwinism - the thought of Darwin. As it is used in this manual it essentially refers to the ideology of the survival of the fittest. An ideology that is used today to justify the position of the powerful over that of the powerless.

Dehumanisation - treatment of persons as if they were less than human.

Discrimination - various types of social prejudices (ie racism, sexism, classism) are contained within and enacted from positions of power, within society, against the offended groups.

Exegesis - a critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially a religious text.

Elohism - one of the constitutive elements of the Pentateuch in which the name for God is Elohim.

Emancipatory theology - rooted in the idea that theology is not neutral. It can either support the status quo or oppose it. Emancipatory theology then refers to that theology that opposes the status quo in order to propose a new social order.

Etiological - study of why things occur, or even the reasons behind the way that things act, and is used in theology in reference to the causes of various phenomena.

Facticity - the quality or state of being a fact.

Gender - socially constructed (and often unequal) roles, responsibilities and expectations culturally and socio-politically assigned to women and men and the institutional structures that support them. Unlike biological sex, gender is learned and can be transformed. Throughout history gender roles and expectations have been changing.

Gender analysis - a tool that seeks to understand social, religious and cultural processes that create and maintain gender differences - in order to design informed responses of equitable options. It involves the examining the different roles women and men play in society and the differential impacts of policies related to politics, economy, social relations and religion on these roles. Extending from the idea that gender differences are based more on social, cultural and religious defined values, than on biology, this type of analysis recognizes and challenges the value systems which are responsible for the different (and unequal) impacts and benefits experienced by women and men of any given society.

Gender bending - an informal term used to refer to the active transgression or 'bending' of expected gender roles.

Gnostic sacrament - here is that of the Bridal Chamber. Gnostics believed this to be the essence of Gnosis (knowledge), the joining of the soul of man with the Soul of God. The act of entering the bridal chamber is a sacrament followed by the Eucharist. In the Gospel of Thomas (75) Jesus said, "Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber."

Hegemony - predominance over another with the aim to control.

Hellenistic - zenith of Greek influence in the ancient world.

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Heterogeneous - something that lacks uniformity.

Hermeneutics - science or art of interpretation.

Homophobia - irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuals.

Immaculate conception - according to Roman Catholic doctrine, the conception of the Virgin Mary *without any stain* ("immacula" in Latin) of original sin. The core belief is that Jesus was conceived by Mary through the Holy Spirit and not through sexual intercourse with another human being.

Immutability - unchanging over time or unable to be changed.

Judeo-Christian heritage - a cultural tradition that emerges from the Biblical world view.

Koinonia - Greek word that means fellowship.

Kyriarchal - lord centeredness. Or a social structure that revolves around a central lord like figure. It is used in the opposite sense of an egalitarian structure.

Machismo - prominently exhibited or excessive masculinity. It refers to an attitude, displaying manly characteristics, such as domineering, fierceness, bravado, etc., in ways that are showily and histrionically tough.

Marginalization - social process of becoming or being made marginal - to relegate or confine to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge, as of social standing.

Masculinity - pertaining to men. It is used to speak of the roles and behaviour that are traditionally assigned to men and sometimes of the properties or characteristics of men.

Mutuality - directed and received by each toward the other - reciprocal.

Misogynistic - hatred of women

Omnipotence - quality of having unlimited or very great power.

Omniscience - infinite knowledge - knowing everything.

Ostracization - being excluded, by general consent, from society, friendship, conversation, privileges.

Parenthetical - inserted into a passage as if not essential, and marked off, usually by brackets.

Parlance - way of speaking.

Patriarchy - the situation where women's stories and thereby, their experiences, have been ignored, forgotten, misinterpreted and devalued, while stories about men and thereby their experiences have been elevated, remembered, emphasized and overvalued. Patriarchy also refers to systemic societal structures that institutionalize male physical, political, economic and social power over women.

Glossary

Perichoresis - theological term that refers to the relationship of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. It speaks of how the three are unique and distinct but also of how each of the three penetrates and is penetrated by the others.

Priestly - one of the constituent strands of the Pentateuch, written by priests.

Post-colonial - analysis and criticism of the cultural legacy of colonialism.

Poverty - a state of insufficient resources necessary to maintain a basic and sustainable standard of living. It includes the lack of access to food, shelter, clothing and social services, ie health, education, water, sanitation, peace and security.

Proleptically - in anticipation.

Progeny - descendants

Racism - where individuals or groups of a particular race are discriminated against and become the target of unfair assumptions and/or unfair or unjust treatment because of their race.

Redemptive masculinities - belief that there are certain aspects of traditional male behaviour that can contribute positively to the building of community and society. That not all male behaviour is necessarily destructive.

Sex - biologically determined and physical differences between women and men.

Sexism- attitudes, conditions, or behaviors that promote stereotyping of social roles based on gender.

Slavery- condition in which people are felt to be owned by masters and made to work for them at exhausting labour without pay.

Socialization- process through which people are consciously or subconsciously instructed by the values, beliefs and mores of a particular society. It refers to an educational process which informs persons and makes them fit in and function as a member of society.

Social milieu - the social environment of an individual - the culture that he or she was educated and/or lives in, the religious and family background of the person.

Synopticists - authors of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Tribalism - organization, culture, or beliefs of a tribe.

Trinity - belief that God is one but is expressed in the three persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Violence - act of aggression causing physical or psychological harm.

Wimp - weak, cowardly, or ineffectual person.

Xenophobia - abnormal fear or hatred of foreigners and strange things.

Yahwist - one of the constituent strands of the Pentateuch in which the name for God is Yahweh.

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World Communion of Reformed Churches

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)
CALLED TO COMMUNION, COMMITTED TO JUSTICE

Who we are

We are a communion of Protestant churches in 108 countries – a communion committed to justice. Our 230 member churches are Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed, Waldensian, United, and Uniting. The combined membership of these churches is an estimated 80 million people.

What we do

WCRC coordinates joint church initiatives for theological reflection, strengthening our common mission, leadership development and promoting economic, ecological, gender and racial justice based on the member churches' common theology and beliefs.

Our objectives are to foster unity among our member churches and justice for God's people and God's creation.

Why

WCRC's member churches believe that belief in the Lord Jesus Christ renews us to engage in actions which respond to the spiritual needs and economic and social rights of all people in society and that this includes ensuring responsible use of natural resources.

How

WCRC is committed to collaborating with other church movements on issues of common concern such as climate change, gender justice, theological dialogue, leadership development, peace and reconciliation, and mission relevant to the 21st century.

WCRC is supported principally by membership contributions of finances and human resources. It also seeks funding for specific projects.

WCRC is based in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information on WCRC go to www.wcrc.ch

Created in God's Image From Hierarchy to Partnership



A Church Manual for Gender Awareness
and Leadership Development

Created in God's Image: From Hierarchy to Partnership is a Church Manual on Gender Awareness and Leadership Development, edited by Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth and published by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 2003. It is a set of two books: a manual with a facilitator's guide and eight modules and a Workbook for Participants. The manual was designed to help the Christian community and their partners increase their awareness of gender and enhance their understanding of gender relations in the home, church, and society. The underlying principle taken in the manual is that healthy gender relations based on partnership – not power – are necessary for gender justice all over the world.

The books are available from the World Communion of Reformed Churches, justice@wrc.ch

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The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) links more than 75 million Christians in over 100 countries around the world. It is a fellowship of more than 200 Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed and United churches with roots in the 16th-century Reformation led by John Calvin, John Knox, Marie Dentire, Ulrich Zwingli and many others, and the earlier reforming movements of Jan Hus and Peter Valdes. WARC is an interdependent network of people and churches living, working and worshipping together with faith in God's promise always to be with God's creation. The gifts and talents of many peoples and cultures make the Alliance a dynamic international community.

Gender justice and partnership of women and men is an important area of WARC's mission. The vision of the Alliance for partnership of women and men recognizes the full humanity of women together with men as people of God called to work for dignity and genuine community based on love, understanding and right relationships. Gender awareness and leadership development is important in building partnership of women and men and imagining a new model of church which offers hope for life in fullness for all people regardless of gender, age, race, class, tribe or sexual orientation.



World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Geneva, Switzerland

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

FROM HEGEMONY TO PARTNERSHIP



Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership is a church manual on men as partners for promoting positive masculinities. It is a dynamic resource on men, gender and masculinity from the stand point of the Christian faith. The concepts of masculinity and gender are explored with the aim of enabling men to become more conscious of gender as a social construct that affects their own lives as well as that of women. Masculinity is explored from lived experiences as well as from the perspective of social practices, behaviour and power constructions through which men become conscious of themselves as gendered subjects.

Various approaches are used to examine and question hegemonic masculinity and for creating enabling environments in which men and women work towards re-defining, re-ordering, re-orienting and thus transforming dominant forms of masculinity. The intention is to affirm positive masculinities and not to demonize men or to instill feelings of guilt and powerlessness in them. Men are enabled to peel away layers of gender constructions which have played a key role in defining manhood in specific cultural, religious, economic, political and social contexts.

The manual includes theological and biblical resources, stories, sermon notes and eight modules on men, masculinity and gender. The modules include activities for discussion on how men's experiences, beliefs and values form the foundational bases of masculinity. It also addresses the role of the church in this formation. It makes a vital contribution in advancing men's partnership with women in building a just community where right relationships with each other and with all of creation will be fostered. It affirms the right for both women and men to live life in fullness.



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