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REDEMPTIVE MASCULINITIES
MEN, HIV, AND RELIGION

Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma, Editors



**World Council
of Churches**
Publications

REDEMPTIVE MASCULINITIES

Men, HIV and Religion

Edited by Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma

EHAIA series

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To the memory of Ethiel Tagwirei Chitando

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Preface

Most of the chapters in this volume emerged from the MEHAIA-University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Religion and Theology consultations that were held in December 2006 and 2007. Sophie Chirongoma coordinated the meetings and followed up on the chapters. The editors are grateful to Nyambura J. Njoroge and Isabel A. Phiri for the support.

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Introduction

Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma

On the Title

The title *Redemptive Masculinities* might be a major challenge to those among us who are suspicious of any effort to associate men with anything positive, let alone “*redemptive*.” Consequently, the notion of redemptive masculinities might conjure an image of supermen who intervene swiftly and decisively to save women and children: male saviours! The notion of redemptive masculinities can thus be problematic in a world dominated by men. Yet, this book adopts the concept. We embrace and employ the concept of redemptive masculinities to characterize and identify masculinities that are life-giving in a world reeling from the effects of violence and the AIDS pandemic. In particular, we wish to underline the importance of religio-cultural resources in the emergence of liberating “*more peaceful and harmonious masculinities*” (Morrell, 2001b:7).

There are other, equally valid concepts that convey what we seek to achieve in this volume. “*Liberating masculinities*” is one such concept and has the double meaning of “*setting masculinities free*” or “*masculinities that set men and others free*.” Both senses are valid, as contemporary masculinities, both in Africa and globally, remain trapped by negative ideas of being a man. Thus, there is need to develop masculinities that promote health and well being for

all. The idea of “*progressive masculinities*” distinguishes our longing for more accommodating and sensitive masculinities, as opposed to the current death-dealing masculinities. “*Troubling masculinities*” is another appealing concept. It suggests what we seek to do in this volume: both examine masculinities that are “*troubling*” and “*trouble*” masculinities too settled to be bothered by the cries of women, children and men. “*Transformative masculinities*” speaks about the endeavour to generate masculinities that transform the world into a gender-equitable community. We settled for the concept of “*redemptive masculinities*” as it evokes the spiritual dimension that we wish to highlight. The term resonates with the theological and religious dimensions that the contributors to this volume underscore. We are persuaded that contemporary discussions on masculinity in the face of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS have not taken seriously the role of religion in shaping positive masculine attitudes.

On the Context

Masculinities occupy centre stage in this book because of the growing realization that most interventions in the field of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS have concentrated on women and children. Discourses on empowerment have focused on the vulnerability of women and children, an approach that must be appreciated as these groups have been more vulnerable to the epidemic. However, this has had the undesired effect of leaving men (totally) out of the picture. A recent report from Lund University in Sweden, commissioned by SIDA, the Swedish Development Agency, makes the following observation:

The need to redress gender inequities in relation to women’s and girl’s vulnerability to HIV has been on the agenda for more than a decade. Still, most programmes have focused on women, omitting men. Gradually, the importance of the participation of men, and also of focusing on men in their own right, has now become apparent. Since the late 1990s, a number of efforts have therefore been made to

involve men as partners in the struggle against HIV (UNAIDS 2000). In parallel, efforts to increase men's involvement in sexual and reproductive health and rights, earlier criticized as taking funds from women-centred activities, are now widely accepted. (Agardh et al, 2007:3)

The role and responsibility of men in responding to the HIV- and AIDS-related challenges and gender-based violence are beginning to receive the necessary attention. Instead of adopting an "either women or men" stance, there is a growing realization that only holistic approaches will bring about gender justice and roll back the tide of HIV and AIDS. In the *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic: Executive Summary*, UNAIDS makes the following recommendation to reduce gender inequality:

Evidence-informed programmes to forge norms of gender equity should be brought to scale, with particular attention to interventions focused on men and boys. (UNAIDS, 2008:11)

Religion and culture have often been abused by men to perpetrate (and perpetuate) gender-based violence and to have multiple sexual partners. Religious and cultural ideologies have reinforced hegemonic masculinities. These are masculinities that are widely perceived as the most desirable and as having the most power in a given society (Connell, 1995). Some men appeal to "ancestral traditions" or "sacred texts" to defend patriarchal privileges. This book recognizes that masculinity has generally played an important role within faith communities and other religious structures and seeks to interrogate this interface.

Cognisant of the role of religion and culture in discourses on masculinities and the HIV and AIDS pandemic, there is need to mobilize men in faith communities to become advocates of gender justice. The task lies in setting "gender-equitable" norms and values within the various religions and cultures. In a position paper entitled *Human Rights, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Gender Equality: An Impossible Cocktail for Faith-Based Organisations?* a consortium

of European church-based organizations calls for concerted efforts that focus on men. According to these organizations:

Even when AIDS interventions do address gender issues, they often fail to address men's gender roles. Only when programmes are designed to directly address men's sexual behaviour can there be a significant reduction in the rate at which the pandemic is spreading. The main mode of transmission of HIV is through sexual intercourse. Men usually make decisions with whom, where, and how to have sex. However, men's sexual behaviour is a manifestation of prevalent gender norms and men often (have) to appear to be in control to maintain their status. Involving men as important duty-bearers to change unequal relationships and promote more protective environments for young girls and women is crucial. *We need to involve men as partners in social change, particularly in terms of challenging gender stereotypes that disempower women.* Gender stereotypes also encourage double standards, with multiple sexual partners for men and sexual ignorance for women. Men also need to be actively involved in ending sexual violence; and in protecting their own and their partners' health by using preventive measures including condoms. (Christian Aid et al, 2008:3. Emphasis original)

Acknowledging the need for openness on the issue of male sexuality and the active engagement of men, Christine Ricardo and Gary Barker make the following call:

Here is an urgent need for a public questioning and for open, honest and public debates about male sexuality—in schools, community organizations, homes, and religious institutions—and for broader understanding of the contexts and factors that lead to the use of sexual exploitation and sexual violence. Moreover, in programs, as well as policies, there is need for men who do not condone sexual violence and sexual exploitation to question other men and to take a public stand against these actions. (Ricardo and Barker, 2008:42)

Masculinities: Exploring a Significant Concept

The concept of masculinities has enjoyed considerable attention within gender studies in the West. For the purpose of this study, a number of themes need to be emphasized.

First, there is a general acceptance of the plural “masculinities” ahead of the singular “masculinity.” The proverbial wisdom has been that “all men are the same.” Research has shown that in fact there are different ways of being a man. Barker and Ricardo have examined young men and the construction of masculinity in sub-Saharan Africa, with special focus on HIV and AIDS, conflict and violence. They counsel that,

A gender analysis of young men must take into account the plurality of masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa. Versions of manhood in Africa are: (i) socially constructed; (ii) fluid over time and in different settings; and (iii) plural. There is no typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa and no single version of manhood. There are numerous African masculinities, urban and rural and changing historically, including versions of manhood associated with war, or being warriors and others associated with farming or cattle herding. There are indigenous definitions and versions of manhood, defined by tribal and ethnic group practices, and newer versions of manhood shaped by Islam and Christianity, and by Western influences, including the global media. (Barker and Ricardo, 2005:v)

Second, and emerging from the citation above, is the malleability of masculinities. Men are susceptible to change. Masculine identities are not given once and for all. For Morrell, (2001b:7) this reassures gender activists of the possibility of transforming masculinities. Masculinities are fragile: they are constantly breaking down and new ones formed. In religious and theological terms, men are capable of being born again (again!).¹ Men who have been anti-women can become partners in the struggle. Die-hard supporters of inequitable gender norms and values can become the most passionate defenders

¹We are indebted to Gerald West for this statement.

of gender justice. This book is therefore not “neutral.” It seeks to mobilize men to become agents of change in the face of gender-based violence and the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Morrell and Ouzgane identify two fundamental principles that motivate the essays in their volume, *African Masculinities*. These are:

That definitions of African masculinities are not uniform and monolithic, not generalizable to all men in Africa, and that masculine behaviours in Africa are not natural or unchanging—suggesting the possible emergence of new (and less violent and less oppressive) ways of being masculine. (Morrell and Ouzgane, 2005a:8-9)

Third, in most societies in sub-Saharan Africa, hegemonic masculinities have projected men as having power over women and children. Granted, not all men have power, and some men have more power than others, but it remains true that men tend to be socially constructed as more powerful than women. Patriarchy, an ideology that privileges men, is a global phenomenon (Messer, 2004:78). The biological fact of being male places men in privileged positions. This has been termed “the patriarchal dividend”—the benefits that all men enjoy simply as a result of an accident of biology. Through social engineering, facilitated by religion and culture, men have been portrayed as leaders across various cultures.

Fourth, sexual potency is often associated with masculinity across various cultures. Men have been socialized to associate the state of manhood with competence in sexual matters. Many men are “under social pressure to behave in a domineering and sexually aggressive way” (Walker, Reid and Cornell, 2004:24). The “becoming” moment of most men is defined in terms of the first sexual encounter with a woman. Unfortunately, violence, rape and sexual coercion tend to characterize many relationships in Africa. The link between masculinities and (hetero)sexual performance is deep seated.

Fifth, available scholarly reflections on masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa gloss over the role of religion in shaping masculinities. There are two main reasons for this unfortunate development. To begin with, scholars who have been pioneers in this field were not trained in theology and religious studies. As a result, theological and religious perspectives on masculinities have been missing. Secondly, African women theologians who have brought the discourse on gender to the fore have not focused specifically on masculinities. It is therefore crucial to highlight the place of religion in forming and challenging masculinities in the context of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS.

Men under the Gaze: An Overview of Research on Masculinities in Sub-Saharan Africa

It is not possible within the context of this introduction to provide an exhaustive review of the literature on masculinities, gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, we seek to draw attention to some of the more prominent publications in the field. As noted above, interest in masculinities in the West has been closely linked to reflections in development studies. The transition from *Women in Development* (WID) to *Gender and Development* (GAD) in the last two decades has facilitated a more direct focus on men (Sweetman, 2001).

Sylvia Chant and Matthew Gutmann note that while in the 1970s and 1980s there was unprecedented focus on women, in the 1990s the spotlight began to fall on men as well. This was due to the realization that many men are subject to “mounting vulnerability and marginalization” (Chant and Gutman, 2000:1). The reality of “troubled masculinities” (men’s failure to live up to the “breadwinner” tag; men’s resorting to violence; and the male role in driving the HIV and AIDS pandemic) have brought masculinities more sharply into focus, especially within the last decade. In addition, the desire of some professionals to retrieve the original meaning of gender has

brought men into the picture. The tendency to reduce gender to “women’s issues” had effaced men, leaving a distorted picture. The focus on masculinities seeks to restore the balance in gender studies.

Alongside development practitioners’ and policy makers’ growing focus on men, the emergence of men’s studies as an area of academic research facilitated the focus on masculinities. Since the 1990s, the field of men’s studies has been growing, especially in North America. It seeks to complement the more established (but no less contentious) women’s studies. This is a direct result of the remarkable impact of the feminist movement on academia. Realizing that what has often passed as “mainstream” is in fact “malestream,” (Ruether, 2002; Schüssler Fiorenza, 2002) men’s studies have sought to understand men as gendered beings.

Although it has taken a long time, women activists, development practitioners and scholars have come to the realization that *men matter* (Agardh et al, 2007). Awakening to the contention that “domination is not inscribed in men’s nature,” (Silberschmidt, 2005:199) there are now concerted efforts to mobilize men as partners in the struggle for gender justice. This has precipitated considerable research and publication on masculinities.

Masculinities in Africa

Although there were earlier reflections on masculinities—for example, Heald, 1999—the volume edited by Robert Morrell, entitled *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, (2001a) represents one of the first detailed publications on the topic in twentieth-century Southern Africa. Morrell examines the responses of men to changes in South Africa, categorizing them as reactive or defensive, accommodating, and responsive or progressive (2001b:26–33). Essays in the volume examine themes relating to guns, sports and violence, families and sexuality. *Changing Men in Southern Africa* is a rich collection that provides a helpful background to discourses on masculinities, although most of the essays focus on South Africa. On the other hand, *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Lindsay and

Miescher, 2003) concentrates on the colonial period and illustrates the expression of masculinities in diverse African contexts.

African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present, edited by Lahoucine Ouzgane and Robert Morrell (2005b), also has a wide geographical span. Chapters in this volume grapple with the portrayal of black masculinities as well as homosexuality in Africa. Another section examines the representation of masculinities in literature. The construction and contestation of masculinities is reviewed in other sections, and chapters in this volume highlight the wide range of themes that can be covered under masculinities.

In keeping with the centrality of fatherhood to discourses on masculinity, the volume *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa*, edited by Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (2006), focuses on the meaning of fatherhood. The volume opens up the meaning of fatherhood beyond the biological definition and traces fatherhood in a historical perspective, drawing attention to the impact of apartheid. Other chapters focus on the representation of fatherhood in the media and children's views of fathers. While many would like to condemn African culture wholesale for patriarchy, two chapters explore the resources available for the reconstruction of fatherhood from African cultural perspectives. Critically for this study, two chapters focus on the impact of the AIDS pandemic. In particular, Denis and Ntsimane (2006) show the absence of fathers through stories of families affected by HIV and AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal.

The final section in *Baba* explores creative ways of developing programmes that enhance fatherhood. Peacock and Botha (2006) describe various programmes to achieve gender equity, end violence against women, and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS. Tom Beardshow (2006) suggests areas for further research, as well as policy and programmes to support fatherhood and men's roles in families. Overall, *Baba: Men and Fatherhood in South Africa* retrieves men and fatherhood from the intellectual ghetto, reminding readers and researchers that the responsibility and participation of men is crucial for the health of families, communities, and nations.

In *Workers and Warriors: Masculinity and the Struggle for Nation in South Africa*, Tembisa Waetjen (2004) examines the role of masculinity in the formation and expression of Zulu nationalism. The work highlights Inkhata's appropriation of masculinity in its struggle for political power. It confirms the contention that masculinity is not uniform and that class, political ideologies, and other factors have an impact on masculinity. This is expressed clearly in the following citation:

Masculinity and patriarchy were not only contested within the boundaries of Zuluness; they surfaced as points of contention in the broader political marketplace, where opposing class interests and rival political agendas staked their claims. The hyper masculinity of Inkhata's discourse did not merely derive from Zulu traditions or from the formal imperatives of nationalism but was a response to the political challenges of rival liberation movements. (Waetjen, 2004:119)

Horace Campbell's *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation* (2003) sustains the focus on the mobilization and deployment of masculinities in political discourses. Campbell contends that the postcolonial challenges in Zimbabwe stem from an "exhausted patriarchy," and that the ruling elite remains trapped in old-fashioned patriarchal schemes to retain power at all costs. "Executive lawlessness" ensues, as discredited nationalists seek to subdue their political opponents. The men in charge of state affairs shamelessly evoke tradition and culture to defend their patriarchal dividend. Campbell suggests that the full liberation of Zimbabwe lies in appropriating feminist models, as well as debunking patriarchy. His work is a brave effort to deconstruct toxic masculinities.

Staying within Zimbabwe, Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde's edited volume, *Manning the Nation*, (2007) probes masculinities in Zimbabwe. Chapters in the book illustrate the portrayal of men in Zimbabwean literature. Scholars trace the notion of political leaders as "fathers of the nation" and the casting of men

as heads of households, while others interrogate the impact of HIV and AIDS on the concept of a healthy male body. *Manning the Nation* offers scholarly and penetrating analyses of masculinities in Zimbabwean literature and society.

Barker and Ricardo offer a detailed review of masculinities in a publication entitled *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence*. Alongside drawing attention to different ways of being men in the region, they undertake an informative literature review. Unlike other studies, they draw attention to the importance of rites of passage in the formation of masculinities. They contend that while many of these rites reinforce traditional gender hierarchies, they also sometimes act as a form of social restraint (Barker and Ricardo, 2005:9).

Barker and Ricardo highlight the “big man syndrome” in Africa, where power is concentrated in the hands of “big men” and elders. They draw attention to the role of women in the making of men and men’s tendency to have multiple sexual partners. Barker and Ricardo indicate that both young men and young women have internalized violence against women as a norm (2005:22). In discussing young men and HIV and AIDS, they conclude that there are noticeable patterns of change in attitudes and sexual behaviour. They argue in the following words:

Masculinities are clearly changing in Africa, as in the rest of the world. There have been some suggestions that the dimensions of the AIDS epidemic in Africa and the devastation of families are forcing some men to question gender norms and attitudes that were once unquestionable. Some men are taking on care-giving roles and others are caring for their health in new ways. (Barker and Ricardo, 2005:44)

In an article entitled “Sons and Fathers/Boys to Men in the Time of AIDS: Learning Masculinity in Zambia” (2005), Anthony Simpson explores how boys come to construct, experience, and define themselves as men. He notes that although very few men in his cohort regularly attended church, almost all claimed a Christian

identity (2005:570). Simpson traces the impact of fathers on the construction of masculinity. Schools also played in the construction of masculinity. According to Simpson:

If men are to be “brought in” to the fight against HIV/AIDS, more needs to be understood about their relationship to constructions of masculinity and about how this affects the way they perceive and experience their gender and sexuality. They need to be disabused of the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (Simpson, 2005:584)

Africa after Gender? edited by Catherine M. Cole *et al.* (2007), analyses the complexities around the issue of gender in Africa. While the majority of the chapters focus on women, the one by Lindsay adopts a historical approach to trace the emergence of the “male breadwinner” in colonial South Western Nigeria. Miescher’s chapter also employs a historical perspective to understand seniority, gender, and masculinities in Ghana since the nineteenth century. Helen N. Mugambi (2007:289) issues a timely reminder that gender in Africa “cannot be frozen in time.” She observes that socioeconomic factors, as well as internal migrations, militarization, and cultural globalization, all have had an impact on gender constructions in Africa. She regrets that masculinity “remains a barely tapped area in current scholarship” (Mugambi, 2007:289).

Editor Egodi Uchendu’s volume *Masculinities in Contemporary Africa* (2008) is one of the latest additions to reflections on the theme in Africa. It is a helpful volume that highlights the efforts of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) to bring men into focus. While a good number of the chapters dwell on masculinities in Kenya, they also examine different themes. These include masculinity and ritual violence, masculinity and rape, as well as coverage of Xhosa male circumcision in the South African press. The volume also carries chapters from the Francophone region of the continent.

Although other publications that review masculinities in Africa could be cited, the material covered in this section illustrates the

growing interest in the theme. The following section builds on the foregoing discussion by focusing more specifically on men and HIV and AIDS in the region. Before proceeding to this theme, there is a need to highlight some emerging issues from the review of literature on masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa.

First, the majority of contributors to the discourse are non-indigenous or non-black African scholars. To put it another way, the voices of black African male scholars are largely absent. This book seeks to plug the gap by privileging the voices of black African men and women on masculinities.

Second, as noted earlier, the role of religion in both shaping and challenging masculinities does not feature prominently in the literature available. Very few authors have analysed the impact of religion on masculinities.

Third, there appears to be limited dialogue between studies on masculinities and African women's writings on gender. Although this book does not engage African women theologians directly, it is clear that discourses on masculinities must have African women's writings in mind. Gender justice can only be achieved when women and men come to the debating table, or both join the circle. As a result, this book also grants space to African women scholars to reflect on masculinities in the context of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS.

Fourth, an overview of the literature on masculinities in the region shows a growing interest in the representation of men in creative works, films, and magazines. Edited volumes, in particular, devote entire sections to this theme. There is a realization that the arts are an important resource for establishing prevailing gender values and norms. As cultural workers, artists are often capable of bringing out ideas connected to masculinity in a less constrained way. They are licensed to "tell it like it is" or even to exaggerate in order to lay bare the beliefs and prejudices associated with gender.

Fifth, in some publications there is a willingness to address a topic that is taboo—especially within African church circles—that is homosexuality and men who have sex with men. Marc Epprecht

(2004) discusses the history of homosexuality in Zimbabwe. He has also critiqued the notion that the continent is heterosexual (Epprecht, 2008). Epprecht's research has highlighted the need to acknowledge the breadth of the spectrum of human sexuality. In the same spirit, there is a need to pay more attention to men who have sex with men, as well as men in prison. The silence, secrecy, shame, and stigmatization (the four deadly Ss) that currently surround the topic frustrate efforts to stem the tide of HIV and AIDS. Discussions on masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa must necessarily include coming to terms with human sexuality in all its diverse forms.

Overall, there is an appreciable increase in the literature addressing masculinities in the region. It has become clear to the various stakeholders that the struggle against HIV and AIDS can become more effective by including men as partners. Research and publications on masculinities may enable policy makers to design more effective HIV and AIDS programmes. It is therefore crucial for any individual or organization desiring to work with men in the present time of HIV and AIDS to become familiar with the latest material on masculinities.

Men, Gender-Based Violence, and HIV

Most publications on masculinities make references to men's high rating of having sexual intercourse as a key part to what it means to be a man. According to Simpson (2005:584), "All the men in this study felt they had to, as boys, struggle among their peers to achieve manhood, and this routinely involved trials of physical strength, and for many, unprotected sex." Barker and Ricardo (2005:38) maintain that,

[I]deals of masculinity, such as those which espouse male sexual needs as uncontrollable, multiple partners as evidence of sexual prowess, and dominance over women (physical and sexual), can place both young men and young women at high risk of HIV infection.

The Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAFAIDS) and its partners have produced valuable material on men and HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa. The organization examined men's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS, drawing attention to the socialization of boys and men regarding their role in sex. These studies include *Men and HIV in Lesotho* (SAFAIDS, 2002) *Men and HIV in Botswana* (SAFAIDS, 2003b) *Men and HIV in Swaziland* (Mataure et al, 2003) and *Men and HIV in Namibia* (SAFAIDS, 2003a). These publications carry essentially the same information, although there are slight variations reflecting particular issues. There are passionate calls for men to change their behaviours, as well as providing strategies to achieve this result. The authors draw attention to men at specific risk, including men on the move, men in uniform, men who have sex with men, men in prison, and teenage boys and young men (SAFAIDS, 2003b: 23-24).

SAFAIDS publications on men and HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa provide useful insights into men's role in the pandemic. They remind readers of the potential that men possess to make a difference in the struggle against HIV and AIDS. They comment on men's power in matters related to sex, as well as women's resistance to men encroaching on their domestic territory (SAFAIDS, 2002:5). The studies provide hope by highlighting male-driven programmes such as "Namibian Men for Change" and the "Father's Union," who have stated their opposition to gender inequality" (SAFAIDS, 2003a:11). Overall, they call for a transformation of masculinity. The following statement expresses this desire:

It is important for men to feel masculine, but the definition of masculinity should change. Men should learn to take responsibility for their own lives and to share responsibility with their partners for each other and their children. Negative aspects of masculinity, such as violence, should be rejected in favour of positive aspects, such as care and responsibility. (SAFAIDS, 2003b:29)

The theme of men taking up responsibility in the time of HIV and AIDS is taken up in *AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility*, edited by Martin Foreman (1999). Chapters in this book challenge men to set new standards of masculinity and measure “manly” behaviour in terms of responsibility. The reality of men being the major perpetrators of rape and gender-based violence has precipitated the publication of such books.

There is a growing awareness that the epidemics of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS are linked (Musasa Project, 2003). Women who are exposed to gender-based violence are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. In most instances, their male partners are likely to have multiple sexual partners and are unlikely to use protection. Addressing gender-based violence is an effective HIV and AIDS prevention strategy. The interface between sexual and gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS is expressed in the following words:

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is linked to HIV transmission. Coerced sex in all its forms—from rape to age-disparate sex to transactional sex—is usually perpetrated by men. It facilitates, inter alia, transmission of sexually transmitted infections including HIV. Sexual violence may cause damage to vaginal tissues and thereby facilitate infection. Men hoping to avoid infection by sex with younger, possibly virgin, partners might be already HIV positive and infect the women. (Agardh *et al*, 2007:12-13)

The pattern that emerges from an analysis of the material on men and HIV and AIDS is that men have been socialized from an early age to regard themselves as having a sexuality that drives them to have multiple partners. This sometimes drives them to abuse and rape women. A study focusing on the Zimbabwean male psyche with respect to reproductive health, HIV, and gender issues (Chiroro *et al*, 2002) established that most men regard having multiple partners as normal. There is also a growing awareness of the need to rethink masculinities, violence, and AIDS (Gibson and Hardon, 2005).

It is in the light of men's strategic position in the struggle against HIV and AIDS that the call for greater focus on men has been gaining momentum. Men tend to have multiple partners and perpetrate sexual and gender-based violence. There is therefore an urgent need to tackle inequitable gender norms, especially those associated with masculinity, in the overall response to HIV and AIDS. Sonja Weinreich and Christoph Benn (2004:30-31) have noted that conventional male-role stereotypes relating to multiple sexual partners, sexual violence, and unprotected sexual intercourse as signs of manhood must be corrected. They challenge men to be involved in the provision of care, and to visit AIDS counselling centres more often. They also discourage the use of alcohol and drugs, as they increase the vulnerability of men.

Religion and Masculinities in the Time of HIV

Religion is a double-edged sword in relation to masculinities in the face of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS. On the one hand, religion reinforces dangerous masculinities, while on the other it has an enormous potential to transform masculinities. In the study on the Zimbabwean male psyche referred to above, the researchers report that, "the Bible was consistently cited as supporting male dominance and supremacy over women" (Chiroro *et al*, 2002:16). It is therefore crucial to engage sacred texts in deconstructing harmful masculinities and generating life-giving masculinities.

It is not surprising that it is African women theologians who have challenged the church to reread the Bible to dethrone patriarchy and promote gender justice. Mercy Oduyoye (1995) and Dube and Kanyoro (2004) have argued that the Bible must be divested of its patriarchal bias in order for women to enjoy abundant life. African women theologians have exposed the extent to which men have abused religion and culture to protect their patriarchal privileges. Men have (ideologically) attributed their dominance in families and communities to divine and ancestral oracles. Religion therefore plays a major role in promoting male dominance in society.

Although some African communities and traditions allow space and scope for women's leadership, patriarchy is the dominant ideology. This is in keeping with the global trend in which men tend to enjoy power over women. Granted, not all men have the same power, but it remains true that men have claimed power over women. The world's religious traditions are built on patriarchal foundations. In turn, they nourish hegemonic masculinities. Feminist scholars have expended considerable energy in exposing the androcentric bias of Christianity and Christian scholarship.

Come Now Let Us Reason Together: African Women Theologians and Conversation with Men

The relationship between African women theologians and men in Africa is an enigmatic one. On the one hand, men stand accused of suffocating African women. On the other hand, men are potential partners in the struggle for a just world—one where all have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10). It must be noted that from its inception, African women's theology has not closed off any possibility of collaboration between women and men. Many have felt that the term feminism might be misconstrued to imply confronting men or rejecting any collaboration with progressive men. This is one of the reasons why the term "African women's theology" is preferred.

Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a leading African woman theologian, has sought to promote dialogue between women and men in African communities. Although she is blunt in her criticism of patriarchy and male excesses, Oduyoye has by no means written off men completely. She looks forward to an era when men can stand in solidarity with women and denounce death-dealing practices. Oduyoye's vision is one of a just world, which she expresses in the following words:

In our Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, we wish to pray for the transforming power of God so that women and men together may be children of the household of God. We pray and work

for the transforming power of God to infuse our relationships with the rest of creation with care and respect. (Oduyoye, 2001:242-243)

The theme of transforming power is also taken up by Nyambura Njoroge. She charges that male leadership of the church has been a resounding failure, especially in the light of the HIV and AIDS pandemic and violence. Male leadership lacks imagination and motivation, Njoroge charges. She maintains that, “male domination and distorted teachings that promote suppression and silencing in the family and the Church have long kept many women, children and youth imprisoned” (Njoroge, 2008:197). Like most African women theologians, she challenges male leaders to follow the example of Jesus, who embodied an alternative masculinity.

Musa W. Dube celebrates Jesus as a model man. She also salutes Jairus, the father who disregarded his social standing and sought to preserve his daughter’s life. Dube contends that Jesus and Jairus are role models for African men in our contemporary period. Instead of abusing power, men must use their power to empower others. This echoes the transformation of power that Oduyoye yearns for. Dube is convinced that men do have a valuable role in the struggle for the fullness of life. She prophetically proclaims that

Both Jairus and Jesus are powerful men, but they used their power to empower the powerless. I believe that this model highlights that the powerful men in our families, Churches, academy, and society, do have a role in building gender empowerment and in fighting against the forces of death that globalization and HIV/AIDS unleashes against the girl-child of today. (Dube, 2003:88)

Fulata L. Moyo (2005) reiterates the need to push men out of their comfort zones into the trenches of the struggle. She chides men for enjoying patriarchal privileges and hesitating to work towards social transformation. This theme is taken up by Cheryl Dibeela in her reflections on Mark 9:33–36 in *Africa Praying: A Handbook on*

HIV/AIDS, Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy (2003). Dibeela notes that masculinity has been associated with power. Unfortunately, men have tended to abuse power, as can be seen in sexual harassment, child abuse, domestic violence, and rape. In the text, Jesus overturns social attitudes towards power. Like Njoroge and Dube, she maintains that Jesus sets a worthwhile example for men. She interprets the passage in the following way:

Jesus, in using the example of a child, also proposes alternatives of power; the power to care, love and embrace those who are different. Jesus, as a male, could have easily rested in the comfort that men experienced at the time, but he did not. (Dibeela, 2003:188)

Cognisant of the potential contribution of men to the overall response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, African women theologians have invited men to join them in reflecting on the health of the continent. Dube (2006) proposes the holding of a village council to deliberate on the devastation caused by the pandemic. The roles and responsibilities of men would be honestly and openly debated in this forum. Thus, African women theologians have utilized biblical and indigenous cultural resources to invite men to the conversation table in the wake of HIV and AIDS.

Puleng LenkaBula utilizes Joel 2:28—“Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions”—to argue for the full participation of women in the life of the church. For LenkaBula, the church must accept that both men and women have the gift and role of prophecy. According to her, Joel’s message “radically proclaims the importance of a holistic and inclusive ministry and participation of both men and women in the Church” (LenkaBula, 2008:23). Whereas other African women theologians emphasize Jesus’ alternative masculinity as the basis for transforming toxic masculinities, LenkaBula utilizes Joel’s prophecy regarding the democratic Spirit of God as a sound basis for engaging men.

It was in the spirit of promoting dialogue that the Circle fourth Pan African Conference, meeting under the theme “*The Girl Child, Women, Religion, and HIV and AIDS: Gender Perspectives*” (in Yaounde, Cameroon, 2-8 September 2007) witnessed the participation of men for the first time. Some male African theologians participated in the track, “Liberating Masculinities” and emphasized the need for collaboration in the face of the epidemic. Male presence at a Circle Conference represented a breakthrough in terms of initiating collaboration between women and men in the context of HIV and AIDS.

African woman theologians have done well to resist leaving men completely out of the picture. In their quest for gender justice, African women theologians have regarded men as having a strategic role to play in the response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Although they have concentrated on women’s vulnerability, they have recognized the need to get men on board. In a passionate call for gender mainstreaming in African theology, Philomena N. Mwaura (2001:178) writes: “Theology on gender concerns should also be a task for both men and women and not women alone. Women’s or men’s concerns are the concerns of everybody.”

Men on Men: African Male Theologians and Men’s Response to HIV

Before the eruption of African women’s theologies in the 1990s, African theology was predominantly a male undertaking. Following the pioneering works of male African theologians in the late 1950s, different generations of male theologians have appeared on the scene. In line with the prevailing trends, most of their analyses have not been gendered. However, the Circle’s consistent focus on gender and HIV and AIDS has forced some male African theologians to reflect on the male response to the pandemic.

It is significant to note that older male African theologians have not been forthcoming in terms of providing reflections on HIV and AIDS. Perhaps they are not as vulnerable as their younger counterparts. In addition, the pandemic forces scholars to pursue

the subject of sexuality, and this might be culturally problematic for some African male theologians.

Tinyiko Sam Maluleke has emerged as one of the most consistent interlocutors of the Circle. One of the most prolific and creative black African theologians, Maluleke belongs to a later generation of male African theologians. His commitment to black theology has given him a broader understanding of liberation. He is convinced that men have to accord respect to women if communities are to advance. Maluleke critiques patriarchy, showing that it is inconsistent with the values of the gospel. According to him, the AIDS pandemic challenges the church and community to listen to African women theologians. He expresses it in the following way:

If we ever doubted the relevance of a whole range of women's theologies—feminist, womanist and African women's—the HIV/AIDS epidemic should rouse us from our slumber. The powerlessness of women in culture, economics and religion has a direct impact on their vulnerability to HIV infection. (Maluleke, 2003b:67)

In his reflections on “Men and their Role in Community” in *Africa Praying*, Maluleke maintains that masculinity is in a crisis. He argues that men are socialized into believing in force and power over all. As long as this attitude continues, HIV prevention campaigns will not succeed. Commenting on Genesis 19:1–11, where Lot offers his two virgin daughters to avoid the “abomination” of threatened male rape, Maluleke charges that this “is the story of manhood gone mad in pursuit of power and dominance” and concludes by suggesting that men must be taught different and new ways of being men. For him, men must be taught and re-taught love and relationship (Maluleke, 2003a:186).

Maluleke has been consistent in his criticism of dangerous masculinities. In his reflections on Mark 5:1–20, “the graveyard man” features prominently. Maluleke observes that strength and power are interpreted as symptoms of illness. In a brilliant analysis

of masculinity, he proposes “more positive, more life and community affirming notions and practices of power” (Maluleke, 2002:552).

Maluleke has been creative and impressive in his biblical reflections on masculinities. In his analysis of the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13), he charges that a number of men are implicated. He celebrates Joseph for his courage to look after Jesus, his stepson.² He challenges men to learn from John the Baptist, a man who was not ashamed of not being the “main man.” His Bible studies seek to challenge communities to embrace life-giving masculinities.³

Maluleke’s writings and conference presentations provide refreshing views on masculinities, HIV and AIDS, and religion. Essentially, he is challenging men to abandon intolerant masculinities and collaborate in creating a new heaven and a new earth. He seeks to break the covenant of violence against women (Maluleke and Nadar, 2002) and to initiate the emergence of liberating masculinities. Where most men are comfortable with the state of the world on account of the privileges they enjoy, Maluleke is working towards a new world order characterized by gender justice. He suggests that men have to give up the patriarchal dividend and collaborate with women to transform the world (Maluleke, 2007).

Ezra Chitando has offered some thoughts on the need to transform masculinities in the era of HIV and AIDS. Reflecting on Proverbs 4:1–23, Chitando (2003:166-168) argues that the boy-child needs to be resocialized in order to empower him with a positive attitude. In *Acting in Hope: African Churches and HIV/AIDS* (Chitando, 2007b), he has devoted an entire chapter to a discussion of the role of the church in working with men in the time of HIV and AIDS. He has also investigated the role of masculinities in Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe (Chitando, 2007a). In “Religious Ethics, HIV and AIDS, and Masculinities in Southern Africa”

²See also the chapter by Chirovamavi in this volume.

³See for example, Bible studies by Tinyiko Maluleke (Unisa) published in *Challenge Magazine*, www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/ujamaa/resources.htm.

(Chitando, 2008), he challenges men to adopt safer sexual practices and to provide care in contexts of HIV and AIDS.

Gerald West utilizes his expertise as a biblical studies scholar to provide a brilliant reading of masculinities within the Tamar Campaign. West provokes his audiences to identify the latent factors that enable different male characters to participate in the rape of Tamar. Such participatory and liberating Bible studies hold a lot of promise for the emergence of progressive masculinities in the time of HIV and AIDS.⁴

The *Journal of Constructive Theology* (12/1, 2006) is dedicated to an analysis of masculinity. The informative articles in this issue of the journal are followed by probing responses. The articles include investigation of masculinities in the Zion Christian Church and the use of Galatians 3:28 in promoting gender equality. Responses by three scholars conclude by acknowledging that further reflections on masculinities and religion are required. We hope that this book contributes to this quest.

It is not only African Christian men who have been reflecting on masculinities in the wake of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS. Writing from within the context of Islam in South Africa and as an activist with the organization Positive Muslims, Farid Esack has challenged Muslim men to be actively involved in the struggle against HIV and AIDS. Esack maintains that men have abused religion in order to retain power and control over women and children. Muslim men—*and indeed all men* (editors)—must give up power in order to have more fulfilling and just relationships. He wonders whether men are actually justified to claim that Allah has given them power.

At some levels, of course, we may ask whether Allah has sanctioned this male power or not. However, in the face of this horrific pandemic it is a matter of life and death that men become willing to give up

⁴Gerald West has played a leading role in integrating masculinities within the Tamar Campaign. See for example his chapter in this volume.

some of their power so that women can be free to take ownership of their bodies and responsibility in front of Allah for their decisions. (Esack, 2004: 51)

Some chapters in *Islam and AIDS: Between Scorn, Pity and Justice*, (2009) edited by Esack and Chiddy, draw attention to the need for Muslims to challenge aggressive masculinities and promote gender justice. Koh (2009) challenges Islamic feminism to become more critical in the face of HIV and AIDS, while Godsey (2009) calls for new conceptualizations of masculinity in Islam. The volume represents a commendable effort to challenge Islam to respond effectively to HIV and AIDS by interrogating gender stereotypes and homosexuality.

Leopards Changing the Colour of their Spots?

A Word of Caution

Given the history of male oppression, there is need to confront the question of whether male advocates of gender justice are genuine. Is this not patriarchy reinventing itself in order to survive? Using the feminist hermeneutic of suspicion, can women trust the oppressor? Womanist scholar bell hooks is not persuaded. She voices her scepticism of male converts to feminism as follows:

While black male academics and intellectuals give lip service to a critique of sexism (often to advance their careers – any black male who speaks on behalf of ending sexism appears unique, special), rarely do they change their habits in professional and public life in ways that testify to the repudiation of patriarchy or sexist habits of thinking of being. (Hooks, 1995:64-65)

The critique by hooks is profound. It challenges male advocates of gender justice in the face of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS to be consistent in word and in deed. Her challenge to men engaged in activism calls for permanent reflexivity. It reminds men that talk/writing can be cheap: it is in their actions that their commitment to gender justice can be measured. Cognisant of hooks's

critique, the following section seeks to outline the traits of “gender-equitable men.” If black male academics, intellectuals, and activists uphold the characteristics outlined below, they would have gone a long way in addressing hooks’s scepticism.

Masculinities, HIV, and Religion: The Vision

The involvement of men in the response to HIV and AIDS in Africa is an urgent issue. While gender and development discourses in the 1960s through 1980s tended to concentrate almost entirely on women, the role of men has come under the spotlight since the 1990s. The HIV and AIDS pandemic has accentuated this focus as men are directly implicated. Faith communities are being called upon to mobilize men in the response to HIV and AIDS.

In order for faith communities to provide effective interventions in collaboration with men, they need to be familiar with discourses on masculinities. They must appreciate men’s vulnerability in the era of HIV and AIDS. In their interventions, they seek to draw men from violent and intolerant masculinities to life-giving and progressive masculinities. Ultimately, the vision must be one of nurturing and supporting “gender-equitable” men.

“Gender-equitable” men:

1. Are respectful to women, show concern about the feelings and opinions of their sexual partners, and seek relationships based on equality and intimacy rather than on sexual conquest.
2. Believe that men and women have equal rights.
3. Assume, or share with their partners the responsibility for reproductive health and disease prevention issues.
4. Are, or seek to be, involved domestic partners and fathers, who are responsible for at least some of the household chores and their children’s care giving.
5. Are opposed to violence against women in their intimate relationships.
6. Are not homophobic. (Pulerwitz et al, 2006:6-7)

Nurturing Gender-Equitable Men

The foregoing section has outlined some of the qualities of gender-equitable men. What can communities of faith do to nurture such men? The chapters in this book provide valuable insights into the processes required to produce and support gender-equitable men. Reflecting on ongoing work with boys and men, the following methodologies and strategies are useful in the quest to generate redemptive masculinities in the face of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS:

- Encourage positive fatherhood in homes and communities
- Transform cultural practices to support less aggressive masculinities
- Infuse positive masculinities in Sunday School curricula
- Challenge schools to embrace gender justice
- Work with youth groups to promote more harmonious masculinities
- Utilize contextual bible study approach to expose harmful masculinities
- Collaborate with the Mothers Unions to support the emergence of “new men”
- Mainstream masculinities in courses on gender in theology and religious studies
- Conscientize religious leaders on transformative masculinities
- Publicize and support men who are advocates of gender justice
- Build partnerships with non-governmental organizations that mobilize men to work for gender justice.

Organization of the Book

The chapters in this volume are organized thematically. Part 1, “The Making of Men: Masculinities in History and Culture” outlines the shaping of masculinities in history and culture. Part 2, “Thus Says The Lord? Sacred Texts and Masculinities” probes the appropriation of sacred texts in the performance and reconstruction of

masculinities. Part 3, “*Imagined Men: Creative Writing and Masculinities*” explores the portrayal of masculinities in fictional works, while Part 4, “*Deadly Men? Masculinities and Gender-Based Violence*” pays attention to the theme of masculinities and gender-based violence. Chapters in Part 5, “*Versions and Subversions: Reconstructing Masculinities*” yearn for life-giving masculinities. Admittedly, each one of the essays in this volume addresses this theme: hegemonic masculinities have authored gender-based violence and have contributed to the spread of HIV and AIDS, and the world needs the emergence of more life-giving masculinities.

This book includes chapters by women on masculinities. It seeks to mitigate the limitations in previous approaches where gender has been limited to “women’s issues.” The temptation to restrict reflections on masculinities to men is great. However, this would reinforce the trend in which women are absorbed by “women’s issues,” and men become preoccupied with masculinities. It is hoped that this approach restores the term gender to its original meaning, namely, the interaction between women and men in society.

Conclusion

Masculinities can and do change. The challenges of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS necessitate the emergence of redemptive masculinities. Churches and faith-based organizations have no choice but to work towards the emergence of men who work towards the full liberation of women, children and fellow men. We hope that this book will galvanize communities of faith to invest in redemptive masculinities.

PART ONE

The Making of Men: Masculinities in History and Culture

CHAPTER ONE

Towards a Theoretical and Cultural Analysis of Dangerous Masculinities in Contemporary Africa: Can We Reinvent African Patriarchies to Curb HIV and AIDS?¹

Ufo Okeke Uzodike and Christopher Isike

Introduction

HIV and AIDS remain, in some ways, the most daunting of the numerous developmental challenges confronting Africa, especially given its devastating impact on the continent's economic and social development. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has shown that the rate of economic growth in countries heavily affected by HIV and AIDS has been reduced by the pandemic's effects on labour supply, productivity, and investment over the last ten years (ILO Report, 2006). For example, studies in South Africa have shown that apart from their obvious material poverty, orphans and vulnerable children (who also

¹This chapter initially appeared in the *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14 (1), 2008, 3-20. This is an edited version.

face discrimination and stigma) are more prone not only to mental disorders and alcohol-related problems like incest, rape, and domestic violence, as well as to dropping out of school due to the inability to pay school fees, but are also vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by other members of society (SA National Strategic Plan 2007-2011 document).

Expectedly, while much of the scholarship on the epidemiological impacts of HIV and AIDS, as well as international and national policy intervention efforts, have focused on and underscored the vulnerability of women and children, not much focus has been given to reconstructing the role of men in the HIV and AIDS response (Vetten & Bhana, 2001; Lawson, 1997). Men play a significant role in the spread of HIV and AIDS; this is not only because many are engaging in irresponsible sexual and social behaviours but also because these behaviours put men, women, and society in general in a position of vulnerability (Blackman, 2005). Therefore, understanding the evolving nature and characteristics of African patriarchies and the new masculinities they spew (that is, the high-risk sexual behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse, and sexual and other forms of violence against women) should be an integral part of every international and national policy response to the AIDS pandemic.

Given the context, this chapter seeks to explore the plausibility of reinventing contemporary African masculinities within an African cultural prism, to progressively engage men in combating the HIV and AIDS related challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. It highlights and characterizes African masculinities based on evolving patriarchies from the precolonial through to the postcolonial eras, showing how these have changed over time, due particularly to the influence of capitalism.

Having characterized African patriarchies and masculinities over time, and offering a theoretical explanation of contemporary male violence against women that is based on a distorted conception of the African masculinity, the chapter goes on to explore the utility of retooling African masculinities to progressively recruit men in

the response to HIV and AIDS without necessarily importing Western cultural worldviews wholesale. That this is possible is reinforced by the fact that Western feminism does not exist or operate in a socio-cultural vacuum. Rather, it is located within the Western cultural experience and perspectives, which might not fit into African cultural realities. Indeed, as postmodernist feminist scholars contend, ignoring the differences amongst women and their global experiences of social, cultural and economic oppression amounts to imposing a false notion of homogeneity among women and perpetuating a false uniformity on reality (Barrett, 1992; Philips, 1992; Eisenstein, 1989. and Molyneux, 1985). This too should apply to men.

The Evolving Nature of African Patriarchies and Masculinities

An indigenous and inherent “tradition” and “culture” of patriarchy has been implicated as the main cause or source of the masculinization of African societies (Walker, 1991; Hassim, 1993). This sweeping proposition has tended to portray African societies as deeply patriarchal and African men as irredeemable masculinists with no regard for women. Consider for instance the implications of the following statement from Dessine L’Espoir in a write-up about their “Know Your Body” support programme in South Africa:

Although South Africa has one of the most affirming constitutions in the world, gender equality is far from a reality. 60 percent of all AIDS cases are women and gender bias remains a reality due to economic dependency that stems from a traditional patriarchy and an acceptance of violence against women.²

These kinds of generalizations do not take cognisance of the evolution of African patriarchies over time, nor do they echo the capitalist

²<http://www.dessinelespoir.org/projects/knowyourbody/index.html>
(Accessed 15 July 2006).

influence in transforming patriarchies and constructing masculinities³ in the continent. Indeed, as in most states of Europe, Asia, and the Americas, most African societies have deep patriarchal roots that predate the capitalist mode of production. However, scholars who have written on African patriarchy have not brought to light the nature and features of these patriarchies with regards to how they benefited women. We shall refer to them collectively as the “old” patriarchies of African societies.

As we will show, the old African patriarchies are different from the “new” African patriarchies or “neo-patriarchy,” which have been wrought on the continent by the forces of imperialism and colonialism. These new patriarchies are what subsist in African societies today. By not making the distinction between old and new patriarchies in Africa, most scholars distort the changed nature and reality of patriarchy on the continent. This distortion has laid a false premise for understanding the phenomenon and has had an attendant negative effect on the response of African men to affirmative policies on gender balancing, which manifests sometimes in dangerous masculine sexual behaviours that make women more vulnerable to HIV and, in extreme cases, deliberately infecting some women (Leclerc-Madladla, 1997) or killing their partners (Sowetan, 23 August 2000).

The phenomenon of dangerous masculinity is particularly glaring in Southern Africa, for instance, where men generally oppose gender equity policies and actions, based on their belief that “African culture” does not permit women to be active in the public space, nor be

³Like femininities, masculinities are fluid and dynamic and should not be considered as a homogenous category. Different forms of masculinities exist in Africa, just like elsewhere, mediated by class, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. For instance, see Bhana (2006) and Pattman (2006), who underscored the need to speak of ‘masculinities’ rather than ‘masculinity.’ Also, within masculinities there are hierarchies, as some are dominant or hegemonic while others are subordinated, marginalized or complicit (Connell, 2000:10; Morell, 2001:6-8).

equal with men, for that matter. For example, the opposition of Zulu men to gender equity action based on cultural misunderstanding is palpable in common arguments like, “In Zulu culture women are inferior to men, and must never contest men in politics,” and, “Politics is culturally a man’s domain.”⁴ However, today’s Zulu men are often unaware of the fact that the transformation from agrarian patriarchy to capitalist patriarchy impacted on gender identities and relations which, though ever changing, have remained dominant in the perceptions and attitudes of men towards women in contemporary times. For example, according to Sadiki, (2001) violence against women in the Great Lakes region and elsewhere in Africa is an invention of modernity, “a new phenomenon that is both a novelty and serious contradiction of the values linked to respect for human life and for women, seen as the provider of life in pre-colonial African societies” (Ibid.: 445-446).

Indeed, as Gordon (1996) argues, capitalism and economic exploitation across the continent by the colonialists relied on gender and ethnicity for its maintenance and sustenance, with concomitant effects for gender relations. Therefore, there is a need to interrogate critically the culture to which men refer when they say things like, “In our culture, women are inferior to men,” or the culture that justifies risky sexual behaviours and sexual and other forms of violence against women. Such misconceptions and misrepresentation of African culture and its patriarchies provide the operational *raison d’être* of contemporary male violence and negative masculinities that men now freely employ to perpetuate women’s vulnerability to the human immunodeficiency virus.

⁴This came out from a Focus group discussion with 15 male Zulu students in a Humanities Access Programme class (Africa in the World) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 25 October 2006. Of this number, 13 (86.7 percent) felt very strongly about their masculinity. According to them, being dominant in their relations with females was part of being *umnunzane* (real manhood).

Gender Relations in Precolonial African Societies

Patriarchy existed in diverse African societies in varying forms before colonialism. However, in general terms, it was a kind of patriarchy that respected women and retained significant sociocultural and economic space for them. In the economic realm, for example, Gordon contends that, “production and consumption were centered in the extended family where both men and women had vital productive roles in predominantly agricultural or pastoral societies” (1996: 29). Therefore, while women’s conditions and positions in various precolonial African societies obviously varied from one society to another according to the kinship structures and the economic role women played within the societal structure, women commonly held complementary positions to men, although patrilineal and patriarchal kinship structures dominated most African societies.

In most societies women controlled a range of economic activities. For instance, there was a distinct sexual division of labour, with certain crops, handicrafts, animal husbandry activities and other tasks assigned to both women and men (Ibid). Although she argues that elder males tended to have more control over productive assets than women, as well as power over the labour and produce of women within the household, April Gordon concurs that “women often had enormous autonomy that helped to dilute tendencies toward male dominance,” such that in some societies, they had parallel or dual authority structures, which allowed them control over their own spheres of activity as well as a measure of economic independence and control over productive assets (Ibid.; Okonjo, 1976).

Besides, this male dominance was also mediated by age as elder women, just like elder men within these societies, were privileged over other younger members based on recognition of women’s dual roles as producers and reproducers. For example, the societal position of a young wife improved as she grew older, bore children and earned approval from its older members. She gained assistance from younger wives as she grew older, thus allowing her to spend less time in the home and more time engaging in activities outside the household—activities such as farming and

craft making—which allowed her to provide the material resources needed in order to care for her family. Amongst the Yoruba society in what is now Western Nigeria, older women had opportunities to participate in other economic activities such as manufacturing and trade. The responsibility of a woman to provide for her family included providing the material resources for such care. Women believed that providing such resources met their responsibilities as women and citizens. Their society considered the work the women did complementary to that of men, and some women achieved impressive status in the economic and social realms of Yoruba life (Awe, 1977).

Socially, women had value as they were symbols of fertility and, as such, a guarantee of children. Kinship groups, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, expected their married women to give birth to children to ensure the future of the group. This in no small measure underscored the importance of women in these societies. As with the family and economic structures, African traditional religions conceived the position of women as complementary to that of men, even though, as aforementioned, men were believed to be superior to women and, to some extent, in control of women.

Politically, precolonial African patriarchies provided space for women to participate in the public arena, contrary to the formal and circumscribed history invented by the West. This history perpetuates the view that, before colonialism, African women did not participate in governance and existed only in shadowy spheres, meekly accepting whatever their male lords and masters directed (Nzeogwu, 2000). No doubt, as Coquery-Vidrovich notes (1997: 34), “men certainly asserted their political supremacy, but women always retained opportunities for power.” For example, in very patrilineal societies such as the Sherbro and Mende in Sierra Leone (West Africa), Ganda in Uganda (East Africa), and the Zulu Kingdom in South Africa (Southern Africa), there is evidence of women playing active roles and having a fair voice in politics. Also, in matrilineal, precolonial societies such as in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, Baule and Asante women respectively held sway politically.

In diverse states such as Nigeria, where there were variants of centralized and decentralized precolonial political systems, Igbo women groups such as the *Umuada* constituted a social base of political power and also served as checks on the abuse of power by the Council of Elders. This is not to mention the fact that, as Coquery-Vidrovich put it, “Igbo women ruled among themselves by an assembly or *Ikporo-ani* of related women, widowed, married, or not” (Ibid.: 36). According to her, “these women heard spousal disputes, adultery cases, and quarrels between groups and villages, and the existence of this body meant women could also impose rules on their village political authorities” (Ibid.: 37). Okonjo described the Igbo political system as a dual-sex system in which political interest groups were defined and represented by sex such that every adult participated (1976). This is supported by Amadiume’s incisive analysis of the politics of gender in Igbo societies using her society, Nnobi, as a case study. According to her, indigenous Igbo society was based on strict sexual dualism, whereby women’s economic and political organizations were separate from those of men (Amadiume, 1987: 89).

However, sex and gender did not necessarily coincide in these societies, as women played roles usually monopolized by men and were then classified as males, just to underscore women’s power—facilitated by their economic independence and the existence of a strong goddess-focussed religion (*Idemili*), which was the basis of women’s political power at the extra-descent level of political organization in Nnobi (Ibid.:52-99). When one adds the array of other African queen mothers, female regents, and warlords like Queen Aisha of the Kanem-Borno Empire (Northern Nigeria), Empress Menetewab (Ethiopia), Queen Nzinga of Angola, and Queen Idah of Benin (Southern Nigeria, Coquery-Vidrovich, 1994:37-

40), the picture of female power in precolonial African societies becomes clearer.⁵

In essence, precolonial African women held complementary rather than subordinate positions to men in their societies and played far more important roles in the economies of their societies, where many were involved in farming, trade and craft production than previously conceived of in Europe or America (Terborg-Penn & Rushing, 1997). Although men appropriated political power and were dominant in most of these societies, power was generally based on seniority rather than gender. The absence of gender in the pronouns of many African languages and the interchangeability of first names among females and males strikes Sudarkasa (1987) as a further example of the social deemphasis on gender as a designation for behaviour. For instance, amongst the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, one would typically hear a woman being addressed as “Ngozi, daughter of Okonkwo and the wife of Okoli” instead of “Mrs Okoli,” which effectively denies Ngozi of her personage and that of her parents. Indeed, “many other areas of traditional culture, including personal dress and adornment, religious ceremonials and intra-gender patterns of comportment, suggest that Africans often de-emphasize gender in relation to seniority and other insignia of status” (Sudarkasa, 1987:36).

⁵Clearly, men’s physical strength gave them huge advantages over women in ancient warfare strategies, which required physical combat. This was the case in nearly all societies in Africa as elsewhere around the world. Nevertheless, there were many cases of outstanding female military leadership and activities. Even in societies like Rwanda, which did not have a tradition of grooming women for combat, there is the historical figure of *Ndabaga*, a young woman whose warrior father had no son to replace him so that he could retire (as per tradition) from combat in his old age. Since she had no brothers, *Ndabaga* disguised herself as a man and went to war where she fought bravely and with such skill that she came to symbolize extraordinary courage and women’s leadership. See RDRC, (2004) *Demobilization and Reintegration of Military Personnel, Progress Report*, November 2004.

Men and women coexisted in these societies not as equals but as complementary subjects living in a mutual world of responsibility-sharing, where differences were appreciated and celebrated. Masculinities were understood in ways that regarded and respected women, where it was a virtue to protect women, not just in ways that perhaps suggested that women were weaker beings needing men's protection but out of consideration that women were equally deserving of deference and honour, with natural abilities and powers to produce economically and reproduce existentially. Men did not, for instance, dictate the lifestyles of women nor attempt to control their fertility. The gradual subordination and eventual objectification of African women started with European contact through the transatlantic slave trade, culminating in the colonial interruption of the continent's sociocultural existence, which also transformed existing economic modes of production and their accompanying gender relations.

Gender Relations in Colonial Africa

A plethora of literature by scholars of different ideological nuances exists on the negative economic, political and social impact of colonialism on Africa (Nkrumah, 1965; Fanon, 1967; Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1972; Chazan et al, 1999; Mazrui, 1986; Betts, 1998). However, according to Chinwezu (1987), the most damaging impact of colonialism on Africa was not economic or political but rather psychological, which connotes a colonization of the mind that the African is yet to break from.⁶

A cultural persecution of Africa's traditional value systems and beliefs was a logical strategy the colonialists used to impose and perpetuate their own worldviews (Fanon, 1967; Chinwezu, 1987). Although Africa provided Europeans with a source of vital raw materials, it represented for them the home of unsophisticated people on whom they could impose their views and whom they could exploit

⁶See also *The Economist*, 2000.

without the qualms dictated by their Christian assumptions and avowed values.

And so began the psychological reorientation of African societies towards new forms of patriarchies, which further subordinated and marginalized women, even within the home. Males began to dominate the cultivation of cash crops for the international market and confined women to the growing of food crops, which received lower returns. By targeting men as cash-crop farmers, bureaucratic efforts to improve agriculture further encouraged the separation of the economic roles of men and women that had previously complemented each other. The importing of cheap manufactured goods from Europe, and later from Japan, led to the decline of the craft industry, except for a limited range of luxury goods, which in some regions affected the significant proportion of women engaged in such manufacture. Thus, the creation of the colonial economy tended to marginalize the structural position of the majority of women. According to Amadiume (1987:119-143), colonialism led to the erosion of women's power as it oversaw the violent suppression of indigenous institutions and the subsequent imposition of new gender ideologies that accompanied the introduction of masculinized Christianity, Western education that made women invisible, the warrant chief system of local governance that became a short cut to power for men, and a new capitalist cash economy that changed the existing gender relations of production.

African women responded to these changes and the restrictions placed on their structural position in various ways. For instance, women held a series of protests throughout the colonial period against particular colonial policies and against colonialism itself. Examples of such women's social and political activism include the Aba women's riot of 1929 in Nigeria, women's nationalist and civil rights struggles in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Campbell, 1999; 2003; Cutrufelli, 1983; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997).

In sum, colonialism disrupted the traditional systems of production of pre-colonial societies and, in so doing, reinforced existing systems of social inequality by introducing oppressive forms of social stratification through the instrumentation of the colonial state. The resultant loss of power for women has been exploited by men, who, in an attempt to maintain the new privileges, often assume hegemonic and/or dangerous masculinities, which are usually justified by a misconception or misrepresentation of African culture.

Gender Relations in Postcolonial Africa

At independence, the post-colonial African state inherited the colonial conception of statehood and its accompanying patriarchal ideologies, and these have endured since then. These new capitalist patriarchies have intensified the hegemonic masculinization of the public arena, leading to the feminization of poverty, illiteracy, and disease. The feminization of HIV and AIDS is indeed a consequence of the masculinization of the public sphere, based on a distorted understanding of Africa's culture and old patriarchies. Today, apart from Rwanda (49 percent), South Africa (36 percent), and Mozambique (31 percent), which have surpassed the 30 percent critical mass threshold set by UN Resolution 1325, women's representation in national parliaments across Africa is about 15 percent on average.⁷ Generally, women play a minimal role in politics, despite their 50 percent average population stake on the

⁷This is not such a terrible record compared to the world average of women's representation in the national parliaments of liberal democratic nations, which is about 10 percent. According to Mutume (2004:4), "despite being one of the poorest regions in the world, the level of women's representation in parliament in sub-Saharan Africa is higher than in many developed countries," observes UNIFEM in its *Progress of the World's Women 2002* report. In the US, France and Japan for instance, women hold slightly more than 10 percent of parliamentary seats. However, the critical issue is the quality of this representation compared to female power in pre-colonial societies.

continent and their disproportionate vulnerability to the effects of its underdevelopment. While women's status generally improved (at least at the formal level) in the last decade of the 20th century, through increased political representation that brought issues of concern to women to the fore, these gains have been blurred by continuous marginalization at informal levels of relations with men and society in general. Informal barriers to gender equality, because they occur in the subtle realm of social relations between men and women where "traditional" male authorities continue to dominate, are actually more difficult to overcome, as they cannot be simply legislated away. Unfortunately, their impact, not only on the deliberation processes of governance but also in the application of policy, actually does impede and undermine women's participation in the social, political, and economic life of their societies (Robinson, 1995:9, cited in Bentley, 2004).

Implied then is that until men are resocialized towards recognizing and accepting the place of women as important parts of a whole without which life is incomplete, formal approaches to engendering development based on equality and justice will continue, for the most part, to fail. Perhaps reconciling the cultural rights of the past with the liberal freedoms of the modern age will help both men and women in Africa to peacefully negotiate the much-needed change in gender relations today.

Modernizing African Patriarchies within an African Cultural Context

African patriarchies have not remained static since as far back as the 15th century, during their intensive contact with European patriarchies. They have evolved into different forms up to the present post-colonial era. It is therefore not out of place to suggest that patriarchies are malleable and can be reinvented to meet particular needs and requirements. Since patriarchy, whether African or Western, does not exist in a social vacuum, the reinvention of African patriarchies to meet the expectations of responsible masculinities must be possible within an African cultural context and worldview.

This does not in any way imply a return to outdated traditional patriarchal practices and norms that emasculate women or reduce them to property. Rather, it is an inward-looking approach that seeks a convergence of whatever is good about Africa's rich cultural past with whatever is good about Western culture; one that seeks a cultural understanding of Africa with a view to reviving and creating an authentic African personality and masculinity. As Murithi notes (2006:14), in reinventing African patriarchies, "we have to create a framework that is a hybrid between indigenous African traditions and modern principles to ensure the human dignity and inclusion of all members of society—women, girls, and boys—to create something that is uniquely African." This implies a combination of "present notions of gender equality with progressive indigenous norms and principles to create something that is uniquely African" (Ibid.:14). This is what the whole idea of modernizing without westernizing is about; a combination of African tradition and Western modernity to recreate functional masculinities that could be utilized, in the context of this paper, in curbing the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Africa.

As mentioned, men and women in pre-colonial African cultures and societies held positions in the social, economic, and political milieu and coexisted not as equals but as complementary subjects living in a mutual world of responsibility-sharing, where differences were appreciated and celebrated. The gender worldview that underpinned and defined masculinities in this era was one that saw women as spiritual and earthly leaders with awesome abilities, and powers to both produce economically and reproduce existentially. Even Robert Morrell, while questionably positing that colonialism did not destroy the history of an inherent patriarchal culture that served to legitimate the sexual division of labour and male power, agrees that "there was a presumption about the importance of community and the essential role that women played within the household and larger social units" (Morrell, 2001:13) in twentieth-century Southern African societies. As such, women were appreciated not as essential subjects but as valuable components of society. In the context of conceiving of women as economic

producers and existential reproducers, real masculinity, apart from implying strength, bravery, perseverance, courage, provider and protector of the family and society, also meant affection, respect and responsibility towards women. This kind of attitude would have informed men's responses if pre-colonial societies had encountered the HIV and AIDS pandemic.⁸ Indeed, in line with virtues associated with real masculinity of the pre-colonial era, men would have taken responsibility not only by avoiding reckless sexual behaviours but also by providing emotional support and care for women and children infected and dying from the contagion. These are virtues that flowed from an inner recognition and acceptance of the role and importance of women as partners in progress and in reaffirming their (men's) existence. These are positive virtues that can be retrieved from indigenous African cultures and enlisted alongside positive attributes of contemporary Western cultures in a concerted effort to combat the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Across different parts of pre-colonial Africa, the dominant cultural worldview that defined social, economic and political existence was underpinned by a communal ideology that was rooted in *ubuntu*. The meaning and practice of *ubuntu* in Southern Africa can be inferred from a Zulu maxim, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which literarily translates to "a person is a person because of other people." This underscores the collectivism and agency of people as the means and end of development. *Ubuntu* captures the human

⁸Julius Gathogo and Lubunga Ewusha writing within the context of Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo respectively in this book highlight the same attributes of manhood. Gathogo reiterates how *Mundurume* would go out to chase a leopard at night and risk losing their own lives just for the sake of protecting their women and children. Ewusha also explains how an ideal Bembe man *Mlumyana* was supposed to portray attributes such as being a courageous person, warrior, provider, hunter, protector and being responsible for one's family. Rose Gabaitse writing within the context of Botswana in this book also highlights the same characteristics for "real" manhood.

essence of the African personality (male or female) and traditional society built around familyhood which, according to Julius Nyerere, was an attitude of mind that was not taught but lived (Nyerere, 2000:151-158). In conceptualizing *ubuntu*, Desmond Tutu observes that (1999:35),

A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

Clearly, this was not a worldview that ill-treated, neglected, or humiliated women, since an injury to one was an injury to all. Men did not need to feel threatened by women, as each complemented the other in ways that allowed them to function cohesively as a social unit. This is tantamount to Lederach's worldview of peace-building, which advocates the centrality of relationships in an ever-evolving web of social interactions where every member is a part of the web and plays his or her role based on a moral understanding of their personal responsibility, and acknowledging relational mutuality. According to him, "the centrality of relationship provides the context and potential for breaking violence, for it brings people into the pregnant moments of the moral imagination: the recognition that ultimately the quality of our life is dependent on the quality of life of others" (Lederach, 2005:35).

Therefore, African men need a cultural paradigm shift from the present worldview of masculinities that view women as sub-humans to one that acknowledges them as part of a whole web of interdependent relationships without which the men's own existence is empty. African men need to reconnect with *ubuntu*—the moral imagination and understanding of self and other; of taking personal responsibility for their every action, and acknowledging the mutuality of human existence. Morrell (2001:30) suggests that a moral

understanding of humanity based on the principle of *ubuntu* (the cornerstone of Desmond Tutu's work as chairperson of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission)⁹ was one of the positive side effects of the TRC for gender relations; "for many, acceptance and forgiveness have been incorporated into new self-understandings of what it is to be a man." It is this kind of mental consciousness or attitude that is needed as we seek sustainable peace and development based on gender equity and justice in all parts of our continent, alongside an understanding that, with peaceful relations between men and women, there is room for development to thrive (Gagnon, 2003). African men must understand that taking on preventive and caring responsibilities in the face of HIV and AIDS, and generally supporting notions of gender equality, will serve to enhance the quality of their own lives, since in the long run "men are men because women are, and women are women because men are."¹⁰

Broad Strategies for Progressively Engaging African Men in Combating the HIV and AIDS Pandemic

Lillian Musang'u, a Malawian social activist, encapsulated the significance of involving men in efforts to combat the AIDS pandemic in these words at the World Social Forum conference in 2007:

⁹See Tutu (1999) where he reflects that he assumed an *ubuntu* posture throughout the TRC's hearings of the evils of apartheid from both perpetrators and victims.

¹⁰Chirongoma and Manda (2008) reiterate how the ethic of *ubuntu*, which incurs reciprocity and interrelatedness, should also be applied in care-giving in the context of HIV and AIDS. They argue that both male and female are interrelated therefore they should have a reciprocal responsibility towards each others' well-being, rather than leaving all the caregiving work in women's hands more so since the ills afflicting society should be every person's concern.

As long as our men are not part of the war, then we should forget about ending HIV/AIDS infection and the violence that comes with it.¹¹

She underscores the imperative of a simple but likely elusive strategy for combating HIV and AIDS in Africa—actively engaging men in the struggle. This paper contends that with their tendency to perpetuate the pandemic through irresponsible sexual and relationship behaviours, dangerous masculinities are often a result of misguided concepts of ideal manhood. Therefore, men should not only be involved in efforts to curb the pandemic but should also be re-socialized to abhor the sociocultural worldviews that currently underscore their behaviours and actions. This resocialization should also aim to identify and promote positive masculine virtues and attributes that could be utilized in preventive and caring strategies to contain the epidemic. Broadly speaking, the following strategies are recommended.

Cultural Re-Enlightenment of Men

According to famous African-American historian and writer, Lerone Bennett,

Men act out of their images, they respond, not to the situation, but to the situation transformed by the images they carry in their minds. In short, they respond...to the ideas they have of themselves in the situation. The image sees... the image feels...the image acts, and if you want to change a situation you have to change the image men have of themselves and of their situation. (Lerone Bennett in Chinwezu, 1987:211)

As we have argued, the images contemporary African men have of themselves as men are distorted images of pre-colonial African

¹¹Lillian Musang'u, a Malawian activist participant at the World Social Forum conference in 2007, available at www.ipsnews.net/news.asp (accessed 12 January 2008).

masculinities. The original cultural images of manhood have been corrupted over time by the external influences of imperialism, colonialism, and now globalization. The images of masculinity African men now carry in their minds, and which define their behaviour towards women, are new images imposed by alien patriarchies and Western imperialism. Therefore, as Bennett and Chinweizu have argued, to change the current situation of hegemonic and dangerous masculinities in Africa, African men need to be mentally released from the patriarchal ideology that informs the concept of women as inferior beings. Through deliberate and systematic projects of cultural engineering—employed using institutions such as churches, mosques and other traditional organizations—African men can be re-enlightened culturally to see that embracing gender equality is truly African.

By identifying and promoting the progressive virtues of masculinities, African men are returning to their roots, while also laying the foundations for safer, healthier, and more peaceful and productive African communities, since the characteristic negative self-concepts and low self-esteem that breed violence against women will be virtually non-existent (Dobash and Dobash, 1977). According to Nomundo Mseleku,¹² there is need to encourage traditional

¹²Mrs Mseleku is a Counselor at the Campus HIV and AIDS Support Unit, University of KwaZulu-Natal. A Xhosa by ethnicity, she claims to have gotten insights into male circumcision practice through her elder brother who underwent the ritual and told her, against cultural expectations, of how that experience shaped his overall attitude towards his wife and women generally. Though subjective, Mseleku thinks that this practice is what makes Xhosa men to be more responsible and caring men than Zulu men, for instance, who do not circumcise their men.

practices like male circumcision,¹³ which was a veritable instrument of transmitting progressive masculine behaviour amongst Xhosa men in South Africa when used to teach young boys to regard and respect women and to be socially responsible in their sexual relations with women.¹⁴

Using Gender-Friendly Men to Encourage Men on Behaviour Change

There is a need for African men already involved in gender-equality advocacy work to forge collaborations and alliances between themselves and HIV-infected men, aimed specifically at encouraging other male colleagues to change their general attitudes and behaviour towards women. This will help to teach and foster preventive behaviour, like faithfulness and commitment to one spouse or partner, practice of safer sex (using condoms), as well as post-infection behaviours like voluntary testing, disclosure, and caring for women who are already infected. Men's organizations like Papa Plus in the Democratic Republic of Congo¹⁵ and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in South Africa, should be replicated all over the continent to help involve all men in combating HIV and AIDS, starting with a change in attitudes. In the same vein, since traditional

¹³Studies have shown that male circumcision is also a strategy for curbing the spread of HIV as there is a positive relationship between male circumcision and HIV infection in varying contexts given that the male foreskin is rich in blood cells that are conducive to HIV. For example, according to a three-year longitudinal study conducted in South Africa (Orange Farm Trials) by the WHO, there was a reduction of 60 percent in the risk of acquiring HIV by circumcised men. This probably explains why infection rates are higher in societies (most parts of Southern Africa) that do not circumcise their men. However, this does not imply circumcised men are not prone to the disease (*Mail & Guardian*, 18/08/06).

¹⁴Interview with Mrs. Mseleku, 28 January 2008.

¹⁵Lubunga Ewusha in this volume elaborates on the role of this organization.

ruling councils across Africa are male dominated, these councils should be enlisted in the quest to revive positive indigenous cultural values that would make men more responsible partners.

Counselling Perpetrators of Sexual Violence against Women

Sexual violence should be identified as a highly anti-social behaviour that must be met with the most serious of societal disapproval. Through public enlightenment campaigns, victims of such violence must be encouraged to report incidents and must be given every means of support to facilitate their treatment and recovery. Perpetrators of such violence should not only meet with strong public censure but should also be deliberately targeted for systematic re-socialization and retraining. Men's organizations should also be encouraged to provide rape and domestic violence crisis counselling for men. Men involved in expressing these kinds of negative masculinities need help to overcome the mindsets that inform their behaviour.

Co-Parenting

The family is the building block of society; therefore, the quality of men and women a society has is dependent on the character of childrearing. It implies that the origin of patriarchy can be traced to childrearing in varied cultural and social contexts. According to Balbus, the pre-oedipal experiences of a male child in "mother-dominated" childrearing presuppose him to assume oppositional stances and withdrawal attitudes towards his mother in the absence of a parent of his own gender—a father—with whom he can identify. (Balbus, 1987:110-127). This scenario is aggravated by the fact that in mother-dominated childrearing, the mother is also the "first overwhelming adversary" of the will of the child, the constant representative of authority he always confronts, and eventually loathes, and which he must resist and overcome if he is to become a "man." This hatred of the mother is subsequently "transferred to all those who came to represent her, i.e., to women in general. And the exclusion of women from positions of authority outside the family

reflects the terror of ever again experiencing the humiliating submission to the authority of the mother within it” (Balbus, 1987:113). Balbus therefore contends that since the mother is the source of both the satisfaction and the frustration of the imperious needs of the infant, “co-parenting is the key that can unlock the possibility of a society in which the nurture and care that have thus far been largely restricted to the arena of the family come to inform the entire field of human interaction” (Ibid.:119).

African men should be socialized to involve themselves in the rearing of their children on an equal basis with women, in order to dismantle the basis of patriarchy in society and, in the process, enthrone a new kind of civilization; a civilization without domination where the moral imagination that enables *ubuntu* will guide the interaction between men and women; where men will feel free to openly discuss their sexuality with women and feel the need to identify with rather than oppose their feminine sides as a way of reaffirming their masculinity. This is imperative considering that gender equality is pivotal to containing the spread of HIV and AIDS (Kaufman, 2001).

Conclusion

Men remain vital to efforts to combat the HIV and AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Accordingly, the images of contemporary manhood that inform their concept of women as inferior beings and underlie irresponsible sexual behaviour need to be transformed in line with Bennett’s postulation on social change. Such transformation should occur within an African cultural context, as all masculinities and femininities are located in cultural worldviews. In turn, this conduces to a cultural reinvention, which, apart from meeting African men at their own cultural levels, enables them to rightly perceive and accept gender equality in post-colonial Africa as innately African rather than as a Western imposition. Given the often critical roles they play in spreading the HIV and AIDS virus, they can be a useful agency in curbing and managing the pandemic and its effects.

However, this agency can only be realized by converging and then reworking pre-capitalist African patriarchies and Western patriarchies to create something uniquely African.

It is important for such cultural reinvention to occur within an African cultural context because apart from the fact that masculinities and femininities are located in cultural worldviews, it meets African men on their own cultural levels. Also, such reinvention within an African cultural context enables men to rightly perceive and accept gender equality in post-colonial Africa as innately African. This will help to enthrone a new kind of African civilization—a civilization without domination—where the moral imagination that enables *ubuntu* will guide the interaction between men and women, allowing men to openly discuss their sexuality with women and to identify with rather than oppose their feminine side to reaffirm their masculinity.

CHAPTER TWO

The Connectedness of Masculinity and Culture in the Context of HIV and AIDS: Special Focus on Rwanda

Celestin Hategekimana

Introduction

The present chapter explores the possible roles that can be embraced by the Christian community in Rwanda as a concerted response to the current challenges posed by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Since Christians confess that God is the Creator of all, without exception, and they firmly believe in the equal dignity of all, the chapter uses these beliefs as a vantage point to make Christians custodians of humanity's well-being. A commitment to the Christian faith and principles obliges Christians to promote respect for the inalienable rights to well-being and the abundance of life for all, and their integration into the church and into society as a whole. This chapter therefore focuses on Rwandan culture as a lens through which the connectedness of masculinity and culture in the context of HIV and AIDS in Africa can be explored. Special reference will be made to the Abakiga, an ethnic group in the Northern Province of Rwanda.

Thus, the chapter focuses on masculinity and HIV and AIDS, seeking to demonstrate how men can become effective agents of change in the time of HIV and AIDS, and what role the Church and religious leaders can play in transforming masculinity.

The Connectedness of Culture, Gender, Patriarchy, and HIV and AIDS

Rwanda is a hilly and evergreen country located in the Eastern part of Africa (Burnet, 2000:21). In the north, Rwanda shares borders with Uganda, in the east with Tanzania, in the west with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and in the south with Burundi. Rwanda is a small landlocked country, with an area of about 26,338 square kilometer. The population is estimated at 8 million inhabitants, giving an overall population density of more than 300 per kilometer (Ibid). Although women constitute the majority (56 percent) of the Rwandan population and labour force, particularly in agriculture, they continue to face substantial constraints on their participation in the economy and in society (Ibid.:23).

As in other African states, women in Rwanda face numerous cultural, customary, economic, legal, and social constraints regarding their access to community resources, such as land, and ownership of property in general. The discriminatory laws and practices in education, employment, inheritance, and finance have marginalized women to the extent that some of them are forced to engage in risky survival strategies, such as sex work, which is one of the modes of contracting the HIV and AIDS infection. Haddad poignantly states how this marginalization of women leads to gender-biased poverty, which is sometimes referred to as the “feminization of poverty” (Haddad, 2002:425).

In the social sciences and humanities, a gender role is a set of behavioural norms associated with a given gendered status (also called a gendered identity) in a given social group or system. According to Bem, gender is one component of the gender/sex system, which refers to the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity and in which

these transformed needs are satisfied (Bem, 1981:354-364). This is also true of the Rwandan experience, where masculinity is an indicator of *social status* as much as wealth and *social class*.

The relative importance of the roles of socialization and genetics in the development of masculinity continue to be debated in Rwanda and elsewhere. While social conditioning obviously plays a role, it can also be observed that certain aspects of the masculine identity exist in almost all human cultures. Despite the call of the Rwandan government for gender equity, there is still broad gender inequality among the *Abakiga* and in other traditional patriarchal contexts.

The reality in Rwanda and in many other African societies is that most men feel pressured to act in a masculine way. This means that men feel that they have to prevail in situations that require physical strength and fitness. Therefore, to appear weak, emotional, or sexually inefficient is a major threat to their self-esteem. To be content, these men must feel that they are decisive, self-assured, and rational. Arrindell explains that masculine gender role stress may develop if a man feels that he has acted in an “unmanly” fashion. Conversely, acting “manly among peers will often result in increased social validation or general competitive advantage” (Arrindell, 2005:31). This “manly” behaviour is usually influenced by culture. The positions of power and authority that society bestows on men sometimes push them to subordinate women or to abuse them in different ways. The perpetration of rape is one of the common abuses committed in the name of and under the cover of culture in different societies. In view of this background, this chapter focuses on analysing the extent to which the two issues of masculinity and culture can influence the spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic with special reference to the *Abakiga*.

Controversial Cultural Practices in the Era of HIV and AIDS

The *Abakiga* are commonly known in Rwanda for child marriages and unequal and unfair relations between spouses. Once a young boy manages to gather enough resources to pay *inkwano*, the price

for his bride, he considers himself licensed to treat her like a slave. Thus, the wife is expected to perform all the household responsibilities, for instance, domestic maintenance and farming, while men are aimlessly moving from one traditional beer-drinking place to another in the surrounding villages. However, when it comes to the harvesting of the crops, men become the managers of the produce, especially the cash crops. There are some who take all the proceeds from the agricultural production and squander all the money in beer-drinking sprees. Since the majority of the young women and girls are unemployed and have no access to family resources to provide for their basic needs, a situation exacerbated by the irresponsible behaviour of some of the men who abuse their only source of income, some end up being forced to adopt risky survival strategies, varying from sex work to selling illegal drugs. Such strategies have negative outcomes and far-reaching repercussions, especially the risk of HIV and AIDS infection. This confirms once again how gender-biased poverty and inequalities are the main root of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Similar circumstances are also prevalent in Umutara, the eastern region of Rwanda. This region is known for the high rate of rape of young girls, under the guise of culture. This is perpetrated in a traditional ritual called *kwambika umwishywa*, which is regarded as a cultural traditional marriage. In my view, this is a real case of rape. In the ritual, a group of boys or men connive to ambush a targeted girl whom one of their friends is interested in marrying, regardless of whether she likes him or not. In other instances, the man is either too shy to approach her, or his proposals might have been turned down. They usually ambush her as she is fetching water or firewood and put *umwishywa*—that is, a bush herb—on her head. Thereafter, one of the boys or the men who is interested in her takes her straight to his home by force, helped by the people who accompanied him.¹

¹Tabona Shoko in this volume refers to a similar tradition, *Musengabere* among the Shona in Zimbabwe.

Culturally, it means that from then onward, she is married to that man, willingly or not. Such practices victimize young and unmarried women, making them vulnerable to the HIV and AIDS infection. No one would doubt about the connectedness of that culture and the spread of HIV and AIDS in that region of Rwanda during the last decade, which rose from 5 percent in 1995 to 8 percent in 2005 (Wight, 1999:26).

Another risky cultural practice is *Ugukuna*, which is common in the whole of Rwanda, especially in the rural areas. This cultural practice involves stretching the clitoral hood but without excision of part or the entire clitoris of young girls. This is done with the aim of providing pleasure to the girl's husband during future sexual intercourse.² Before the current Rwandan government set up laws and policies promoting gender equity, there were many cases of husbands who chased away their wives for failing to have performed that practice during their childhood. Despite the fact that the international human rights framework itself acknowledges cultural issues, at the same time it argues that "culture" is neither static nor sacrosanct but rather evolves according to external and internal stimuli. Thus, there is much in every culture that societies quite naturally outgrow and reject. The point is that, in any case, culture is not an excuse for neglecting or abusing human rights (World Health Organization (WHO), 2005). Indeed, harmful traditional practices, such as *gukuna*, *kwambika umwishywa*, or female genital mutilation, even if embedded in long-standing cultural customs, need to change if they are in conflict with international human rights standards.

Gender in the Post-Genocide Period

The combination of gender and culture prevents most women in Rwanda, and elsewhere in Africa, from enjoying their human rights and makes them more susceptible to HIV and AIDS. In the case of

²Tabona Shoko in this volume refers to a similar tradition among the Remba in Zimbabwe.

post-genocide Rwanda, women are reluctant to talk about their experiences of sexual violence because of the associated stigma. This is still more the case if they know they have consequently been infected with the AIDS virus. Often, the International Tribunal for Rwanda investigators encounter difficulties in proving that a certain witness was a victim or survivor of sexual violence until the witness takes the stand and reveals that information during testimony.

The stigma associated with talking about sexual violence is not the only hindrance. There are cultural and social factors, for example, the assumption that because men are heads of households, they alone have the right to talk on behalf of the household. My personal experience in what was formerly the Ntongwe district, now the Ruhango district, was that often investigators had to interview men, as women were always preoccupied with household chores that prevented them from participating in the investigative process. Indeed, the cultural assumption that the man is the chief of the household still prevails in Rwanda, especially among the *Abakiga* tribal group.

Thus, this study maintains, among other things, that inequalities linked to gender are also tied to the inequities in social, cultural, economic and political areas. In terms of the impact of these inequities on women, research has established that the percentage of women living with HIV and AIDS has been on the rise for many years, that women are often infected at an earlier age than men, and that gender-based violence accounts for a large proportion of HIV and AIDS infections in women. In Kigali city alone, 36 percent of females and 33 percent of males tested HIV positive in 1996 (National AIDS Programme, 2006).

At the end of 2001, the Rwandan National AIDS Programme estimated that 500,000 Rwandans were living with HIV or AIDS, corresponding to an adult HIV prevalence rate of 8.9 percent. Nearly 50 percent of sero-positive individuals are women and 13 percent are children under 15. In addition, the epidemic has negatively impacted on the country's life expectancy; as of 2002, it stood at 39.5 years. It is estimated that, in the absence of AIDS, life expectancy would have been 51.5 years (National AIDS Programme, 2006).

The same programme highlights that in the late 1990s, HIV infection rates rose up to 30 percent among pregnant women in the capital, Kigali. More recent data reveal that rural sero-prevalence ranges between two percent and seven percent. (National AIDS Programme, 2006). This situation, coupled with the 1994 genocide effects, has a big impact on the Rwandan economy. That is to say, with a growing number of sero-positive patients needing medical care, the demand for resources is increasing and causing increasing challenges to the health system. The National Health Accounts of 1998 revealed that the total per capita health expenditure stands at around US\$12 per year. Of these, about ten percent were spent on prevention and treatment of HIV or AIDS and related care. (National AIDS Programme, 2006).

In response to this challenge, from 1998 different policies were set up to empower women and to integrate them in different structures of decision-making in Rwanda. This has started to bear fruit; for instance, 48 percent of the Rwandan parliament is made up of women, ranking the country second in the world after Norway for gender equity in parliamentary representation. The government is attempting to do the same at all levels of education. Women's associations have been empowered significantly. There are even associations of sex workers in the Northern Province that are helped by the Ministry of Youth, Associations and Co-operatives. Eight of them appeared on Rwanda national TV on 12 November 2003, describing how they managed to quit sex work after having been helped to pursue other ways of earning a livelihood. Consequently, the National HIV and AIDS Programme, set up in 2007, records that HIV or AIDS infection in Rwanda dropped tremendously between 2000 and 2006, from 30 percent to 8 percent, as commercial sex was reduced by the strategy of helping sex workers, coupled with other strategies of the Rwandan National Commission for Combating HIV and AIDS.

However, despite all the challenges posed by gender inequality in Rwanda, this issue has for a long time been regarded as largely a women's problem, and women have always been primarily at the forefront in advancing the gender agenda through women's

associations, such as *Duterimbere* (“develop us”), *Haguruka* (“wake up”) and many others. Bem highlights that the unequal power relationship between males and females in most societies has been recognized as the root cause of most development woes, and the spread of HIV and AIDS. (Bem, 1981:354-364). Chirongoma also reiterates the same in these words:

Often treated as legal minors, barred from owning or inheriting property, unable to make independent financial decisions, women are vulnerable to poverty, exploitation, violence and ultimately to HIV infection, which lies at the end of this long causal chain of injustice. (Chirongoma, 2006:51)

Examining the Connection between Patriarchy and the HIV and AIDS Pandemic

Dunkle et al. argue that while culture is a key determinant of the gender power relationships, “patriarchal structures and systems are the vehicles through which gender inequalities, discrimination and the subordination of women are perpetuated and justified; and from which men reap unfair benefits and dominate women.” (Dunkle et al, 2003:31). The predominant patriarchal society insists on control, subordination and the undervaluing of females, stereotyping males as stronger, better, of higher value, and as leaders of women and society. That attitude, therefore, creates major problems for females and males of all ages, and nowhere has this been as evident as in the current situation in which HIV and AIDS has ravaged humanity, especially in African countries.

In other words, this patriarchal system seems to be the main cause of poverty for women, and unfortunately, poverty and HIV infection are deeply intertwined. As the burden of caring for the sick, the dying and the orphaned forces millions of African women deeper into poverty and batters their energy and self-esteem, so it increases the pressure to resort to high risk “transactional” sex—sex in exchange for money or goods—or sex with older “sugar daddies,” who offer the illusion of material security. And as more

and more women and girls take to the streets as their only means of survival, the need to confront gender inequality becomes inescapable. (Albertyn, 2002).

On the other hand, as can be observed in most African patriarchal societies, these socially constructed images of masculinity encourage high-risk behaviour such as violence, sexual risk-taking, excessive drinking or drug abuse. These attitudes, which are encouraged in many cultures, make women more vulnerable to the HIV infection because of the imbalances in power to make decisions. As a result, most women cannot negotiate condom use and are often forced to have unwanted sexual relations. It is a paradox that so many men reject the use of condoms and express this in a joke—comparing condom use to eating a sweet in a plastic wrapper. It must be noted that the position of power renders men vulnerable to the HIV infection as well, since power could encourage them to have multiple sexual partners.

Another major challenge for many men and women is the difficulty in talking about sex and in revealing one's HIV status. In fact, to talk about sex is to break taboos in various cultures in Africa, and that is particularly the case in Rwanda, especially among the *Abakiga* tribal group. Among this group, men believe that women cannot be allowed to publicly give their views on important issues like sexuality, issues that have a fundamental impact on the spread of the HIV and AIDS virus. Even when journalists want to talk to the community about HIV and AIDS issues, the women themselves would rather call their men to talk to the journalists. This means that the women have themselves created the image of occupying a lower status. Consequently, advocating abstinence, faithfulness or condom use among the *Abakiga* can be difficult for many couples.

Many cultures and religions in Rwanda give more freedom to men than to women, for reasons which will be discussed further. As an example, in the Umutara region in the Eastern Province of Rwanda, consisting of a community of which 85 percent is engaged in cattle-herding, it is considered normal and sometimes even encouraged for young men to experiment sexually before marriage,

and it is considered acceptable for men, married men included, to engage in sex with sex workers.³ Indeed, these cultural attitudes towards sex are leading to the HIV and AIDS infection in both men and women, and often the men's wives are affected. This trend can also be seen among the *Abakiga* tribal group, including the former Ruhengeli, Byumba and Gisenyi provinces in Rwanda, despite the fact that this region is believed to have the largest Christian population in Rwanda.

On the other hand, "employment may also mean that couples have to live apart, since men must sometimes migrate or be mobile for work, as is the case for long-distance truck drivers." (Factsheet No. 2, 1994). Indeed, due to loneliness and the availability of money, "these men may have unprotected sex with other women or men and become HIV-infected. These HIV-positive men may, in turn, infect their wives and other sexual partners." (Ibid). In addition, some beliefs can result in increased risk of HIV infection. One especially dangerous myth in Rwanda, also found in many other cultures around the world, is that having sex with a virgin will cure HIV and AIDS. While this is obviously untrue, increasing numbers of young girls are infected as a result of this practice. As a matter of fact, in 2003, the statistics from the Rwandan police revealed that 90 male prisoners in Kigali city alone were convicted for that criminal offence, and this appears to be a common trend in other African countries. (Burnet, 2000:35).

As such, Redman suggests that the task of turning the tide of the HIV and AIDS pandemic requires the efforts of everybody in society, especially men, who hold the power of decision-making at every level, from the bedroom to the statehouse and other power bases of policy, politics and resources. (Redman, 1996). There is therefore an urgent need for innovative, bold and rigorous approaches to HIV and AIDS prevention and care for those infected or affected.

³The articles by Tabona Shoko, Jairus Hlatywayo, and Gift Masengwe in this volume written in the Zimbabwean context also reiterate the same fact.

Men are critical players at all levels. The examples of the success stories from Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya are very inspiring. Wight intones that countries like Uganda, which have made remarkable strides in halting the spread of the pandemic, offer useful lessons, especially on how to mobilize and involve critical male players, including children, both boys and girls in schools, young women and men in their peer groups, men in faith-based groups, trade union groups, workplaces and communities. (Wight, 1999:25). In addition, male political leaders have a particularly important role to play in spreading the message, and as the President of Kenya, Hon. Mwai Kibaki recently told his fellow men in an international forum, “the choice is between life and death and they must choose life.” (Ibid).

Revisiting Religious and Cultural Resources to Transform Masculinity in the Time of HIV and AIDS

Given the fact that religions and Churches have a tremendous influence on individuals and society as a whole in Africa, one can ask what the Church could contribute to the challenges of masculinity and culture that are inevitably connected to HIV and AIDS. In this regard, Schmid highlights that:

For many in South Africa their Church is still an important source of information and education. This is true for largely illiterate communities, where Churches remain a crucial agency for interpretation of events and for raising awareness. (2006:90)

Since religious communities are so influential on people’s behaviour, the Church should be the first port of call for social transformation towards gender justice and combating HIV and AIDS. I concur with Chitando who propounds what he terms AIDS-competent Churches.”⁴ Chitando articulates his views as follows,

⁴I am indebted to Ezra Chitando (2007) for the use of the term “AIDS competent Churches”.

AIDS-competent Churches have a clear vision. They strive to see gender justice, peace and development. They challenge hegemonic masculinities and accompany women in the quest for abundant life. They engage with men to appreciate the benefits of gender equity and encourage them to become partners in the response to the epidemic. AIDS competent Churches do not promote harmful cultural practices in the name of upholding African culture. They take African women theologians seriously and act decisively to stop violence against women. (Chitando, 2007:90-91)

An analysis of the characteristics of the Church as portrayed above would paint a picture of an ideal Church. However, it becomes difficult to implement some of the suggested tasks in the Church because experience has shown that the Church, both in Africa and worldwide, is patriarchal. For instance, a simple observation of the Anglican Church in Rwanda reveals that the Church is as male dominated as any other secular society. As a matter of fact, it took 60 years after the establishment of the Anglican mission in Rwanda for the Anglican Church to ordain its first female priest.

Such experiences have made feminists go deep to locate sexism existing before the arrival of missionaries in Africa. They came to criticize even the Bible, which was translated with the use of “he” to the detriment of “she.” Therefore, not only society as a whole but also Christians in particular could pay more attention to the needs and concerns of women and could value women as highly as they value men. The Christian community could become more alert to the dangers of male domination and pride and could go to the Scriptures to learn and obey more thoroughly God’s standards for male-female relations. (Carson 1998:187-188).

The sort of masculinity that is found in the Bible influenced the Rwandan culture that does not use “she” in its grammar at all. It is not surprising that the supporters of masculinity dare even to argue that women and children did not appear in the statistics in the Bible. Indeed, that was the culture of the Jewish society, and many other cultures operate in the same way. However, in the context of human rights, children and women and every human being rightfully deserve

respect and dignity. Moreover, given the fact that culture directly influences the spread of HIV or AIDS, Churches and para-Church organizations, faith-based organizations and other people of goodwill need to raise their voices and advocate for changing such cultural behaviours.

Due to the fact that masculinity is a cultural construction, many Christians have viewed the epidemic as only a tragedy and have not also seen it as an opportunity and a challenge. In particular, most men have not taken the initiative to respond effectively. In view of this, Daniela Gennrich suggests that “perhaps this crisis (masculinity, culture and HIV and AIDS) is a new opportunity for Christians to bring Christ to a world that is increasingly being forced to rethink how to bring Jesus’ unconditional love, healing, unity, wholeness and hope to this broken world.” (Gennrich, 2004:39). The major challenge for Christians is to avoid taking the easy road of simply repeating some biblical verses that condemn sinners and to reflect seriously on the biblical teachings and principles of the gospel in the light of the contemporary context.

In this light, the Malawi Council of Churches, the lead partner organization and Network contact for Malawi, could give inspiring insights. The Council works to fight gender-based violence with its campaigns to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS. This has proven to be an effective strategy of mobilizing male support and participation in programmes for gender equality. The initiative is based on the recognition of the vital role played by men in leadership in private and public spheres and the impact they could have in transforming gender relations if they had the knowledge and commitment to do so. Furthermore, the initiative is based on the knowledge that, in many countries, there are existing efforts by individual men or small groups of men who are willing to take action in support of women’s empowerment and gender equality. The initiative aims at “mobilizing such men, bringing them together; and involving them in programmes to reach, mobilize and influence other men to join the movement of men in support of gender equality and in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.” (ENI, 2006).

Indeed, according to Matthew 28:19–20, the Church has a mission to teach and to change people. To change people is to change their behaviour. Similarly, a culture that oppresses and marginalizes a group of people based on sex or whatever is to be changed. This should be the first step, and foundation of the Church while making its strategic plan for Church activities, because the negative impact of patriarchy has affected some women in such a way that they have developed poor self-images. It is therefore the Church's responsibility to motivate them to be confident.

From Kretzmann and McKnight's approach of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), it is clear that the principles of development of ABCD can humanize and empower women because it considers all the community members and their assets, skills, capabilities and gifts without discrimination. (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:35). This approach leads one to believe that it is in line with the word of God that there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free man, there is no longer male or female; for all are one in Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:28). Furthermore, women have been created in the image of God, just like men, "God created human beings in his own image; in the image of God he created them, male and female." (Gen. 1:27, Revised English Bible). Moreover, addressing the Romans, the Apostle Paul says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." (Romans 12:6). These are teaching, prophesying, serving, encouraging, helping others, leadership, and the Bible goes on to say that "each one should use whatever gift he [sic] has received to serve others faithfully, administering God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10). Here, there is no specific task based on gender; rather everyone contributes to the community's well-being.

However, under the pretext of African culture and a misinterpretation of the Christian teachings stipulating that women must obey their husbands under whatever circumstances, as he is the head of the entire household, some men end up abusing such authority and responsibility by perpetrating violence against women. This kind of behaviour has led to gender biased poverty. In view of

this, Haddad reiterates that “theoretical issues of gender and development need to be understood within the context of extreme poverty experienced by poor and marginalized women,” victims of the so-called culture that favours masculinity with all its consequences. (Haddad 2002:425).

Unfortunately, in connection to HIV and AIDS, due to the complexity of masculinity, most men feel uncomfortable about revealing their HIV status publicly, compared to how women feel about it. Once again, this highlights how the issue of masculinity, coupled with the cultural concept, are massive catalysts in spreading HIV and AIDS.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that the hope for the future lies in changing the attitudes and behaviour of the boys of today—the men of tomorrow—who will not be afraid of equality with women. This should include developing new masculine and feminine ideologies, especially among the youth. The involvement of men in programmes for gender equality, and especially those committed to curbing the spread of HIV and AIDS, should learn from the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. The ending of apartheid came when some of the players who were benefiting from the evil system took it upon themselves to put an end to it. In other words, men must take the lead in dismantling the patriarchal systems and they must refuse to continue being beneficiaries of the evil system that dehumanizes and subordinates more than half of every patriarchal society. Moreover, men who support equality with women can be very powerful and effective advocates for change and transformation towards gender justice.

Community and religious leaders (who are often men) have a critical role to play in HIV and AIDS prevention and care, because they are often highly respected and are usually advisers in their communities. Their position enables them to either promote or hinder behavioural change, as well as HIV and AIDS prevention and care in general. Therefore, their involvement in a community’s response

to HIV and AIDS is vital. In closing, I concur with the 2006 Malawi Council of Churches on what they suggest as the way forward, summarized in the following four points that, if given serious consideration, will bear fruitful results towards social transformation for gender justice in our joint struggle to combat HIV and AIDS. It summarizes the way forward as follows:

- To make the family a place where boys first learn to respect women and to speak about their sexuality.
- To encourage local leaders to teach men how to honour their masculinity by actively caring for their partner's and their children's health.
- To encourage male religious leaders to use their influence to inspire social responsibility among boys and men.
- To identify and promote positive images of masculinity and male behaviour for promoting HIV prevention, men as fathers caring for their family, and men with a sense of responsibility and being reliable towards themselves and their partners.

CHAPTER THREE

The Role of an “Ideal” Man in Bembe¹ Culture and within the Contemporary African Christian Tradition in the Face of HIV and AIDS: Towards a Proactive Male Response

Lubunga Ewusha

Introduction

The scope and scale of the HIV and AIDS prevalence rates in Africa brings to the fore the issue of gender relationships in our society, with a special emphasis on the responsibility of men. It is an acknowledged and established fact that the main mode of HIV and AIDS transmission is through heterosexual sex, which in Africa is by and large controlled by men. In their study on HIV and AIDS in Nigeria, Jean Garland and Mike Blyth observed that, “Nine out of ten HIV and AIDS infections are caused by sexual

¹Bembe are an ethnic group in the Eastern part of Congo, south of the Kivu province by Tanganyika Lake. The focus of this discussion is on this particular group because I am one of them and am fully informed on their culture. Similarities can be drawn to other ethnic groups in the region and in the rest of Bantous.

activity.” (2005:126). Male sexuality is at the epicentre of HIV and AIDS transmission. One would hardly find a case of infection due to woman-to-woman relationships, whereas infections generated by man-to-man and man-to-woman relations are rampant. Male partners are therefore key players in the spread of the pandemic; any programme that wishes to adequately address or respond to HIV and AIDS must involve and prioritize men.

The earlier approaches adopted by many organizations tended to overlook the hegemonic role played by men in sexual relationships. Much effort and resources were spent, in the past, in educating and protecting women and children because of their vulnerability to the HIV and AIDS infection. There has been a pressing appeal to empowering women so that they might protect themselves against sexual abuse. Ronald Nicolson aptly states that, “AIDS demands that the Churches take more seriously than they have done until now the rights of women in Africa to direct their own destinies, make their own decisions, control their own bodies.” (1995:47). People have realized that very little has been achieved thus far in trying to stem the tide of the pandemic by concentrating on women while leaving men out.

This chapter subscribes to the new trend seeking to correct the past by targeting men’s response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. It highlights the importance of involving men in the process, and this will be done through an attempt to answer a number of questions, such as—Why men? What is the ideal man in African culture and in the Bible? How can ideal manhood contribute to the current struggle against the HIV and AIDS pandemic? The case of a male organization, “Papa Plus,” in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be used as a vantage point to illustrate the centrality of the man’s role.

Why Engage Men in HIV Discourse?

There is a popular Bembe proverb that goes, “If you tame a lion, the cattle will live in peace.” This statement appropriately illustrates the negative role that some men have played in the spread of the HIV

and AIDS pandemic. In this instance, men are the lion and the cattle are, therefore, women and children. It is unrealistic to envisage the change of sexual behaviour that HIV prevention requires without involving both men and women. Previous strategies to deal with the HIV and AIDS pandemic that focused on women and children alone proved ineffective. In spite of all the changes effected by globalization and the acknowledgment of women’s rights, such as equal rights to education, employment and ownership of property, the communities in the Eastern DR Congo, and in other parts of Africa, continue to live under a male-dominated system. Traditional culture ordains the man as the decision-maker—even in matters regarding sexual intercourse— if he wants to be respected as a man. Even when he is unemployed, a man still wants to have absolute control over his household’s income, as the owner of the house. If he loses this control for some economic or social reason, he feels frustrated and less of a human. The list of duties and privileges that John Apeh draws for the social role of an Igala man in Nigeria is not different from what is expected from a Bembe man in Eastern DR Congo. Thus:

- He is expected to provide for his family.
- He is expected to make decisions for the family.
- The wife or wives is/are responsible to him [sic].²
- The children are directly responsible to him [sic].
- He is responsible for the acts of those in his family [sic].
- His decisions are never challenged.
- The wife and children are his properties.
- The wife and children do not have private properties while under the authority of the head of the family.
- He is the chief executive officer and the public relations officer.

²I have decided to quote the author verbatim, hence sic.

- He is the liaison officer between the family and extended family members in the community and as such cannot be represented by the wife or female children.³

Various circles of women are today challenging many rights and privileges reserved to men, as mentioned in Apeh's list above. This is true especially among the twenty-first-century educated women who can stand up to reflect upon and blatantly question male dominance, which is still strongly present in the majority of African cultures. Men hold power over their wives, and they have control over sexual relationships and authority to decide on the number of wives and children in their households. Culture requires that children and women respect the authority of the household head. (Apeh, 1989:16).

As long as the male-dominated system prevails, any attempt to empower women against men to extend their power at home and make them self-confident and able to make decisions or initiate change in their families becomes a very risky endeavour. In her study on the rape of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, Patricia Bruce concludes, "Despite the precautions taken to control young girls, the case of Tamar shows that not even the daughter of the king was safe if the male members of the household failed in their responsibilities." (2003:60). Several reports show that men react with violence against women who want to reverse cultural roles in the society. (White, 1997:21). A man who has been brought up with a cultural script that prescribes what he should and should not do in order to keep his power and control feels humiliated or ashamed when women take the lead to initiate change in a marital relationship. Most men do not like to give up their position and identity by adhering to changes initiated by women.

³Apeh, 1989:15. John Apeh encourages Church planters to be sensitive to the social structure of their receptors. This is applicable to those involved in setting strategies to respond to the HIV pandemic in Africa. They must take into account the control exercised by the "head of the house" upon his family.

When men feel robbed of their male identity, they become aggressive towards their partners. It is reported that many women who initiate the use of condoms experience violence from their partners. They are accused either of being themselves promiscuous or of suspecting or accusing their lifelong partners of promiscuity, which is considered an offence. Douglas Webb sums it up.

Within marriages or semi-permanent relationships, initiating the use of condoms may be extremely difficult. Many female respondents stated that if they requested their partner to use a condom, they would implicitly be accusing the men of infidelity, or admitting it themselves. This barrier regarding trust prevents the topic being discussed openly, even though many women tacitly accept the likelihood of their (often absent) partners having other sexual partners. (1997:154)

The issue of condom use is just one of the many examples of how paradoxical it is to ignore men and expect to achieve substantial change in marital relationships. When men become aware of the danger that they themselves and their families face because of some behaviours or practices that they are responsible for, they may recant and encourage one another to change. This kind of male-initiated change will obviously benefit women and children because the head of the house can use his constructed authority and control to command respect and instil new values in his household.

It is also important to note that although men are considered strong, their cultural script exposes them to their own peculiar vulnerabilities with regard to HIV and AIDS. In her study, Rachel Blackman draws a list of factors that make men more vulnerable to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. These include:

1. In most places men are likely than women to abuse drugs and alcohol. This might lead them to risky sexual behaviour or to inject drugs.
2. Men tend to have more sexual partners than women.
3. Men may have to work abroad or travel around the country, which results in a long time away from home.

4. Men are less likely to seek healthcare.
5. Men are more likely to experience peer pressure and hide their emotions.⁴

If what Blackman states is true, then involving men in the response to HIV and AIDS becomes crucial. Organizations or communities that embark on preventing the spread of the HIV and AIDS pandemic should find allies in men who are favourably inclined to change, in order to succeed in their enterprise. Until such a time when gender inequality is eradicated from our society, the priority of involving men in responding to the HIV and AIDS pandemic remains imperative. It is obvious that not all men will choose to behave differently and accept change if it entails losing some hegemonic privileges they have over women and children; yet many of them would like to behave as responsibly as possible for their own good and for society's good. The motivation comes when men realize that what they are called to do is part of the values prescribed for them by ideal manhood in their African culture and in the Christian tradition, at least for those who profess Christianity. This takes us to a discussion of the script of ideal manhood in Bembe culture and in the Christian tradition.

Ideal Man in Bembe Culture

In Bembe culture the term *mlumyana*, used to designate a man, has more to do with duties and obligations than one's biological or physical appearance. Therefore, a man who fails to rise to the standard of the masculinity script defined by the community can be called *m'acana* (woman), while a woman who distinguishes herself in some duties that are usually designated masculine is considered

⁴Blackman, 2005:40. This study provides important information to Christian development organizations in their response to the challenges brought by HIV and AIDS. The author urges organizations and Churches to consider challenging gender inequalities among the factors that encourage risky behaviour.

as *mlumyana*. Attributes that are associated with manhood include being a courageous person, warrior, provider, hunter and protector and being responsible for one’s family. There are several socially constructed ways of being and behaving that distinguish male and female attributes. To grow into full manhood, a boy is socialized and taught in his early childhood the determinants that will make him a real man, different from a woman. Expressions such as, “Men do not cry,” “When a man is in the village, children and women feel secure,” “Men should always be on the front line of any procession and they should sleep in front” are used to assert men’s position of authority and responsibility. Men’s sense of protection was nourished with heroic tales in which mythical men of the past challenged lions and other ferocious animals, to the point of risking their lives to prove their manhood.⁵ In certain cases, the exploits of outstanding ancestors or forefathers of the clan are evoked to instil courage to the young ones. Risk-taking, heroism, power and self-determination are among the attributes that are often associated with manhood.⁶ A real Bembe man would be ashamed if he let a woman involve herself in killing a snake, hunting, fishing, or building a house when he is present and in good health. There is the possibility for both positive and negative exploitation of these cultural attributes of ideal manhood.

On one side, we have the hegemonic masculinity, which has been criticized by feminist movements because of its oppressive character. Men have sometimes used their cultural advantages to oppress and subjugate women and children. They decide unilaterally on matters that concern the whole family, even though not all men have the sense of responsibility to do so. There are a number of wrongdoings on the side of men that have led women to have a very negative image of manhood. This male dominance is known today as “patriarchy”:

⁵Julius Gathogo in this volume explores this tradition at length.

⁶Paul Leshota, Gift Masengwe, Jairus Hlatywayo and Tabona Shoko in their articles in this volume also reiterate the same fact.

Patriarchy is the concept that men hold power in all the important roles in society—in government, the military, education, industry, business, health care, advertising, religion—and that women are, in the main, deprived of access to the power. (Moose, 1993:51)

Patriarchy has maintained women in their subordination, denying them access to empowerment resources such as school and land, so that they do not compete with men. Miriam Lephala and Pinkie Mabunda highlight some of the common struggles prevalent in many African cultures,

In several instances, girls were denied an education or withdrawn from school on the grounds that they had to get married. It was argued that schooling would limit these girls' chances of getting married because they would be a threat to their husbands. (2000:122)

On the other side, there are core values in manhood that constitute male identity. Culturally, being an ideal man, though not claiming to be perfect, did not in any way entail threatening gender relationships in the family. Ideal manhood was designed to assert the capability of being useful to the family and to society at large. For a long time, families in Bembe culture have been built around the positive and inspiring image of the father as the pillar that supports the household. Shortcomings could be observed, as people are not all tailored equally, but the bottom line is that each family had sufficient appreciation for the role played by the head of the family. Ideal manhood is being challenged today because of the change in the world that has deprived men of their cultural role of provider and protector. This loss of male image is captured by Mhlanhla Mkizhe:

Unemployment and poverty coupled with the social and cultural tendency to define manhood and fatherhood primarily in terms of ability to provide economically for one's family, rob many men of the opportunity to play the fatherly role in the raising of their children. (2006:184)

Men are still conscious that their manhood and fatherhood are attached to the positive social values of being the protector and provider for their families. These attributes are defined by their cultural script and are still highly valued in the contemporary society. This paper therefore argues that these positive attributes are the image of manhood that must be retrieved in this era of HIV and AIDS, instead of capitalizing on gender inequalities.

One should not ignore the fact that culture in a great number of Sub-Saharan African countries has been influenced and shaped by its encounter with Christianity. In those countries, the authority of the Church is established and the Bible is referred to for social, economic and political change. I concur with Gerald West, who highlights that in South Africa, “The Bible plays an important role in the lives of many, particularly the poor and marginalized. The Bible is a symbol of the presence of the God of life with them, and a resource in their struggle for survival, liberation, and life.” (West, 1999:9). This is also the case in DR Congo and elsewhere. Therefore, there is a need to examine biblical ideals of manhood in addressing men’s response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

The Ideal Man in the Bible

The Bible has been read through different filters and its message has also been interpreted to fit various contexts and human ambitions. This diversity of readings of the Bible has often raised a number of suspicions about the Bible’s message with regard to gender relationships. Despite the fact that some people have misused the Bible to advance their personal causes, God’s primary design for and assignment to manhood was to create a caring and responsible person. This can be discerned as one pays close attention to the text. God has created human beings in God’s image. (Gen. 1:26-27). Therefore, from the creation, God’s design and intention was that humanity would portray some of His attributes. What is obvious in the biblical text is that Adam was responsible and diligent as he exercised dominion on the earth (Gen. 1:28) and loving in his relationship with his wife. (Gen. 2:22-24). The failure to abide with

God's directives on humanity's side has put a curse on the entire world. "To Adam God said... 'Cursed is the ground because of you'." (Gen. 3:17).

This package of punishments includes the husband ruling over his wife, (Gen. 3:16) setting the stage for oppression and unequal relationships in marriage. What happened after the fall should not be taken as a model of the ideal biblical manhood. It is true that the Bible does not reveal enough about the gender relationship between Adam and Eve before the fall, but in a few sentences the reader can grasp God's prescription for gender relationships. The Bible makes it clear that both the man and the woman were drawn from one body and upon marriage were to forsake any other person and cling to one another in a perfect unity.

This is now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh...

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh. (Gen. 2:23-24)

Leaving the consequences of the curse brought in by Adam's fall, the ideal man, in biblical perspective, had to respect and love a woman as his own body. (Eph. 5:28).

Since all people have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, (Rom. 3:23) one has to turn to the perfect display of biblical manhood in the portrayal of Jesus Christ, true man and true God, who did not sin. Jesus expresses his real manhood in showing love and compassion to all those who were suffering and rejected. The Bible describes his compassion toward the blind, lepers, the lame and sick people as he was moved to heal all of them, feed the hungry, weep with those who mourned, and welcome women and children. On the other hand, Jesus was tough and harsh with human injustice, hypocrisy and unbelief. In his comment on Jesus' manhood Jack Balswick states,

Jesus possessed a wide range of emotions and was harmoniously complete in his human individuality. He also had the full range of human needs and appetites—he hungered, thirsted, was weary, knew

physical pain and pleasure, slept, grew in knowledge, wept, suffered and died. All that is human manifested itself in perfect proportion and balance to Jesus Christ. He was emotionally mature and able to freely express his emotions to himself and to others. (1992:58-59)

It is hard for a man bearing the character of Jesus, as described above, to become an oppressor and the agent of an infectious disease. An ideal man, according to the standard set by Jesus Christ, should act in love and compassion toward everybody. This biblical relationship is underscored in Paul’s writings:

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another and forgiving each other. (Col. 3:12-13 NAS)

Paul advises Christians to ground their relationships to one another in true love. He is even more specific as he addresses the men of his time; “Be on the alert, stand firm in faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Cor 16:13-14). Stuart Scott concurs; “It is only through this understanding and appreciation of God’s great love toward us that we can begin to love others with the right motives and to have enduring love.” (2002:102). The bonds of love should compel a real man to be more responsible and considerate in his family. Paul, the family counsellor, teaches that, “if anyone does not take care of his (sic) family, he (sic) has denied his faith.” (1 Tim. 5:8). And to Christian husbands, Paul prescribes,

So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the Church. (Eph. 5:28-29)

The presentation of men as oppressors of women and children becomes an aberration if one has to consider the script of the ideal man in the light of the Bible. The man is not the head of the family

in order to lord over his household but to be a servant, a caring husband, and responsible father to his family. He has to follow the example set by Jesus who came as a servant, washing the feet of his disciples, although we call him Master and Lord. (John 13: 13-15). The headship of the Bible is all service and not authority.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:25-28)

With these two concepts of ideal manhood in the Bembe culture and in the Bible, we will look at how the involvement of men can make a difference to society's response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Many scholars admit that culture and religion should not be divorced because they go together and help people to construct their lives. Though each culture contains its own religious system, Christianity and African cultural traditions constitute two separate cultures, which combine their parts in the lives of believers to create a totally new value system and worldview. Shorter puts it this way:

When religious experience intersects with a symbolic, cultural tradition, religious symbolism is born and new meaning is possible. (Shorter, 1998:41)

Ideal Men's Response to HIV and AIDS

The way in which most men have responded to HIV and AIDS in Africa is considered inconsistent and irresponsible. On the one hand, men have championed risky behaviours that fuel the spread of HIV and AIDS. This includes the denial of their status, reluctance regarding testing, and the tendency to having multiple sexual partners, using their cultural script or their economic and political advantage. In some cases, men turn to forced sex to assert their authority and humiliate women. (Genrich, 2004:14). The point we make in this

chapter is that this negative attitude does not reflect what the Bible and Bembe culture prescribe for an ideal man.

The devastating effects of HIV and AIDS upon the population and economy in Africa compel men to respond to the pandemic in a very responsible manner. It is no longer a matter of satisfying one’s sexual desires but a matter of stopping a disaster that threatens to decimate the community. Culturally, it is believed that whenever a village faces a calamity or is on fire, men have the moral and spiritual responsibility to deal with the situation. In Bembe culture, men are responsible for making sacrifices and seeking the favour of the divinities whenever drought or a fatal disease affects the community. Even though women have to prepare the beer and food to be used in a community sacrifice, the actual sacrifice is effected by men. Men must play their roles as warriors and protectors and fight anything that endangers the life of the community in order to spare women and children from destruction. Failing to do so could bring shame to their masculinity.⁷ One should acknowledge that not all men in Bembe culture lived to this ideal standard; the reality was often different. The following statement captures well the dilemma of rising up to the reality:

Culture also has ideal and real aspects. Ideal culture is what people think their culture should be or ought to be, real culture is what actually exists. In all cultures there are frequent discrepancies between the two facets. (Schusky and Culbert, 1973:75)

Although it is not easy to live out what is ideal, people are encouraged to strive towards improving what is real—and often lower—and move toward the ideal. The ideal constitutes the guideline that should determine the norms under which one operates. The call to practice

⁷Julius Gathogo in this volume writing within the Kenyan context explores this tradition at length.

what is ideal is not different from the message of the gospel, despite the failure to practice what is preached.

The Bible also uses the image of a shepherd who is ready to sacrifice his own life on behalf of his sheep. (Ps. 23; John 10). In Bembe culture, as well as in Israel's, shepherding is almost exclusively a male responsibility. The main reason for this is that shepherding entails a lot of risk-taking, which fits the male script. Any woman doing the job would be thought to portray characteristics of masculinity. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, underscores male responsibility and compares men to the ideal man, Jesus Christ, as he writes, "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her." (Eph. 5:25). Love calls for the ultimate sacrifice; the loss of one's life for the loved ones.

As far as HIV and AIDS is concerned, it has taken a long time for people in Africa to have knowledge of the virus and its modes of transmission. Thus far, most people have learned about the consequences of HIV and AIDS through relatives, spouses, and children who have been infected. People who are in charge of bringing awareness of the danger of HIV and AIDS to the community should take this opportunity to address men without sparing words, showing that wives and children are perishing, and asking what men should do to deal with the situation. It is a cultural and biblical duty for men to deal with a calamity of such magnitude as the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Men should tap into the prevailing positive attributes of manhood and strive towards the prevention of the HIV and AIDS infection. Men should be reminded of their responsibility to protect women and children who are more vulnerable to the HIV and AIDS infection. Somebody has to blow the trumpet⁸ and call men to rise to the occasion and curb the effects of HIV and AIDS in society.

⁸Julius Gathogo in this volume also makes reference to the need for the trumpet blower, *Mugambi* in the Kenyan context, as a response to the HIV epidemic.

The success of all programmes of prevention and treatment depends on the goodwill of men to collaborate with love and compassion in their response to HIV and AIDS. The result is that this call to men can bear fruit in responding to HIV and AIDS if it stresses biblical and cultural values associated with ideal manhood. The negative image of men that is being constructed in some feminist writings has the effect of restraining men’s potential. Men should be encouraged in their assigned role to take the lead in the protection and care of children and women as the head of the family and custodians of cultural inheritance. The approach of putting men on the front line for preventing HIV and AIDS is likely to succeed because it helps some men who feel humiliated by the current social pressure—which tends to exalt women in all sectors of the society—recover their male identity in a meaningful way.

The involvement of men in the response to HIV and AIDS does not depend only on men being valued and comfortable in their manhood but, for the most part, on who is calling them. In Bembe culture, to summon a meeting in which men should participate is solely a male prerogative. Many programmes on HIV and AIDS are not successful because they are designed to teach and empower women, expecting that they will be able to motivate their husbands to change their behaviours. In some instances, women were taught about testing and means of protection against the HIV and AIDS infection but could not convince their husbands to do the same because in their culturally constructed script—women are not supposed to teach men anything related to sex. Douglas Webb adds,

Behavioural empowerment is extremely problematic in many contexts as giving women, and girls in particular, the ability to negotiate sexual activity contradicts many cultural mores. (1997:209)

Many men find it difficult to adopt practices initiated by women because they feel as if they would be losing their masculinity. The most powerful approach to motivating men is peer education. Men easily accept learning from and being influenced by other men who

have experiences to share. Approaches to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS by changing the sexual behaviour of men should use peer education, as men share experiences and knowledge among themselves. The example set by a men's organization, Papa Plus in Kinshasa, as discussed below, constitutes a way forward in the response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Papa Plus in DR Congo

The term Papa Plus simply means men testing HIV-positive and is constituted from the noun "papa," or father in Lingala and other major languages spoken in DR Congo, and the sign "plus" in French (+). This organization emerged from the men's fellowship group of the Roman Catholic Church in the year 2000, as men's response to what women were able to achieve in their meetings. More than men, women in DR Congo, both inside and outside the Church, have several gatherings dealing with issues pertaining to their HIV status and conditions in the society. They even started an organization called Mama Plus to provide support and meet the needs of those living with HIV. These groups of women are doing quite well and their success is spreading all over the country. The problem is that men living with HIV and AIDS could not join these groups because of gender prejudices and discrimination. The initiative to form a parallel organization for men sprang from those who felt that men are also capable of doing what women do and possibly even better. It was not only a matter of replacing the term "Mama" with "Papa" but of having a true resolve to emulate and improve on what is done by women in their circles. This determination to show the best side of masculinity is the driving force behind the achievement of Papa Plus.

The Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), in its study mapping existing resources in Central Africa in order to respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, mentions this organization of men in Kinshasa who are contributing toward the involvement of other men in containing the spread of the HIV infection. (EHAIA, 2006). This is a very significant step, mainly in DR Congo where

male dominance is felt in all institutions. Over many years men have taken advantage of women through political and economic power, education, traditional and religious customs and culture, and during armed conflicts to oppress and assault women sexually. Since 1983, when the first cases of the HIV infection were reported in DR Congo, women have been bold enough to come out and speak of their status and even form support groups for their survival, while men lived in denial, blaming women. Popular songs and dramas have been used to warn men that their relations with women are considered as the cause of the spread of the pandemic, and yet it is known that having multiple sexual partners is a common and tolerable practice among men in DR Congo. Many women in marital bonds state that they have never known any other men apart from their husbands, which is rare among their male counterparts.

Papa Plus has to be considered as a new movement of men who have accepted the challenge of breaking the circle of violence and rejecting oppressive masculinity. Papa Plus is determined to provide a forum for men to reflect on their behaviour and empower themselves to change. The challenge facing Papa Plus is an endeavour to respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic through answering the question—Why should women alone struggle to alleviate the consequences of the pandemic in our community, while men are considered to be in charge of society? The study done by EHAIA reveals that the organization is taking seriously the responsibility of men in finding solutions to the pandemic.

The objective of Papa Plus is to encourage men to reflect critically on themselves as many of the practices of men contribute to the spread of HIV and AIDS. Papa Plus is distinguished by its determination to act, innovate, and lead through example and encouragement. (Ibid)

This objective is being reached because Papa Plus organizes fora where men can openly share their testimonies among themselves and encourage one another to live positive lives. This is also a strong

way of attracting support and relief from organizations who wrongly consider men to be strong enough to cope without social help. Few organizations would include men in their scheme of help because the international as well as national opinion holds a biased view of men's vulnerability. More important is that when men come together and decide to change their behaviour and act responsibly toward children and women, everyone can enjoy the positive results. In this case, they have decided to refrain from spreading the virus, and things are likely to change dramatically. Papa Plus is an example of how peer education can equip men with the tools to tap into their cultural and religious hegemony and draw on the positive values of their masculinity in order to counter the devastating effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The spread from Kinshasa is slow because of some resistance, but slowly Papa Plus is reaching other regions.

What is significant to note is that Papa Plus' success lies in it being conceived and put into place by the community of faith, within the Roman Catholic Church of Congo. This chapter therefore emphasizes the fact that the Church, which is present in most African countries that are heavily affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic, can have a significant impact through mobilizing men for critical reflection on their role in the increasing rate of the HIV infection in their communities. In DR Congo, the number of Christians is estimated at 80 percent of the population; this includes Roman Catholics (the most popular Church, attended by 40–50 percent of the total population of DR. Congo) and different branches of Protestant and Kimbanguist (30–35 percent). When one includes other religions, only 3–5 percent of the DR Congo population could be considered atheist or without a formal form of faith. In each religious institution men have their special gathering for fellowship and discipleship.

If every religious entity decides to reach out to their men's fellowships and challenge them to reflect on the positive contribution men can bring to the prevention of HIV and care for families affected, Africa would experience a tremendous decrease in the

HIV and AIDS infection. It should also be noted that men, being the main factor in the spread of HIV and AIDS, should also be the key players in containing it. Therefore, men’s choice to either spread or contain diseases can also be determined by the way they are mobilized to make a contribution towards responsible and caring behaviours. Men should learn that what seems to be a way of expressing their hegemonic sexuality over women becomes tragic for both of them when it comes to issues of HIV and AIDS. Men should exercise their authority positively, portraying a conduct that limits the spread of HIV and AIDS instead of increasing it. This chapter maintains that any organization that avails its funds to train and empower only women, leaving men aside, will have very little impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa. The question is—How can religious institutions help men deny some of their socially constructed attributes that contribute to the spread of HIV without feeling that they have lost their masculine self-esteem? That is an area where African theologians have to make an important contribution by providing sound teachings and reflections to be used in men’s forums designed to tackle issues related to male responsibility in this era of HIV and AIDS.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the problem of the involvement of men in the response to HIV and AIDS. Thus far, this involvement has been timid because many organizations have concentrated their efforts on women and children, leaving men aside. This is because they consider men as individualists, uncaring, and oppressive by nature. The assumption was that if women were empowered they would be independent, bring change, and be able to negotiate safer sex with their male counterparts. Results have shown that this approach is met with resistance on the side of men, who feel their authority is threatened, and has fuelled domestic violence and abuse. We have shown in this chapter that the negative portrayal of manhood contradicts the ideal manhood of either the Bible or some African cultures, such as Bembe culture. There are core values of

manhood underlying Christianity and African culture that have upheld solid relationships in society, based on love and mutual respect between men and women. Although men in the Bible and in most African cultures are called to be heads of the family, this headship has nothing to do with oppression and exploitation; rather it entails responsibility and accountability.

What is required is to draw the attention of men to those attributes, which are still highly valued today, as protector of and provider for the household and channel them toward the prevention of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Men themselves, through peer education and influence, should conduct the mobilization of others to engage in the response to HIV and AIDS. The exemplary success of Papa Plus in Kinshasa proves that such a strategy is workable and effective. Churches have the significant responsibility of facilitating safe spaces for men to gather and providing positive teachings and theological insights to motivate them to engage toward this end. The more men understand the impact and benefit of their involvement, the quicker Africa will be able to contain the spread of HIV and AIDS.

CHAPTER FOUR

Karanga Men, Culture, and HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe

Tabona Shoko

Introduction

The global spread of HIV and AIDS poses grave challenges for Zimbabweans. It is estimated that over four thousand Zimbabweans are dying of AIDS-related illnesses every week. Several authors have written on HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe, for instance G. Foster and Chavunduka, etc. (1990 and 1993, respectively). These studies deal with ways in which the HIV and AIDS virus is spread, the channels of contracting HIV and AIDS, and methods of care for people living with HIV and AIDS. The trend established by most previous studies show that the HIV and AIDS infection is more prevalent in women than men. Average life expectancy for women, who are particularly affected by Zimbabwe's HIV and AIDS epidemic, is 34—the lowest anywhere in the world. However, few studies have paid attention to the role of men in the epidemic.

This chapter explores the possible positive roles that men and cultural tradition can play in response to HIV and AIDS. It is based on the contention that socially and culturally constructed images of masculinity can encourage high-risk behaviours. Men are influenced

by cultural norms regarding manhood, some of which are very negative in the context of HIV and AIDS. Traditions, values, and attitudes in Karanga culture, such as patriarchy, polygamy and inheritance that affect boys' and men's sexual behaviour will be critiqued. For social, cultural and economic reasons, men are often in the stronger position in their relationships with women. "Macho" attitudes that encourage multiple sexual partners and risk-taking put men and their partners at risk of HIV infection. This gives them more control in deciding when and where to have sex, as well as whether or not to use condoms. Because of their privileged and usually influential positions in society, men can be good advocates for behaviour change and social responsibility. Christian ethical values can be inculcated to provide effective responses to HIV and AIDS. (Shoko, 2006).

This chapter first introduces the Karanga social and political structures as parameters for masculine power in society. Then it discusses traditional customs, marriage, and traditional beliefs that predispose men to the infection and subsequent spread of the HIV and AIDS virus. Finally, it examines ways of preventing the pandemic.

Kinship Structure

The Karangas are a subgroup of the Shona people of Zimbabwe, who live in the Mberengwa district of South-West Zimbabwe. Their kinship system is patrilineal, a factor that determines gender patronage and is based on the father as the central figure in the family. The father represents the ancestors' spirits, so the traditions and customs follow the father's line. The people are divided into patrilineal clans, each with its own clan names (*mutupo*) and sub-clan names (*chidawo*). These are based on the history and origins of the clan. The Karanga kinship system is based on a certain pattern of relationships. (Bourdillon, 1976:37-38). The nucleus family comprises *baba* (father), *mai* (mother), and *vana* (children). But it also includes the extended family such as the grandfather (*sekuru*), grandmother (*mbuya*), father's brother (*babamukuru*), and his wife (*maiguru*). *Babamukuru* cannot inherit his brother's wife since he is

like a father. The father's young brother is *babamunini* and his wife is *mainini*. *Babamunini* can inherit his brother's wife. The father's sister is called *vatete*. She grooms her brother's daughters and is central in their marriage. *Vatete*'s children are called *vazukuru*. Male children play an important role as master of ceremonies at rituals, funerals and weddings. They also mediate disputes in the family.

Political Structure

The village headman is the principal head of the family. He is *baba* (father) and the villagers are *vana* (children) to him. The village headman performs several duties in the community. He ensures the sustenance of people in the community. He allocates and distributes land amongst the people. The village headman is also responsible for conducting religious rituals that yield rain and good crops. The traditional title *samusha* (owner of the village or home) has changed to *sabhuku* (one who owns the book, the tax register; Bourdillon, 1976:77).

A grouping of wards¹ is administered by a chief (*ishe*). People ascribe special powers to the founder member of the chiefdom. These powers may be in the form of medicine, magic and witchcraft to strengthen one's position. This legendary power is associated with the spirits who are the guardians of the chiefdom. The chief performs several functions in society. His major role is to mediate between the people and the spirit guardians in the chiefdom. He organizes appropriate rituals such as *mukwerere* to ensure rain and fertility on the land. The chief is a "religious and political ruler." (Ibid.:137). The chief also presides over the traditional court (*dare*). He exercises full jurisdiction over all land and people in the ward. He acts as the last court of appeal for referral cases from the village headmen. In executing his duties, the chief is assisted by his personal advisors (*machinda*), comprising some elders of the community. They give

¹A "ward" is a civic-administration unit. Several wards make up a town.

advice to the chief and help to maintain unity in the chiefdom. The chief's court deals with many cases, including those that involve divorce, quarrels, compensation, breaking taboos, and thefts of cattle. The chief, who has jurisdiction over the land, ensures that any violation is rectified according to norms and traditions. The Karanga emphasize the link between the chief and the spiritual powers. After independence, the traditional position of the chief was affected by the new, westernized government policies and administration.

The Karanga social and political structures provide gender inequalities that benefit men and disadvantage women. This sense of hegemonic masculinity is an important determinant of HIV infections.

Customs

A Karanga man occupies a position of high status in the home. He is the head of the family and the wife is subsidiary. She belongs to a different blood lineage and is only brought to her husband by marriage. A man can marry more than one wife. In the past, the wives were related by blood. The elder woman *vahosi* is respected and controls the other wives. He takes care of his wife and children in terms of food and clothing. He builds and allocates houses for them. (Dahlin, 2002:60). The wife and children respect the father. Wives try to impress him by supplying the best diet. All wives show respect in greeting by kneeling, clapping hands, and uttering lineage praises. Survival of the family is dependent on the father. In the modern context he is responsible for the education and welfare of his children. The father owns the homestead. He is responsible for the cultivation of the land, which provides sustenance. He allocates certain pieces of land to himself and to his wives. He is in charge of cattle, goats and poultry, which are important components of the economy and provide food. He ensures the security of the family and livestock at home. The man's birthplace is important. He holds the reins of administration, a heritage from the past. He ensures the rules and norms are followed, such as observing one's totem. He is

responsible for the administration of the home. This elevates men to the position of overlords above their female counterparts.

Traditionally, a woman is viewed in a negative sense. A woman is regarded as “sold” at marriage (Bourdillon, 1976:68) because of the bride-price (*roora*), paid to the in-laws. A husband can ill-treat and abuse her, and she has no right to complain. The woman is expected to be docile. A man may be irked by huge sums of money he has to pay for *roora*. The bride-price charged may be exorbitant and fail to match the value of the girl. But the difficult question is “How do we determine the commercial value of someone?” Despite the problems, the woman cannot return to her home because it is difficult to return *roora*. Her parents may regard her as *hure* (a prostitute). In whatever way, she must stick to her marriage; no matter how hot the iron is, she must handle it. (Chirongoma, 2006).

In the Shona cultural belief, women are the main victims accused of witchcraft. This is influenced by the fact that a man is “indigenous.” His history and origin are important. He resides at his original birthplace, where his umbilical cord is buried. In this way he links with his ancestors at home. A woman is considered “alien.” At marriage she leaves her own home and joins the husband. She loses her totem and acquires the husband’s clan name, so her status becomes invidious. She is associated with witchcraft. She bewitches people and exhumes graves at night. She eats human flesh. She also uses *mupfuhwira*, meant to tame her husband, who may have extra-marital sex with other women and does not necessarily sleep at home. But men also use *runyoka* to prevent their own wives from sleeping with other men. A man, usually a migrant labourer or urban worker who spends a lot of time away from home, can medicate his wife against promiscuity. *Runyoka* can cause serious discomfort and even death. It is believed that the couple will become inseparable after copulation. In some cases, the guilty man may develop a skin rash and scales like a fish. He is relieved by putting his legs in a dish of water. In other cases, a man will develop a complex sexually transmitted disease or lose his genitals. When the culprits are caught, punishment is meted out. Instant justice is applied

through beating. The guilty man is made to pay cattle as compensation. In some cases the problem may degenerate into divorce. (Shoko, 2007a:20).

A woman is also associated with all sorts of evils, including prostitution. In the traditional context, a personality is measured by *hunhu*. (Chirongoma and Manda, 2008; Murove, 2006 and 2008). This means the practice of behaviour in a “decent, good, rational, responsible way”. (Gelfand, 1968:53). A woman with *hunhu* has good morals. She exercises self-control in both her passions and instincts. She possesses good manners. But some women are vulnerable and succumb to prostitution. They are regarded as weak, with loose morals, and are called *mahure* (prostitutes). This may be caused by lack of sexual satisfaction from her husband. She cannot freely express her feelings verbally, since culture restricts her, and she ends up seeking extramarital relations. But prostitution is not confined only to married women. It also applies to unmarried women who sleep with several men. In some people, it is caused by extra-sexual desire, whether psychological or biological. Today prostitution is prompted by the desire for money and is therefore referred to as commercial or survival sex or sex work. A woman indulges in sex work in order to get money to buy food and clothes. Some sex workers prosper and live well, with beautiful houses, nice furnitures and vehicles, and so on. They can afford to send their children to expensive private schools for education. But sex workers risk infections, especially sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS. However, the majority are so desperate to sustain themselves and their families such that they reason: “it is better to die of the diseases than hunger.”

In contrast, men are not accused of prostitution, even if they engage in multiple sexual relations. Sex for a man is regarded as an essential need. A man may have sex with any woman at will. A man is compared to a bull, which is in charge of other cattle.² A bull mates with many cows and produces plenty of offspring. Likewise,

²Gift Masengwe in this volume also highlights this tradition.

a man can have sex with many women and produce as many children as possible. (Dahlin, 2002:64-65). A man's marital rights cannot be questioned, and in fact some men are actually arrogant enough to inform their wives about their extramarital sex. However, sex with another man's wife is prohibited. The practice is adultery, which is evil. The most serious offence is for a man to sleep with the wife of a close relative. Such a practice is regarded as a form of witchcraft called *uroyi*. This is because it is believed that such a man would not hesitate to kill the husband in order to continue sleeping with the woman. (Bourdillon, 1976:66). If adultery is discovered, the guilty man has to pay a heavy fine in the form of animals. This exonerates men and encourages them to have frequent unchecked sex. In the context of HIV and AIDS, such a situation is a recipe for disaster.

Some men use aphrodisiacs—*vhukavhuka*—in order to boost sexuality. The most common one is the use of *mazondo* (trotters). These are cooked and mixed with a medicine that is taken orally. The objective is to enhance stimulation. The Karanga man believes that a bigger penis and an enhanced erection are more sexually effective and desired by women. But aphrodisiacs are also dangerous. In some cases, an erection has been lowered after taking them. Then, in other cases, stimulation is uncontrollable. Men enjoy sexual freedom and some make use of *mubobobo*. This is a practice in which a man can have sex with a woman without her knowledge. The man can enter a bedroom where a couple is asleep, and have sex with the wife. The man remains in a deep sleep but the woman senses something like a dream. There are several cases of employers who use *mubobobo* on domestic workers and, after sex, collect their pants in a plastic bag. This serves as evidence for the practice of *mubobobo*. Some men boast about this practice, but the Karanga society denounces it as evil and sexually abusive. (Shoko, 2007a:21). This kind of male behaviour can be another potential driver of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In the traditional set up, a woman did not participate in some social and cultural activities. They could attend court cases in which they were involved but were not allowed to speak for themselves; a

woman was represented by a man, a close relative who is to speak on her behalf. Nowadays the situation has changed and women have the liberty to speak on their own. (Bourdillon, 1976:70-71). Even minors, in cases of child abuse, make use of victim-friendly courts in which they supply evidence to trained officials, but always in the absence of the offenders.

The Karanga acknowledge that there are positive roles that can be performed by a woman. Her services are notable in the kitchen and in agriculture. In the rain rituals women are involved in making preparations for the ceremony. They grind millet, rapoko and sorghum to prepare beer days before the occasion. They carry beer pots to the point where the ritual takes place. Only women past childbearing age and young virgins regarded as “clean” can brew this beer. Middle-aged women are perceived as “dirty” and ritually unclean because they are still sexually active. Paradoxically, the ritual spells are conducted by men, regardless of their sexual activities. In some cases the women’s involvement is limited. During funerals, a wife is not allowed to visit the gravesite during burial. She remains at home and takes a bath, which is not allowed before the burial. Washing her body is important because it cleanses her from defilement caused by any contact with the dead body.

A woman is valued for marital purposes. She is a partner in sexual relationships. The Karanga enjoy sex and regard it as sacred. Sexual language is taboo. Ideally, the sexual act should be confined to the marriage mat. It is private but should be conducted in the presence of light. In the past, light from a fire lit the hut. In the contemporary context, couples put on a paraffin lamp, light a candle or switch on an electric lamp in areas where these resources are available in order to brighten sex. Fire is a symbol of reproduction. It represents God symbolically in the process of creation. (Aschwanden, 1982:208). The woman is important in that she produces children. Children are considered as gifts from the spiritual realm and that is why *roora* must be paid, as gratitude to the in-laws. Infertility is viewed as a curse from the ancestral spirits. It is a constant worry in the life of a woman. She makes efforts to consult

traditional healers and prophets to get medicines to help her conceive. While that may be successful for some people, it has proven otherwise for other people. Some people arrange the marriage of a sister to act as substitute wife. These days, people resort to scientific means, such as artificial insemination, in order to produce children. Men are scared of sterility. It does not promote the growth of the clan. It is an embarrassment for the man and his relatives. In order to cover up this situation, relatives arrange a private sexual relationship between the sterile man's brother and his own wife (*kupindira*). The products of the sexual encounter, children, belong to the sterile man and neither the wife nor his brother should ever mention a word about their encounter.

The VaRemba people, a Karanga sub-group, practice initiation to adulthood for boys, called *murundu*, and girls, *komba*. The boys temporarily leave the village and go into bush camps with traditional elders. The boys are trained in skills and customs that pertain to Remba culture, like ritual killing and tribal endogamy in marriage. Education involves social, cultural and medical knowledge. Boys are trained to handle a wife in bed. They also practice circumcision. The foreskin is cut in order to enhance sexuality. It is cut with a knife, and the piece that is removed and the resultant blood are eaten by the boys. This is a test of endurance. The boys also take medicines to promote their health and strength. They undergo severe tests like bathing in cold water in June, the coldest month of the year, as part of the training. The initiates are trained in several disciplines such as hunting, craft, and agriculture. They also play games like *tsoro* and do strenuous exercises. In the training the boys are beaten with medicated whips. At the end each one gets his own whip, which he keeps. They can be used to beat any outsiders who do not belong to their culture, should they be considered to be intruding on VaRemba privacy during the ceremony. They may also be used to hunt animals. The VaRemba activities are vigorous, so much so that some people die during the initiation ceremony. The dead must not be mourned but are buried in graves at the camp. They view this death as a sign of honour, of dying for your own

clan, so they sing and dance while trampling the grave. (Shoko, 2007a:24).

VaRemba girls practice *komba* (female circumcision) and attend “weekend courses” (Dahlin, 2002:63) led by some traditional elderly women. Education for women involves preparation for life. Girls are taught various skills of sexual styles in order to please their husbands. As part of the training, a girl lies on the ground and raises her body supported by hands and feet. Needles are placed below her body, upright on the ground. One woman sits on top of the girl and imitates the man’s role during the sexual act. In some cases a stone is substituted for the older woman. The girl must play the sexual act and avoid being pricked by the needle. This ensures excellent sexual skills. The women also stretch the girls’ labia (*makongo*). Long labia act as sexual stimulants.³ The initiates receive training on social matters of marital conduct. They are taught the virtues of life applying to the husband and family, such as kindness, industriousness and moral uprightness and the don’ts, like gossip and greed. They are also exposed to household activities like pottery, weaving, knitting and sewing. Initiation is not marked only with serious business. Games and entertainment are also part of the ritual. The dominant games are *nhoda* and *pada*. The girls also share stories, proverbs and riddles. (Shoko, 2007a:24). In circumcision and excision, if the instruments used are not properly disinfected, they may transmit HIV and AIDS.

The Karanga form of initiation does not only involve elaborate rituals. It is a social and cultural practice that provides education for young boys and girls and prepares them for life as adults. In the traditional past, the uncle was responsible for educating boys as they grew up. They checked on the boys’ level of maturity by conducting tests at the river. A boy was made to stand in a pool of water and induced to masturbate, although in daily life masturbation is not encouraged since it is a waste of human seed and fertility. If

³Celestin Hategekimana writing in the context of Rwanda in this volume also makes reference to this practice.

the sperm he produced floated in water then the elders knew that he was immature. He was given medicine to strengthen his manhood. But if the sperm sank in the water then they concluded that the boy was mature. (Bourdillon, 1976:64-65). He was then cautioned against having sex with girls since that might lead to pregnancy. The river test was important. Water is a symbol of life. Other tests also applied. These included the use of an egg. A raw egg was broken and given to the boy to eat. If he vomited, then he was infertile, but if he did not vomit he was fertile. Special medicine called *mudanhatsindi* was mixed with water and placed in the boys' hut so that the boys could drink at any time. The medicine was meant to strengthen the boys' fertility.

Marriage

There are some cultural practices that facilitate the spread of HIV and AIDS. Some driving forces of the disease are of deep cultural orientation. Some of the practices are marital, such as *barika* (polygamy)—a practice whereby a man marries more than one wife, *kugara nhaka* (wife inheritance), *sarapavana* (take care of children)—a practice that stipulates that when an elder sister or aunt fails to conceive then a young sister is supposed to marry the brother-in-law in order to conceive children on behalf of her sister – and *kupindira* (overtake) whereby a brother of a infertile or deceased man is expected to sleep with his sister-in-law in order to produce children on behalf of his brother. In these cultural practices, the chances of spreading HIV and AIDS are abundant. But while some argue that such practices do not help spread the pandemic, others believe they do fuel infection, for example in such cases as that of spouse inheritance, where the original partner may have died of an AIDS-related illness.

On polygamy, the Karanga culture enjoins that a man is not obliged to have only one wife. This indigenous practice is highly regarded. In the Karanga society, most peasants depend heavily on agricultural production, and that type of cultivation requires a lot of labour. Polygamy ensured the availability of sufficient cheap labour.

Mr Vio Makazhu, a polygamist, also argued that a lot of labour input can only be defined through the size of the household and that this was what made the practice mandatory.⁴ But the practice can promote the spread of HIV and AIDS; should the husband or one of the wives be unfaithful and get infected, then a number of people will contract the infection. The greater the number of wives one has, the less one is likely to satisfy them all sexually. The result is that the likelihood of infidelity increases and this in turn increases the chances of getting HIV and AIDS. (Mukweva, 1997:12). However, some traditionalists defend the system. One health worker commented, "Polygamy can help curb the promiscuous behaviour of married men and thus reduces the chances of getting infected by HIV and AIDS."⁵

Wife inheritance is a common practice among the Karanga traditionalists. This practice means that if a man dies and leaves behind a wife or wives and children, his younger brothers can inherit the deceased's surviving spouses and the children of the dead. The problem with the practice is that if the deceased was infected by HIV and AIDS, then his wives may also be infected and then infect the man who inherits the wives. He will then infect his own wife and further spread the virus. (Mukweva, 1997:13).

Marriage is an important institution in the Karanga society. In the past, the procedure of marriage was simple. Whilst formal marriage was recommended, some informal types of marriage precipitated problems, often disadvantaging the girl child by exposing her to diseases. In some cases, *kuzvarira* (pledging) was practiced. A poor family with a daughter negotiates with a rich family and exchanges the daughter for food. The man supplies regular food and crops to the girl's family. The girl remains at her homestead. When she matures, she leaves her home to join the husband. It is a form of "marriage in advance." (Kileff, 1970:28). This tradition is problematic now, when young girls resist marriage with (*harahwa*)

⁴Makazhu interview, 14 January 1997.

⁵Makazhu interview, 10 January 1997.

old people. Another form of marriage is *matenganagudo*. This involves two families exchanging their daughters for marriage. No payment is involved. “The two *roora* cancel each other out” and balance the transaction. (Shoko, 2007a:26). The issue of payment of *roora* in cash is a new development in the process of marriage. The son-in-law pays five goats and corn—for example, a few bags of maize and rapoko—to his in-laws. But in the event that he could not afford this payment, he volunteered to work in the fields of the in-laws. *Kutema ugariri* is the name used for this type of marriage. (Kileff, 1970:29).

Another form of marriage in the Karanga society is *kutiza mukumbo* (elopement). This is practiced when a man impregnates (*kumitisa*) a girl before marriage. The boy makes arrangements to collect the girl at night and bring her to his own home. The girl packs her clothes and sneaks to a meeting point outside the home, accompanied by a friend. They meet the boy and start the journey to his home. (Ibid.:36).

Musengabere is a type of marriage that involves the abduction of the girl.⁶ The man identifies a woman of his choice and plans to marry her. He does not communicate with the girl, but he targets her when she goes to the river or into the forest to fetch firewood alone. Stealthily, he kidnaps her. The girl mauls him with her nails and her teeth but the boy does not let her loose. He perseveres until he reaches home. Then the marriage process starts. In a similar kind of marriage, a girl can marry a boy without pre-arrangement. The marriage is called *kuganha*. She identifies the man of her choice and heads to his home straightaway. No one resists her efforts. The man is expected to comply and marry her. In both cases of marriage, neither courtship nor preliminary arrangements apply. A husband or wife is a precious gift from ancestors and must not be resisted. The choice made by the ancestors is more valid than human choice.

⁶Celestine Hategekimana in this volume, writing within the context of Rwanda, discusses a similar tradition.

In the past, parents were involved in the choice of a man for the girl. They based their criteria on sound knowledge of the boy's background and family history. Families associated with witchcraft, murder, hostilities and evil practices were ruled out. But today individuals make their own choices. The 1901 Native Marriage ordinance allows women to choose their own husbands. Choices are usually determined by employment and possession of money, and the acquisition of high education. Parents can still exert influence to subvert the choices. But some boys and girls defy parents' advice by engaging in sexual activity, resulting in the girls' unexpected pregnancies, and then proceed to get married. This may be a potential source of problems, such as sexually transmitted infections.

Male homosexuality is a controversial issue in the African community, not least the Karanga, and is a practice that fuels the spread of HIV and AIDS. In the Karanga tradition, the term *chingochani* is used to refer to this practice. But there are two conflicting positions to explain the views on homosexuality. The first and most popular is that homosexuality is a foreign phenomenon, brought by westernization. Traditionalists insist that, historically, Africa was ignorant of this practice before the Europeans came. Most believe there is no precedent of people who had homosexual relationships. Homosexuality is a borrowed tradition, seen as anti-social.⁷ At the back of their minds, traditionalists believe they had a strict moral upbringing in society, which was affected through traditional practices such as the *murundu* and *komba* initiation ceremonies.

However, there are some people who maintain that homosexuality was in existence in the Karanga culture even before the coming of colonization. The proponents of this position hold that homosexuality is not really a foreign phenomenon. Homosexuality was practiced by some boys at puberty. However, the intention was to "relieve one's sexual tensions without any

⁷Mataruse, interview, 1 April 2006.

⁸Mudavanhu, interview, 5 August, 2006.

shedding of future plans for heterosexual relations in marriage.”⁸ Also both genders committed homosexual acts in the absence of the opposite sex. What people needed in these relationships was love.⁹ If we agree with the suggestion that homosexuality was inherent in Karanga traditional culture, then the practice was liable to aid in the spread of HIV and AIDS, as condoms were not used in most of these encounters.

Cultural Beliefs

In Karanga society, there are several indigenous beliefs and cultural practices that may facilitate the spread of HIV and AIDS. The Karanga share one of the most distinctive characteristics of African indigenous religions—they are secret religions. (Platvoet, 1988). Accordingly, Karanga religion is also secretive and people are not open on matters pertaining to sexuality. Open discussion of HIV and AIDS, sexuality and reproduction issues is often considered too sensitive and too controversial. Sex is believed to be secret and sacred, so much so that no one speaks about it in the open. Most indigenous Karanga people believe that talking about sex is *zvinonyadzisa* (an embarrassment). Such matters are shrouded with shyness and taboo, which prevent open discussion and therefore hinder education. (Chirongoma, 2006). For instance, elderly Karanga people refer to the genitals as *zvinhu* (“things”).

Sexual intercourse is called *kukwirana*, which means “to sleep with one another.” This does not mean that the Karanga do not have blunt terms for these things, but they avoid the use of those words with deeper meaning.¹⁰ So when someone contracts HIV, the Karanga attribute the fundamental cause of the illness to sexual misbehaviour. More bluntly, they pinpoint *chihure* (prostitution) as the cause of illness. In these cases, HIV and AIDS are categorized as sexually transmitted infections (*siki*). The afflicted is described as *akarumwa ne siki*, or “bitten by venereal disease,” equating the

⁹Shumba, interview, 15 July 2006.

¹⁰Dube, interview, 2 August 2004.

disease with a snake that bites. As such, HIV and AIDS infection is classified as *runyokaI*, sickness as a result of illicit sex. In Karanga culture, *runyoka* is most common among the Korekore people in Mt Darwin, where it is called *rukawo*. *Runyoka* manifests in various forms of illness, classified as *rwemajuru* (ants), *rwehove* (fish), *rwekuzvimba dumbu* (swollen tummy), *rwokunamirana* (gluing together), *rwebanga* (knife) and *rwetsuro* (rabbit).¹¹ The imagery is evil and invokes embarrassment, and the consequence may be reversible if attended to early and or can be fatal if delayed. However, since indigenous healers can reverse the symptoms of attack by *runyoka*, people also believe that HIV and AIDS infection can be reversed. Traditional medicine remains highly valued among the Karanga.

Since the cultural beliefs maintain secrecy, the Karanga also refer to sickness due to HIV and AIDS in a metaphorical language. The most common term is *Mukondombera* (fatal disease). Mashiri et al discuss the Karanga practice of naming the pandemic in descriptive terms that use “indirection” as a way to “save face.” For instance, the Karanga refer to the disease as,

- *Mubatanidzwa* (One who unites)
- *Zvamazuva ano* (Contemporary things)
- *Shuramatongo* (Warning of disaster that wipes out everyone)
- *Chakapedza mbudzi* (Disease that killed goats in large numbers)
- *Jemedza* (One who causes severe pain)
- *Kurudzikunemakuva* (A clan ridden with graves)
- *Mutswairo* (A broom)
- *Paradzai* (One who destroys)
- *Mupedzanyika* (One who kills indiscriminately)
- *Gukurahundi* (Rain that falls in autumn)
- *Chazezesa* (Scaring)

¹¹Moyo, interview, 10 April 2002.

- *Jehova Ndouyako* (Lord I am coming home) (Mashiri et al, 2002:229).

Accordingly, the infected person's condition is also described in terms that are meant to describe the plight of the sufferer and his kith and kin. The Karanga refer to the condition as,

- *Akarobwa namatsotsi* (He/she has been beaten by thugs)
- *Ari pabus stop* (He/she is at the bus station)
- *Ane pemu* (He/she is with perm—referring to the thinning and loss of shine in hair observed in the terminally ill)¹²

Mashiri et al also provide terms that describe the symptoms of people affected or infected with HIV and AIDS:

- *Mudonzvo* (Loss of weight)
- *Bhemba* (Head becomes as thin as a hoop-iron)
- *Pemu* (Thinning and loss of shine of hair)
- Go slow (Gradual deterioration of health/long illness)
- *Tsono* (Very thin like a needle) (Mashiri et al, 2002:257).

Cultural myths and beliefs that create misconceptions about the existential reality of HIV and AIDS also prevail. The Karanga have always been sceptical about the origins of the disease. They believe it originated in the West, especially America, hence they interpret the acronym AIDS to mean, "American Ideas of Discouraging Sex." So when it comes to sexual practice, some people resist using a condom on the grounds that "one cannot eat a sweet in its packet." The idea equates a condom with a sweet packet that inhibits flavour. Also disregarding its effectiveness as a protective device, a condom is also considered humorously as *jombo* (gumboots) or a "raincoat" that one can easily do without. The Karanga also use the popular Western brand for a condom, "durex."

¹²Hove, interview, 4 August 2005.

There are also other beliefs that promote unprotected sex. Some Karanga people think they cannot refrain from sexual intercourse since deprivation is tantamount to death. So they argue, *kusiri kufa ndokupi* (“Either way, one has to die”).¹³ Also culturally-fuelled stigma and discrimination like the belief that certain types of genders or types of people are carriers, facilitating the spread of the virus. There are some people who believe that if one sleeps with a virgin, one can rid oneself of HIV and AIDS. Yet deflowering of girls by their fathers as practiced in some Karanga cultures facilitates the transmission of HIV and AIDS.

Men’s Behaviour

There are some common male behaviours that facilitate the spread of HIV and AIDS. Most Karanga believe a man’s virtues lie in his prowess, and his vices are cowardice, be they social, cultural or political. In the political context, President Robert Mugabe once praised manly valour and scoffed at cowards—“*Sifuna amadoda sibili*” (We want brave men). Men show a negative attitude and arrogance on matters pertaining to sexuality. For them, transmission of the virus is “*haina hurry*” (not a concern) or “*Haizi mhosva yangu*” (It’s not my fault). In cases of transmission through rape, some believe the rapist is avenging his predicament; “*Ndoda kumukaurisa*” (I will fix him/her). Men are vehicles of transmission of STIs and HIV. Most men boast, “*Handifi ndoga*” (I will not die alone). They are not concerned about abstinence or the use of condoms—“*kusiri kufa ndokupi?*” (abstinence is equivalent to death)—and they entertain false beliefs, such as “*Zviri nani kufa somurume*” (It’s better to die like a man). As a result, men take pride in their power and potency and are reluctant to seek medical care, unlike their female counterparts. Male behaviour and its sexual urge, as many people believe, are culturally conditioned.

The male Karanga identity is also located in drinking alcohol. This stems from intake of the product of a traditional brew, *doro*

¹³Shiri, interview, 5 June 2002.

rechiKaranga (traditional beer), which is brewed in many homesteads in honour of ancestors and recurs every year the dead still lie in the memories of the living. A beer party is held when the village gathers to perform sacrifices for the deceased relatives. The beer is free of charge, which cultivates a culture of alcoholism among the adherents. Alcohol reduces the sense of responsibility and curtails the motivation to exercise restraint during sex. The Karanga believe violence is another badge of manhood. Boys are trained to be brave and tough at childhood by having their arms rubbed with a medicine, *mangorombera*. At the cattle pens, boys engage in fist fighting and a coward is punished by herding cattle for the whole village. The champion is referred to as *anegarudzo*, vicious. He boasts arrogantly, “*Handihwembwo*” (“No one can do anything to me”). These expressions of male identity express themselves in sexual matters, when a man who dates and sleeps with multiple partners is revered as *gamba* (a hero). Unfortunately, this behaviour exacerbates the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Also traditional healers often prescribe *mushonga womusana* (aphrodisiacs) to young men as sexual stimulants. This often leads to the young men indulging in sexual sprees to satisfy their appetite. In that way they become exposed and can end up spreading HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. (Mukweva, 1997:13).

It would be unfair to treat Karanga men as entirely negative in relation to HIV and AIDS. Just like women, they also endure domestic violence that exposes them to anger and frustration. Some men are beaten by their own wives, others are cheated on by unfaithful partners or wives. Some are even denied conjugal rights. As a result they become reactionary and errant. But this is not to justify their misdeeds; it is merely to point out a dangerous pattern that makes men and women vulnerable to encountering sexual partners with HIV and AIDS.

Methods of Prevention

AIDS education must be encouraged to help men and women to abstain from casual, unprotected sexual intercourse. Paul Matavire, the late Karanga musician from Mwenezi, composed his song, *Yakauya AIDS* (AIDS has come), which warns of the dangers of the epidemic. He depicts HIV and AIDS infection as “*Zvihwitsi zvavasinganzvwi*” (Sweets for errant behaviour), implying that HIV and AIDS is a just reward for wayward behaviour.

Since men are prone to multiple sexual partners, their chances of contracting and further spreading the virus are many. In sexual encounters they have the power to decide where and when to wear condoms. As agents of transmission, it is also important to consider that an adjustment of men’s behaviour could result in further reduction of HIV and AIDS infections.

Group work is also a powerful means to engage men in discussions of the connection between AIDS and gender issues. In some countries, action groups for men have been established and these provide a platform from which to challenge and critique prevailing male stereotypes. These venues are “safe spaces” for men to reflect and to adapt their practices. Through debate, theatrical performance, peer education, community events and other means, they discuss dominant cultural understandings of masculinity and contribute to the generation of new stereotypes of a “real man,” one who takes a different approach to gender, who uses condoms in order to prevent HIV infection, and who lives responsibly, caring for his loved ones. Such groups are also sources of accountability regarding a participant’s actual behaviour and provide role models for others. This is very important for male adolescents. Male socialization is an important arena for work with young men on the connections between gender identity and HIV.

Men and women share similar experiences of oppression that link them across the gender divide. Men’s own oppression offers a valuable point at which to develop empathy for women’s experience of inequality.

Some activists have argued that it is problematic nowadays to equate the use of violence, the consumption of alcohol, the pursuit of multiple sexual partners, and the domination of women with being manly. This idea takes the view that men have a personal investment in challenging the current gender order for their own health reasons, and also because they do not want to place women they care about at risk. The facts on the ground are that many men are eager to challenge practices that endanger their health and the health of their loved ones. Another approach is to engage with society leaders to ensure the means to combat the epidemic. Male community leaders in particular play an important role in dealing with gender issues.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that Karanga social and political structures manifest in kinship and administrative roles are set in favour of men against their female counterparts. They wield a tremendous power base that classifies women as inferior and perpetuates negative stereotypes. Many Karanga men resort to violent behaviour, such as rape, beating up women, increasing promiscuous behaviour and dislike of condom use. Culture has been complicit in women's social subjugation to men owing to the spread of patriarchal ideology in society. This situation unfairly paints all men as dangerous HIV carriers. Women's socially-designed powerlessness has also exposed them to HIV infection through sexual harassment. This means that African men have to make a positive change from patriarchal—oriented behaviours to gender-sensitive behaviours.

Karanga traditional beliefs and customs, such as marriage, establish that men “naturally” have a stronger sex drive than women. This frequently exonerates males in cases of sexual misconduct. In the same culture, men are exempt from moral expectations of premarital abstinence and marital fidelity. As a result it is regarded as “normal” for men to have frequent sex with various sexual partners. A “real” man only acts upon “natural” urges. Therefore, sexual risk-taking is part of being manly, according to the script. It would be regarded as strange, perhaps even feminine, not to follow

the impulse of the sexual drive. In Karanga culture, such behaviour is further encouraged through the understanding that abstinence might even make a man weak and is embarrassing. The side effects of frequent sex with multiple partners, unwanted pregnancies and infections such as sexually transmitted infections, are somehow accepted, because, as the Karanga proverb goes, “*Bhuru rinovonekwa namavanga*” (A bull is known by his scars).

In such circumstances, the risk of HIV and AIDS infection is very high. The fact that men have more opportunities to contract and transmit HIV and AIDS, as they usually determine the circumstances of sexual intercourse and decide if condoms are used or not, means that they are the main agents responsible for a further spread of the HIV epidemic. This also means that men’s disposition to HIV is not merely biologically determined but culturally conditioned, and therefore it is possible to adjust male behaviour in order to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

List of Interviewees

- Dube, L. interview, 2 Augst 2004.
- Hove, M. interview, 4 August 2009.
- Makazhu V. interview, 10 January 1997.
- Mataruse, H. interview, 1 April 2006.
- Moyo, S. interview, 10 April 2002.
- Mudavanhu, B. interview, 5 August 2006.
- Shiri, C. interview, 5 June 2002.
- Shumba, N. interview 15 July 2006.

CHAPTER FIVE

Dangerous Masculinities: An Analysis of the Misconception of “Real Manhood” and Its Impact on Vulnerabilities to HIV among the Ndau of Chipinge in Zimbabwe

Jairus Hlatywayo

Introduction

Within the framework of theology and development, the issue of gender disparity that continues to fuel the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa and the rest of the Third World is seen as a developmental issue, an impediment to development that needs urgently to be tackled. The chapter endeavours to highlight and critique dangerous masculine activity within the Ndau tribe of Chipinge, in Zimbabwe. These activities inevitably increase the vulnerability of both men and women to the HIV and AIDS infection. It also explores some readily available theological resources within the Christian tradition that can be utilized to increase understanding of the spread of HIV and reduce stigma and discrimination. Masculinity is viewed as a cultural construction rather than a universal, biologically based set of characteristics. It is defined as the extent to which men believe it important to adhere to culturally defined standards for masculine behaviour. In this regard, men behave

as they do because of the internalization of cultural norms. Male ideology is concerned with beliefs about what men (and women) are like and how they should behave. (Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993).

The Gendered Nature of HIV Infection Trends in Africa

Africa has emerged as fertile ground for the spread of the HIV and AIDS pandemic and this has wreaked havoc in all fundamental areas of existence – social, political, health, economics and gender. (Mhloyi, 2004). One cannot, therefore, talk of dangerous masculinities without addressing the issue of the HIV and AIDS infection. Foreman highlights that,

Women are more vulnerable to HIV infection... Their vulnerability is as a result of social and economic factors and [they] have limited opportunities to protect themselves while many men are at risk because they refuse to do so, often deliberately, it seems. (1999: viff)

Approximately 55 percent of those infected by HIV and AIDS in southern Africa and other parts of the world are women. According to Haddad, (2002), women's biological disposition coupled with the disadvantages and oppressive sociocultural situation means the odds are stacked against them. Foreman reiterates that, "the HIV epidemic is driven by men." (Foreman, 1999: vii). Despite their levels of infection, men are less affected by HIV and AIDS than women but more responsible for transmission. In short, men determine the path of the epidemic, and there is a general unwillingness on their part to regard it as a problem that concerns them, seeing it rather as a problem of the other, "a disease of otherness." (Kippax, Crawford & Waldby, 1994:S321). In addition, there is also a general privileging of men within AIDS policy, which "attempts to protect heterosexual male bodies and to maintain masculine sexual freedom in the age of HIV." (Kippax, Crawford & Waldby: S321). Therefore, the responsibility for transmitting HIV lies more less with individual men or with men as a group than with widely accepted concepts of masculinity that

underpin the behaviour of millions of men across the globe. Foreman's central argument is that,

Many if not most men who fail to protect themselves and their partners do so less from conscious choice than because that is how men are expected to behave. Most boys grow believing, implicitly or explicitly, that their identity as men, and therefore as individuals, is defined by their sexual prowess. Attitudes to sex are in a state of flux almost everywhere, but in many societies men are still expected to have regular intercourse with their wives or regular partners and occasional or regular intercourse with casual partners. Women are expected to accede to men's demands, abstinence is seen as harmful, and condoms are seen as unmasculine and as restricting a men's pleasure. As long as men and women are influenced by such concepts of masculinity, HIV will continue to spread. (Foreman, 1999: xi)

Therefore, the spread of HIV and AIDS is fuelled by commonplace practices and beliefs, most notably those surrounding sexual intercourse. For this reason, AIDS needs to be understood in relation to masculinity, because masculinity is not a property of men, but an everyday code of practice that regulates behaviour between men and women at sites of transmission.

Dangerous Masculinities and the Misconceptualization of "Real Manhood" in Ndau Culture

Various masculine activities fuel the spread of the HIV epidemic in the Ndau culture in Chipinge. These include the concept of an insatiable male sex drive, the notion of conquest, masculinity as penetration, males as risk takers and the notion of the idealized male body. The discourse of the insatiable male sex drive holds that men are driven by an uncontrollable sex drive that is biologically rooted. In the face of this insatiable drive, women simply have to submit in order to provide men with the desired relief and satisfaction. (Pendry, 1998). The wide acceptance of this notion results in the perpetuation of risky sexual behaviour, leading to HIV infection.

The notion of conquest holds that masculinity is established through the male conquest of women, and men are allocated a place in the social hierarchy on the basis of the extent of these conquests.¹ Closely related to conquest is the notion of males as risk takers. Embarking on conquests through hunting or war, men defined their sense of self as risk takers. This behaviour has been extended into various aspects of typically masculine behaviour such as substance abuse, reckless driving or participating in dangerous sports. (Kaminer & Dixon, 1995; Nauright & Chandler, 1996).

Another belief is that masculinity is linked to penetration. To be male is to penetrate, and penetration serves to reinforce and stabilize one's sense of masculinity. In brief, masculinity is connected with penetration, regardless of whom, how or what it is that one is penetrating. In this light, the condom is regarded as an impediment to the capacity for or intensity of penetration, especially if considered in conjunction with (raw, unhindered) conquest, therefore reducing one's sense of masculinity. Furthermore, any forms of sexual expression that do not involve penetrative sexual intercourse are inconsistent with the definition of oneself as masculine.

Petersen argues that masculinity assumes the materiality of the male body as opposed to the female body. (1998). The ideal male body is conceptualized as heterosexual and driven by a biologically determined sex drive. Heterosexual men have been established as the standard for measuring and evaluating other bodies. The ideal

¹Masculinity among the Ndaou tribe of Zimbabwe has been used to emphasize the power that men should have over women where men are like bulls that should conquer as many cows as possible in their kraal. The term "conquest" in this case refers to the expression of power, bravery and the amount of risk-taking associated with men, especially how to expose oneself to pain in pursuit of dominance in society. It is expressed sexually, militarily, violently, and by throwing your weight around on people. It is the use of power to manipulate, suppress and make things difficult for others, and this study endeavours to condemn such behaviour as being instrumental for HIV transmission.

male body reflects the values of competitiveness, toughness and desire for control. Such notions of the male body have led to the tolerance or encouragement of sexual discrimination and harassment, prostitution and abuse of women. Petersen further states that men have an instrumental relationship with their bodies, in which the masculine ideal has no control over emotion and desire. Women, by comparison, are driven by emotion and desire (according to this scheme). Hence the privileging of the male body has been a major backdrop to the spread of HIV, leading to a situation in which men have failed to see themselves as being in any way responsible for HIV or its prevention.

The AIDS Pandemic as an Impediment to Development in Southern Africa

Demographic Structures

HIV and AIDS is Africa's largest development problem, and the Church is not exempt. Unfortunately, some Churches and African leaders fail to recognize this. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), more than one-fifth of the adult population is infected with HIV in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Furthermore, in four of these countries, HIV and AIDS infection exceeds 30 percent, and Botswana's rate is nearly 40 percent. This is undoubtedly a staggering prevalence. According to 2003 reports, southern Africa houses about 30 percent of people living with HIV or AIDS worldwide, yet this region has less than 2 percent of the world's population. (UNAIDS/WHO, 2003). The economic viability of most of these countries is therefore adversely affected because of the way in which the epidemic attacks those who are economically productive. The HIV epidemic therefore presents the African continent with the greatest social, economic and health crisis in living memory. This is particularly because, out of an estimated 45 million people infected with HIV worldwide, approximately 85 percent, or

38 million, are inhabitants of the Sub-Saharan region. (ukzn/aidsprogramme, 2007). Population figures are changing every day because of the way the epidemic impacts demographic structures. For instance in Zimbabwe, life expectancy has dropped to a record low of 34 years and approximately 34 percent of the adult population is infected with HIV. There are about 3000 deaths every week, and presently Zimbabwe has the highest number of orphans in the world. (Chirongoma, 2006).

The Interconnectedness of Death, Development and HIV

Development targets are unattainable due to the HIV epidemic, which inevitably regresses a society's ability to develop. HIV destroys promise, shortens and impoverishes life, and crowds out vital human investment. The epidemic is a development issue at both Church and household levels; it hits families at the most productive ages, especially young women who might be the bearers of new life. It is an open secret that women are the most important agents of development in Africa; unfortunately, they are also the most vulnerable to HIV infection because of their biological disposition and socioeconomic inequality. Poverty, inequality and gender violence create a vicious circle of vulnerability and the spread of the HIV epidemic. (Ibid). HIV thrives on poverty, and depends on it. This is a stumbling block to the central goal of development, which is to better the lives of the community, both rich and poor. According to the UNAIDS/WHO report, (2003), HIV also forces countries to make tragic choices—between today's and tomorrow's lives and between health and the dozens of other investments vital for development.

Families have been disintegrated; their structures have changed, with a new trend of child-headed families becoming the norm in certain communities. Everyone is affected by this epidemic in some way; families, friends, and neighbours have been snatched in the prime of their lives. This inevitably leads to retarded national development, as skilled people die, resulting in a lack of skills and in vulnerable households headed by children or grandparents, who are

either too young or too old to work. The following section discusses the role of women in African society, to show how the gender disparities that inevitably lead to high rates of HIV infection among women have far-reaching repercussions on development and society in general.

The Central Role of Women in African Communities

The role of an African woman in the community is akin to that of the roots of a tree. The roots are always underground and covered by the soil, collecting and receiving nutrients and water and passing all this on through the trunk to feed all other parts of the tree, so the tree can bear fruit and blossom with beautiful flowers. The role of the roots is accorded very little respect and recognition normally taken for granted, and in most cases it is not even mentioned. This analogy makes a lot of sense if one thinks seriously of the historical role of women in many African societies. It also makes sense to a Zimbabwean *Shona*-speaking person. In the *Shona* language, the word for woman (*mudzimai*) is taken from the word “root” (*mudzi*). *Mudzi* means root and *mai* is the short version for woman/mother, hence *mudzimai* means woman/mother. Hence the role of a tree root is compared to that of women in African society, a role most women come to embrace naturally, but which is never accorded the value and respect it deserves. The typical African woman is a giver, nurturer and nourisher of life who will give her all to ensure the continuity, safety, security, and well-being of her family or community. (Chirongoma and Manda, 2008). Women are the backbone of the family and play a significant role not only in Church but also within the life cycle of the family, as well as in various professional fields.

Women are leaders in many institutional organizations and have recently become heads or deputy heads of countries such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and Liberia to mention a few. Historical records show African women proved themselves astute managers of local economies, capable of playing important roles in war and peace-making and even in the religious arena. But all this has slipped into oblivion. (Snyder, M. and Tadesse, 1995). The contemporary

African woman has continued to prove capable of contributing to the agenda for social change in local communities. However, there continue to be vast discrepancies between men and women and their access to resources and opportunities. The concept of real manhood in the Ndau culture reflects the true behaviour of some African men in a region that perpetuates the spread of HIV infection.

Factors Fuelling Zimbabwean Women's Vulnerability to HIV Infection

Sexual Abuse and Lawlessness

When the land redistribution (or land invasion, as it is famously known) crisis erupted in Zimbabwe in the year 2000, female farm workers became the easiest target for men since the majority of land invaders were men. (Hill, 2005). Women and young girls were raped, assaulted and brutalized without the state arresting or trying a single case. These were all methods used predominantly to intimidate white farm owners and their workers; the majority of farm workers were women. Rape and domestic violence against women is still treated as common assault within the Zimbabwean criminal justice system. (Dube – Chirairo, 2005). Like most African countries, it still treats rape and violation of women and girls as a common crime. Although some women's organizations exist in the country, not much has been done to improve the situation. This is very dangerous because it puts women at risk and exposes them to HIV. The legal system is dominated by men who make rules to suit themselves and do not seem to care about discrimination against and exploitation of women. If women are the backbone of the family, society is allowing its backbone to be eroded at its own peril.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that there are also some women who have become perpetrators of violence and the spread of HIV. Some women manipulate rules and regulations that are meant to safeguard community values. For example, a law new to Zimbabwe in 2006 gives a woman the mandate to sue her husband

if he comes home late without informing his wife.² The danger is that some women go too far and use this bill to inflict fear and intimidation on their partners. They interpret the bill to mean that a woman has the right to control her partner in every aspect of his life. As such, they end up restricting their partners' social lives, making their men very miserable and possibly causing them to drown their sorrows in risky sexual behaviour.

There are now also financially stable older women challenging community values by molesting younger men. They use their financial position to pay younger men for sex. This is disturbing because this age group is expected to be mentors and mothers to the community, maintaining moral values and integrity and teaching the younger generation to uphold tradition. Instead, they are the ones who are luring the younger generation to disregard self-respect and dignity. Again, such relationships are exploitative and manipulative; the younger men are not in a position to insist on safer sex, and if the older woman decides to be careless, this results in both of them being exposed to HIV.

Patriarchal Systems: Unequal Power Structures

The dominating nature of patriarchy in most African communities has resulted in a situation in which women have been subordinated, oppressed and prevented from making full and equal contributions to their communities, let alone recognized as significant. Although most of the back-breaking manual work such as working in the

²The Domestic Violence Bill was passed by the House of Assembly (lower chamber of Zimbabwe's Parliament) in November 2006 and awaited transmission to the Senate. After it became law it outlawed harmful cultural practices including pledging of women or girls for the purposes of appeasing spirits, female genital mutilation, forced wife inheritance, and forced virginity testing. A council mandated to deal with domestic violence issues was established, and it is mandatory for all police stations to establish a section to deal with cases of domestic violence. Unfortunately, very few women have utilised the Domestic Violence Act. This is due to cultural, religious, social, and economic factors.

fields, fetching water from distant sources and fetching wood for cooking is basically the woman's responsibility, it is not accorded much value since it can not really be measured using monetary value. Women are left at home, especially in the villages, to take care of the family, while men flock into the big cities in search of employment. Most of these women are economically deprived, as their household chores do not earn them any income. Consequently, they cannot equate themselves with their male partners, who fend for them financially. As their men return from the so-called greener pastures, most women feel powerless in terms of negotiating for safer sex with their partners since, culturally, it is regarded as impolite. Such powerlessness makes them vulnerable to HIV infection.

These patriarchal systems with such unequal power structures are still influential and very much at work in our African communities, making the spread of HIV and AIDS very difficult to stop. One African researcher had this to say:

Can we overcome hunger and malnutrition without involving the women who cultivate, process and cook our food? Can we overcome ignorance without women who are the first teachers of our children? (Govere, 2006)

The significant role of women in our battle against poverty cannot be ignored. We need both sexes to be on the same footing, to turn the tide of the continuing HIV and AIDS pandemic. Unfortunately the Nda culture, like many other African cultures, is not very open about discussion of sexual activities, and since HIV is usually regarded as being transmitted through sexual encounter, many people die in silence due to the stigma and discrimination attached to it. Women should therefore be given space to voice their agony in the struggle to protect themselves from HIV infection.

The Nda culture certainly needs to revise some of its traditional customs in view of the current HIV epidemic. For instance, the institutions of polygamy and wife inheritance have become dangerous since they are sometimes a catalyst for the spreading of HIV and

AIDS. These are customs that exist to safeguard the traditional caring system, under which widows and orphans were inherited by an adult man in the family. However, the current scenario makes this very problematic due to the risk that if a man inherits a wife or takes another in a polygamous relationship without all concerned parties having undergone an HIV test, they might end up creating a vicious circle of infection and re-infection, especially if they do not practice safer sex.

The Church should also play a fundamental role in encouraging caring within the Ndaу clan. In the whole traditional caring system, disease is an indication of an unhealthy individual or communal life. If one person is not well, then the whole community is affected and becomes sick as well. Health and well being in the traditional African society is not just a matter of some individual, physical pain. It is a matter of the spiritual pain of the clan and of the whole community to which the sick person belongs. The kinship system is basically a caring institution. It cares through the family, the community and the whole clan. Should this system be encouraged by the Church, there would surely be a reduction in the number of orphaned children as a result of HIV and AIDS.³

Transforming Gender

The Church must play a major role in addressing harmful and aggressive masculinities. It must be actively involved in the socialization of boy children in their families, and encourage schools to promote harmony across the gender divide. The Church is well placed to promote collaboration between men and women in facing the challenge of HIV and AIDS. Currently, women carry the burden of care and bear most of the consequences of the epidemic.

Male religious leaders have an important role to play in the transformation of gender. Among the Ndaу of Chipinge, and indeed

³See Ezra Chitando's two volumes (2007a, 2007b), which proposes "AIDS competent Churches," outlining their expected roles and responsibilities towards those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS.

in most African contexts, they wield a lot of power, which they must use positively to ensure that women are treated fairly. Church leaders must condemn the oppression of women, gender-based violence and aggressive masculinities. They must undertake programmes to promote positive masculinities.

Church schools and other institutions must be utilized to promote new images of manhood. They can incorporate positive aspects of masculinity from Ndaou (and other African) culture. These institutions can deconstruct harmful masculinities built around the concept of an insatiable male sex drive, the notion of conquest, masculinity as penetration, males as risk takers and the notion of the idealized male body. The positive masculinity that the Church must promote must assist boys and men to abstain, be faithful or use condoms in sexual relations. The idea of conquest must be replaced by the realization that women are not objects to be conquered, while the notion of risk taking must be replaced by responsibility. These values will be instrumental in the emergence of the new, gender-sensitive man.

Conclusion

The issue of HIV and AIDS is not just a fundamental problem of existence, nor an occasion for imputing blame between men and women, but an opportunity to reflect more deeply on the work of God. If all humanity has been created in the image of God (Gen 1:28), then there is no justification for men to treat women as second-class citizens, because we are all equal in God's family. (Gal 5ff, Romans 8:28). After creating humanity and all else, "God blessed them, saying to them; be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and multiply in it." (Genesis 1:28ff). This begs questions such as: Can the African continent and the Church multiply, develop and be fruitful without the equal participation of both men and women? Can there

be growth and development with only the “*yang* without the *yin*”⁴ or vice versa? Therefore, a dialogue between men and women on the issue of masculinities and gender equality in the Church and community will assure women a full and equal participation on this earth, which is God’s, and all that is in it. (Psalm 24:1ff). This writer sincerely believes that tying together the roles of men and women as equal partners in building, developing and protecting our health and well-being will ensure effective and equal participation and engagement of both genders in the development process. To discriminate against one gender or emphasize the superiority of another is to “dehumanize” it, increasing the chances of HIV infection. It is therefore sincerely hoped that this chapter will broaden traditional understanding of the epidemic and provide ideas that will help both men and women to better serve the Church and community in an endeavour to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS.

⁴Yin and Yang are two basic principles of the universe in Chinese philosophy. Yin is the female principle and yang is the male principle. Although yin is characterised as dark and negative and yang as being light and positive, I am not using these principles in this narrow sense. I am using them simplistically to mean male and female who cannot survive and be fruitful and multiply without the other.

CHAPTER SIX

And This Too Shall Pass: HIV and AIDS in the Context of the Black Male Experience in the United States of America

James Puckett

Introduction

There is an old joke that still circulates within our society that goes, “What is the difference between a large pizza and a black man? A large pizza can feed a family.” This particular joke is significant because it is a rare case where both race and gender identities are attacked. Usually the basis of this type of joke is either racial or gender-based. The issues that this joke attacks have been experienced firsthand by many African-American males, such as Richard Wright. In “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow,” a piece in his acclaimed collection of novellas, *Uncle Tom’s Children*, he remembers a specific case in which his “manhood” was attacked.

One night, just as I was about to go home, I met one of the Negro maids. She lived in my direction, and we fell in to walk of the way home together. As we passed the white night watchman, he slapped the maid on her buttock. I turned around, amazed. The watchman looked at me with a long, hard, fixed-under stare.

Suddenly he pulled his gun and asked, “Nigger, don’t yuh like it?” I hesitated. “I asked yuh, don’t yuh like it?” he asked again, stepping forward.

“Yes, sir,” I mumbled.

“Talk like it, then!”

“Oh, yes sir!” I said with as much heartiness as I could muster. Outside, I walked ahead of the girl, ashamed to face her. She caught up with me and said, “Don’t be a fool! Yuh couldn’t help it!”

This watchman boasted of having killed two Negroes in self-defence. Yet, in spite of all this, the life of the hotel ran with an amazing smoothness. It would have been impossible for a stranger to detect anything. The maids, the hall-boys, and the bell boys were all smiles. They had to be. (Wright, 1991:12-13)

In this situation, Wright recalls his feelings of helplessness as a part of being a black man. He was unable to act on his “manhood” and defend his female friend from a physical assault committed by the white watchman. In most societies, men embrace the concept of being able to protect their families, women, and children.¹ This idea of being a protector is a key element in the “manhood” we have constructed in American society. Many black men still suffer from this burden of not being able to live up to their “manhood.” For whites, it is important to keep black males from reaching their full potential. It is accepted to display black males as sexual beasts, childlike, or even feminine. However, in the United States, white males could commit such acts as Richard Wright describes above, or even rape a woman, and no label would be inflicted due to their inhumane actions.

Richard Wright also recalls an incident as a child when his race was the element that was being attacked. This incident is recalled in his autobiography, *Black Boy*:

¹Written from an African setting, the chapters by Julius Gathogo, Tabona Shoko and Lubunga Ewusha in this volume echo the same theme.

Richard, I want to ask you something,” Pease began pleasantly, not looking up from his work.

“Yes, sir.”

Reynolds came over and stood blocking the narrow passage between the benches; he folded his arms and stared at me solemnly. I looked from one to the other, sensing trouble. Pease looked up and spoke slowly, so there would be no possibility of my not understanding.

“Richard, Reynolds here tells me that you called me Pease,” he said. I stiffened. A void opened up in me. I knew that this was the showdown.

He meant that I had failed to call him Mr Pease. I looked at Reynolds; he was gripping a steel bar in his hand. I opened my mouth to speak, to protest, to assure Pease that I had never called him simply *Pease*, and that I had never had any intention of doing so, when Reynolds grabbed me by the collar, ramming my head against the wall.

“Now, be careful, nigger,” snarled Reynolds, baring his teeth. “I heard you call ’im *Pease*. And if you say you didn’t, you’re calling me a liar, see?” He waved the steel bar threateningly.

If I had said, “No, sir, Mr Pease, I never called you *Pease*,” I would by inference have been calling Reynolds a liar; and if I had said, “Yes, sir, Mr Pease, I called you *Pease*,” I would have been pleading guilty to the worst insult that a Negro can offer a southern white man... (Wright, 1944:223-224).

In this example Wright captures the restrictions placed on black men by the Jim Crow laws. As Wright stated, if he had left out the “Mr,” he would have been stepping out of the confines of the restrictions that had been established for the black race.

The relationship of race and gender are rarely spoken about when looking at the treatment of black males in white America. Although they are rarely used in correspondence with one another, a strong argument can be made that race and gender are related when constructing the hierarchy of a society. A great example is the black man in America. This chapter will demonstrate that because of the implementation and enforcement of the Jim Crow laws, which called for the segregation of all blacks in all aspects of life, gender roles for black men have been defined differently from traditional male

roles in the family and in society. This chapter will briefly examine the period of Reconstruction—1865-1877—following the Civil War, leading to a brief background of the Jim Crow laws, and the male gender roles we find in United States' culture. This theoretical research chapter will also be supported by an isolated case in North Carolina in the 1890s known as the “Best Man” paradigm.

Background

The historical and social problems related to the black experience in the United States still haunt the nation and colour the relationship between the races there and in the rest of the world. While the intention of this chapter is to situate the problem of HIV and AIDS in the context of other struggles black people have experienced, part of the objective is to highlight the challenges we face in reconstructing black masculinities in oppressive and dehumanizing structures that do not affirm the value of black life. While the distance from Jim Crow to the twenty-first century might appear great, the reality is that the institution had a lasting effect that still affects black life.

While theology and the Church have often been the place for articulating the travails and hopes of blacks in the United States, this chapter seeks to expand the discourse on HIV and AIDS beyond the pulpit, statistics and health clinics. As such, theology and the Church do not work in isolation from other institutions that shape black experience, and in as much as the Church is the focal centre of hope and inspiration, there are still other discourses that negate the despair and nihilism that is part of the legacy of Jim Crow. The major challenge is recognizing the need to take a stand in solidarity with those affected and infected, as well as recognizing the urgency when it pertains to the black experience. Of course, the Jim Crow laws reflect the problems associated with legal recourse and legislations. In spite of espousing democratic ideals, the practices of the majority rode roughshod over minority populations. Jim Crow still affects how black males experience gender, sexuality, disease, work and life in the United States. In the following sections I outline how race, from the period of the Jim Crow era, shaped the social,

economic, political and gender relations in the United States, especially with regards to black males.

Reconstruction

After the Civil War, the United States went through a period where the priority was to rebuild the South physically, politically, socially and economically. This period was known as Reconstruction, which most historians date from 1865–1877. After the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863 and the South falling to the Union, President Lincoln wanted to have a speedy reunion in the country, but the Radical Republicans wanted an era of where the blacks ruled. During this time, blacks saw an opportunity for advancement in the majority of aspects in life. (Appiah and Gates, 1999:1595).

Despite the optimism of Lincoln and the Radical Republicans, white elites wanted to restore the old order of the South. This old order would mean that blacks would once again be inferior to them. The problem that the white elite had with Reconstruction was that they found it extremely difficult to imagine a society where blacks shared the same equality they had. To sway blacks from wanting any part in the political process, the Ku Klux Klan was formed in 1865 by prominent whites in various Southern communities, to strike fear into blacks with the use of various terror tactics such as lynchings, beatings and burnings. (Ibid.:1596-1598).

As the economy of the United States began to decline, the North turned its efforts away from helping the South rebuild, and instead began to attempt to rebuild the economy. Southern white supremacists believed that due to the negative condition of the economy, the North would be forced to pull out Union troops, which would disable them from enforcing Reconstruction. As the North pulled out of the South, the power began to swing back to the white elites, as blacks began to be subject to discrimination and segregation through the Jim Crow laws. (Appiah and Gates, 1999:1599-1600).

Jim Crow

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, white lawmakers controlling the South began to replace slavery with segregation through the use of the Jim Crow laws. This institution and ideology separated the races in all facets of life. The term Jim Crow originated in the 1830's, due to a minstrel show starring Thomas 'Daddy' Rice, who was a white man who blackened his face with the remains of a burnt cork, dressed in rags and danced and sang the way blacks were perceived to have danced and sang. His act was called "Jump Jim Crow," inspired by a crippled black slave who was owned by a white man named Crow. (Irons, 2002:12).

Prior to the Civil War, the idea of Jim Crow was one of the many stereotypical images of blacks used to keep them inferior and in "their place" During this time other stereotypical and racist names such as "sambo," "coon" and "zip dandy" were used to present blacks as subhuman and subservient to their white counterparts. By the latter half of the 1800s, the Jim Crow laws were used as a way for whites to justify their discrimination and violence towards blacks, making it sound like a legislative practice. (Davis, www.jimcrowhistory.org).

Within the Jim Crow laws, segregation and disenfranchisement were heavily supported to keep blacks out of the mainstream. Even more frightening, these laws also sanctioned the use of brutality and ritualized mob violence, primarily in the South. Between the years of 1889 to 1930, over 3700 men and women were reported lynched for various crimes they were said to have committed, such as rape and stepping beyond the confines of their racial restriction. There were said to be thousands of blacks lynched but conveniently not reported to the authorities, lynched by internal terrorist groups of the United States. (Ibid).

The lynching of blacks often involved castration, the amputation of hands and feet, spearing with nails and other sharpened tools, the removal of eyes, beatings, shootings, burning at the stake, and the most common method was hanging. These acts were usually carried out by angry white mobs, for various reasons. The majority of white

southerners agreed that the acts that curtailed lynching were evil, but they also agreed that blacks were an even greater evil. For southern whites, lynching was necessary to preserve the racial purity of the white race. More importantly, lynching provided protection for white females from black men, because the white female was the sole keeper of white racial purity. (Pilgrim, www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/brute/:5).

Jim Crow was in its prime from 1865 to 1890 and served as a catalyst for the belief in white supremacy. During the Reconstruction period when the country was attempting to rebuild itself after the Civil War, hatred grew toward Negroes, who briefly reaped the benefits of citizenship during this time. (Stamp, 1965:7-15). It seemed as if in only a matter of time, the angry whites who fought for the Confederacy would react. By 1890, the state of Mississippi had written into its state constitution a disenfranchisement provision. By doing so, Mississippi began to legalize Jim Crow. Although the Black Codes existed prior to this provision, these were now not only an ideology, but the legislation. There were many attempts made by the federal government to combat the discrimination of blacks. Passing of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments gave all American-born people citizenship and the right to vote. The government also passed the Ku Klux Klan Act, which gave the President of the United States full power to suppress any terrorist activity. While the federal government took these key steps, it unfortunately did not protect blacks from violence and discrimination. Many violent acts and other acts of terrorism shook the South in the 1860s and the 1870s. The Riders of the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the White Camellia terrorized blacks mainly for voting purposes. The violence and terrorism served a more important role, however: it gave them the power to accomplish something that could not be legally done. (Davis, www.jimcrowhistory.org).

Jim Crow Etiquette

Within the ideology of Jim Crow, etiquette was constructed ensuring that blacks were expected to follow within their everyday interaction

with whites. These expectations were well understood, and to violate these expectations put one's life and the lives of one's family at great risk. Blacks were expected to recognize white males as figures of authority. White males were often addressed as "boss" or "cap'n." These titles replaced "master," which was used during times of slavery, while white females were addressed with the title "miss." Black men, on the other hand, were never addressed with the same amount of respect as their white counterparts. Black males, regardless of age, were often addressed by their first name or referred to as "boy" or "nigger." (Birnbaum and Taylor, 2000:194-196).

Interactions between the two races were allowed and they often occurred, but the rules of Jim Crow still applied. The rules of racial etiquette required that blacks be agreeable and non-challenging, even when a white person was wrong. It was expected that blacks move off of the sidewalk when a white person was approaching, and black men were expected to remove their caps when walking by or talking to a white person. The racial etiquette proved only that blacks were required to demonstrate their inferior status amongst whites, or face imminent punishment. (Ibid.:195-198).

Learning the Lesson of Jim Crow-The Emmett Till Tragedy

On 20 August 1955, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Chicago native, left his home to visit relatives in the Mississippi delta town of Money. Emmett, who was unfamiliar with the racial etiquette in the South, would return home in a coffin, mutilated, after being lynched. On 24 August, Emmett, his cousins and a few of the local kids were playing checkers and listening to music outside of Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market. While Emmett was telling the local kids about life in the North, he pulled out some photographs of a white girl whom he proclaimed to be his girlfriend. One of the kids joked with Emmett and dared him to go flirt with Carolyn Bryant, a white woman who was working in the store at the time. Besides flirting with the woman, Emmett was dared to ask her out on a date. A confident Emmett Till took on the challenge and went into the store to talk to this white woman. He reportedly left the store after a few minutes and ended

his conversation with Mrs Bryant by saying, "Bye, baby," howling like a wolf at her, and whistling a note or two at her. (Metress, 2002:2-6).

The news of this purportedly heinous act spread throughout the county at a very brisk rate. When Roy Bryant, Carolyn's husband, returned home three days later, he was furious and insulted. He devised a plan with his half-brother, JW Milam, to punish Till for not showing proper respect to his wife. According to Emmett's great-uncle Mose Wright, the two men arrived around 2:30 the following Sunday morning, forced their way into the house and kidnapped young Emmett. That was the last time anyone saw the young Chicago native alive. (Ibid.:6-7.).

Both men were charged with the kidnapping and even admitted to doing so, but they stated that they had turned Emmett loose. Emmett's body turned up three days later in the Tallahatchie River. Emmett was found with a millstone around his neck and his penis cut off and stuck in his mouth. The act was not only a brutal crime, but also symbolized Emmett's manhood being stripped from him. The case went to court, and on 23 September 1955 an all-white jury declared Bryant and Milam innocent after only an hour of deliberating. The overall priority amongst Mississippi whites was to maintain the southern lifestyle and the etiquette already in place, which to them justified the acts of Bryant and Milam. (Ibid.:7-10).

As demonstrated, the Jim Crow laws played an important role in dividing the two races in the South. This next segment will offer an explanation of how the legacy of the Jim Crow laws allowed for the unique gender stratification of the black male.

Gender

For long periods in the United States gender, and race have been used to define people's roles and their places in society. This is the element that allows us to make gender and race nearly synonymous, because both constructs help shape the way we look at power in society. There are many accounts of this being a problem amongst men and women, but seldom do we study how deeply these two

social constructs run within the hierarchy of American society and culture. This way of thinking has been popularized by many of our contemporary gender scholars such as Joan Wallach Scott. In her book *Gender and the Politics of History* she states,

For the most part, the attempts of historians to theorize about gender have remained within traditional social scientific frameworks... These theories have been limited at best because they tend to contain reductive or overly simple generalizations. (Scott, 2002:31)

In other words, gender is too complicated to be a surface problem. Her piece is an explanation of how gender is used as a tool to establish dominating groups. This next segment will briefly explore how gender, specifically masculinity, is constructed in our society and compare that model to how black men's masculinity is constructed, primarily due to the enforcement of the Jim Crow laws.

It's a (White) Man's World—Masculinity in the United States of America

From a very young age boys are taught to perform proper masculinity. The criteria they must allegedly meet to achieve manhood are taught to them through their most important institution, the family unit. The family is the most important because it is the family that instills the expectations of society in the young boy, and defines masculinity. (Tomeh, 1975:14). Within the family, the parents generally teach young girls that they are expected to be obedient, nurturing, and responsible, while the young boys are taught the importance of success and self-reliance.

In a study undertaken in 1952, approximately 1400 elementary school children secured information on the kinds of behaviour expected of girls and boys by their classmates. The average girl was expected to be quiet, popular and good looking instead of being bossy, "uppity," and angry. The boys were rated higher than the girls on only three traits: taking risks, being good at games and not being bashful. Other evidence taken from the study suggested that boys

were expected to be assertive and engaging. One could conclude that the boys carried the traits of a master while the girls were subservient and reliant on the boys for all their needs. It is also apparent that the children involved in this study had acquired an image of themselves and the role in which they would play in society. (Ibid.:15-16).

A Society That Favours (White) Men

In discussing the issues of gender socialization, one may ask the question, why don't we just change the way we teach our children to think? Simply put, it is to maintain power where it already exists. There is no question that in the United States, every aspect of power favours men, particularly white men. A major method of maintaining this is by devaluing what women – or other peoples who are not considered men, or even human – do for society. When we refer to humanity as “man,” we blend maleness into humanness and men can enjoy the internal comfort of knowing they are secure in their identity and are not considered to be outsiders. It is for the purpose of keeping power in the hands of white men that we generally hear references to race and ethnicity when we turn on the news and hear about a homicide. Gender is usually minimized to help set the tone for public fear of a particular ethnic group or race. (Johnson, 2000:104-105).

When looking at power, there are five components: external rewards, internal rewards, interpersonal contact (e.g. attention), access to intelligence and access to sexual needs. The key component for the issues at hand is that of external rewards. The external rewards include providing for oneself and one's family, which may include providing financially or offering protection for his family. (Farrell, 1986: 9-11). This component is vital because it is one that can be observed by those in the public. Even today, there is an obvious line between the “haves” and the “have nots.” In this next section, I will explore how the black man's masculinity and gender identity is portrayed and enforced within American culture.

Masculinity and the "Beast"

During slavery, the overwhelmingly dominant portrayal of blacks as sambos, coons and zip dandies helped justify their enslavement because it portrayed them as childlike, ignorant and docile. (Fredrickson, 1971:275-276). To whites, if slaves were childish then the institution of slavery offered them a paternalistic service, with the slave masters acting as pseudo-parents. Even more ironically, the slaves were rarely depicted as evil brutes because that could have become a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Pilgrim, www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/brute/:1-2).

This opinion of black males would change during the Reconstruction period, when many white writers and intellectuals began to argue that without slavery and this parental service, the animalistic tendencies of blacks would begin to appear and, by default, increase their criminality. Writers such as Thomas Nelson Page labelled the enslaved blacks as the "good old darkies," but after slavery he labelled these former slaves as the "new issue." Seemingly overnight, the enslaved black man, although still docile and human, became a tyrannical beast. In 1898, Page published *Red Rock*, a novel about the Reconstruction era starring Moses, a sinister black politician who tries to rape a white woman. As part of the propaganda Page was trying to get out, he describes this scene, "He gave a snarl of rage and sprang at her like a wild beast." Eventually, Moses is lynched for the heinous crime. (Ibid.:2-4).

It was these types of publications and similar efforts that allowed for the increase of lynching in the South. Page's element of fear frightened the South and the additional lynching was justified by the stereotype of the Negro "beast." The only suitable way to combat the criticism Southern leaders faced due to the lynching going on was to contend that many black males were literally beasts, with an uncontrollable sexual passion and a genetic make-up that made them into criminals. Later the racist propaganda was geared to the portrayal of black men as having an uncontrollable lust for white women. In this image we can see the black male presented as primitive, savage obsessed with white women. His red lipstick is a symbol of his

promiscuous behaviour, which, since he is said to have an uncontrollable sexual appetite, makes perfect sense. The white woman is presented as innocent, submissive, scared but yet ladylike, with her finely groomed hair. Her breasts are exposed, which makes the savage crave chicken, serving as a symbol for the savage's animalistic cravings. It was also common for a black man to be dragged to death behind a horse and wagon, or have his pregnant wife's womb slit, killing both mother and baby, for offending a white woman. (Chafe et al, 2001: xxix-xxx). As we know, these white women were the sole owners of the future of the pure white race, so it is clear that this notion of the black "beast" was deeply rooted in white racist imagination. (Fredrickson, 1971: 276).

This trend of portraying black men as "beasts" was also found within the religious sect in the South. In 1900 a religious publishing company introduced *The Negro, a Beast* by Charles Carroll. This piece describes the black man as apelike at best, and credits this image of a black man as the tempter of Eve, which was the reason for the enslavement of the African. (Fredrickson, 1971: 277-278)

The Great Nightmare

With this trend prevalent in popular culture, it would have been a conflict of interest for any black man to have any power or control over his own destiny. We can find a great literary example of this in "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," a short story Richard Wright wrote as a part of his collection of novellas titled *Eight Men*. In this particular story, the protagonist, named Dave, acquires enough money to purchase a pistol. To Dave, the pistol is a tool of power and it makes him feel like a man because he can now defend himself if necessary. While Dave is practicing firing the gun he accidentally kills a mule belonging to the landowner he works for. Indirectly, Dave has killed a symbol of the chattel slavery in which he and his family were involved. The black worker is synonymous with the mule because to whites they are seen as animals, whose only purpose is to work and to die. When Dave kills this symbol, everyone in town is ready to lynch him for stepping outside the confines of his

racial restriction. In the end he faces an even greater fate, when the landowner requires that Dave remains a slave to him and pay him back with back-breaking labour. (Wright, 1996:3-19).

In "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," the pistol is an important symbol of power because Dave obtained his manhood through this weapon. Historically, the symbol of the pistol or the gun has played a prevalent role in how power is constructed and perceived. In Mexican history, figures such as Emiliano Zapata were portrayed as macho through carrying guns and other phallic-weapons. The gun, for Mexicans, symbolized an unconquerable pride. (Stavans, 1996:143-164). This symbol of the gun is similar in white society. Since the black phallus was the most feared weapon in the white psyche, whites felt compelled to produce a weapon in defence, and equal to the power of the black phallus. The problem that whites have with the black phallus is that the sperm of a black male produces melanin, the pigment responsible for all skin coloration, therefore being the direct cause of the annihilation of the white population. By obtaining this weapon, Dave was indirectly castrating the white male of his only source of protection from genetic annihilation. (Welsing, 1991:106-107).

In order to understand how the gun is a representation of a phallus, it is essential to examine the physical characteristics of the gun. The handle and the chamber of the gun are analogous to the testicles, the barrel is the erect penis and the bullets are representation of the sperm that carries the genetic code. When the gun is fired, it achieves the function of destroying the lives of blacks and other non-white peoples. (Ibid.:109-110). Through this technological advance, whites have been able to dominate the coloured peoples of the earth through violence at a frantic pace, in order to prevent white genetic annihilation. Also through this society they have developed terms such as "son of a gun." This phrase depicts the white male genital form that "fathers" whites with their genetically deficient state of albinism. The gun then becomes the desired powerful phallus of the white male, while maintaining its role as the equalizer to the black phallus. (Welsing, 1991:110).

A more modern model of Dave is former heavyweight boxing champion, Mike Tyson. Tyson was marketed early in his career as a brute savage with a sadistic mentality. After his boxing skills diminished, his reputation as a brute gained notoriety after he bit off an opponent's ear during a boxing match. In recent news conferences, Mike Tyson has been quoted as saying, "I am an animal. I am a convicted rapist, a hell-raiser, a loving father, a semi-good husband." (Pilgrim, www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/brute/:6-7).

Although Tyson benefited greatly for embracing this image, it did a great deal of damage to the already negative image of black men. Tyson was also quoted as saying of an opponent, "If he ever tries to intimidate me, I'm gonna put a fucking bullet through his fucking skull." (Ibid.:7-8).

In Tyson's mind, he was the twenty-first-century gladiator, while the American public saw an animal that needed caging. Unfortunately, this was the image that has stuck with the former champ. It is seldom heard that he donated a great deal of money to education programmes, hospitals and other community services. It is also unfortunate that Mike Tyson cannot distinguish the great boxer he is from the sadistic beast he was marketed as, while the American public cannot separate his criminal behaviour from his race. (Ibid)

Mike Tyson can be seen as a modern day version of Dave if we look at the symbols that represent power for a boxer. The gloves that Tyson wears represent the phallus, or the barrel of a gun, while the knockout punch he throws is synonymous with the sperm, or the bullet. While Mike Tyson was throwing knockout punches at his opponents, he was a tool to maintain monetary power for whites and blacks such as Don King, who gains his power through money and by using the boxers he promotes as weapons. When Tyson ran out of bullets—the knockout punches—he was no longer a weapon for those who exploited him. There is no coincidence that the negative depictions began when his career was on the decline.

The Reality of Power

The reality concerning power is that, because of racism and the Jim Crow laws, black men have literally no power. Power would mean that black males possessed the trait of being a man, in American terms. As we can see with Dave, Mike Tyson and many other black males throughout history, power is something that was forbidden to them. During the Jim Crow era, we find that many black women faced the crimes of sexual exploitation, rape, and other forms of violence. Part of why these crimes were committed was because black males had no power, specifically the external reward component of power, which allows them to protect their family, etc. If we look at the power that white men possess, we can see that all of their laws and efforts were designed to protect white women from black men. These laws were put in place by their men, white men. The crimes committed against black women were justifiable because there was nothing to criticize it. Cora Eliza Randle-Flemming, a black woman, remembers her grandmother's rape by a Southern white man in Mississippi in 190: "They told us my grandmother was raped. Well, in those days you didn't 'rape.' You just took what you wanted from the women." (Chafe et al, 2001:70-71).

This statement offers us the general feeling at the time regarding a man's and a woman's place in society. White men were the policy makers and the law of the land. The white women were the sacred keepers of whiteness. The black women were a sexual convenience to the white men. And the black men were powerless in protecting their wives, mothers, daughters and sisters.

The sense of being powerless came in a variety of forms if you were a black man living under Jim Crow. The fact that you were restricted from protecting your family and forced to work chattel slavery jobs was hardship enough, but when there were no black police officers, black justices of peace, black judges or juries, or any black representation in government in the South, there was little hope. It was no coincidence that all these jobs were typically held by white men, because they held a significant amount of power.

(Wright, 1941:42-45). This practice of having males submit to other males is known as male effeminization. (Wright, 1941:42-45).

Richard Wright describes this feeling of helplessness in his novel, *Native Son*. Wright's protagonist, Bigger Thomas, represents every black man in the sense that his oppression gets the best of him, and he also embodies what every black man in the 1930s and 1940s faced in white America. Wright's protagonist is an interesting metaphor for power because it is the male muscle that oppresses a people. Bigger was aware of the world he lived in, and refused to suppress his feelings of being a human or of being equal to white people. Although he feels helpless and caught in the double standard of being a black man in America, he maintains some power within. At one critical point in the novel where he feels helpless because his family is living in poverty, Wright depicts his feelings.

Vera went behind the curtain and Bigger heard her trying to comfort his mother. He shut their voices out of his mind. He hated his family because he knew that they were suffering and that he was powerless to help them. He knew that the moment he allowed himself to feel to its fullness how they lived, the shame and misery of their lives, he would be swept out of himself with fear and despair. So he held toward them an attitude of iron reserve; he lived with them, but behind a wall, a curtain. And toward himself he was even more exacting. He knew that the moment he allowed what his life meant to enter fully into his consciousness, he would either kill himself or someone else. So he denied himself and acted tough. (Wright, 1940:9)

This feeling is also believed to be the feeling of Richard Wright's father, who abandoned his family because he knew that by his being there for his children, things would not be better for them. In other words, the power that most fathers have in the family was lacking in Wright's home, as it was in many others. (Wright, 1944:32). From Bigger's and Richard's father's experience, we can conclude that without jobs, income, power or the right to truly raise a family, you are childish by society's definition and there is no proof of sexual function.

Jim Crow and Gender Meet in North Carolina

As a child you may have been introduced to *The Jungle Book*, a story about a young boy named Mowgli and his many adventures in the jungle. This story was introduced to the world by Rudyard Kipling, a native of Britain, in the late 1800s. Although the story seems innocent and amusing for young children, the content of the story was written with ulterior motives. (Gilmore, 1996:61).

While at his post in colonial India, Kipling produced this piece as a way of justifying why Indian men needed ruling and why the men of Britain were the right men for the job. According to Kipling, the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the world had evolved far enough to bear up to adversity without crumbling, and at the same time, handle success without excess. To Kipling, darker people were often victims of their emotions; they were at best childlike and at worst animalistic, parallel to Kipling's character Mowgli. The image of Mowgli clearly displays him as a young boy, primitive and with no signs of sexual function. In his famous poem of 1899, "The White Man's Burden," Kipling describes darker people as wild and "half devil and half child." (Ibid).

Kipling's writing and poetry were extremely popular among the white men and boys living in North Carolina in the 1890s. They took particular interest in Kipling's ideas of manhood and racial order, and used his work as an endorsement of their own beliefs. This was the first time these white males were exposed to ideas similar to their own coming from abroad. They arrogantly believed that the rest of the world was finally catching up with the mentality of North Carolina. In North Carolina these beliefs were so heavily embraced that they put them into work within their state's boundaries. (Ibid.:61-63).

These beliefs resulted in the white men of North Carolina constructing a paradigm known as the "Best Man." This ideology was constructed in order to reduce the amount of black voters and office holders in the state of North Carolina. The paradigm stated that only the "Best Man" could hold office because he displayed honesty, is fair-minded and is gentle. Due to the belief in their own

superiority, the southern whites were confident in their ability to manipulate the system and exclude blacks from even competing for office. (Ibid.:62)

In this paradigm, the “Best Man” pursued a higher education, married a respectful woman and fathered accomplished children. He was also supposed to take part in religious activities. It was also acceptable for the candidate to collaborate across racial lines on social issues. This last acceptable behaviour was a requirement for blacks under the Jim Crow laws anyway, so it was not necessarily a privilege to agree with whites.

For black men, the paradigm meant that they needed to be nothing less than perfect. Under these rules, black men had constantly to prove themselves and their manhood to maintain their pseudo-civil rights. Their lives needed to be exemplary and, if one black man messed up, it was his fault and responsibility because he was held accountable for his entire race. (Gilmore, 1996:63-64)

The flaws of this system are apparent. Since Jim Crow was what perpetrated the human rights of black men, there was little that they could do in order to gain any power. Even if one were to sell out or play the role of Uncle Tom (a black man willing to do anything to act white or please whites), if another black man messed up and was involved in any criminal activity, the Uncle Tom would be held accountable. This was just another obstacle for black men to negotiate in order to prove their humanness to a white master who would never see him as an equal anyway.

The Division

Jim Crow has clearly made it difficult for black men to reach a status where society would look upon them as men, human or equals. Although this is primarily an issue amongst blacks and whites, there has been a little animosity amongst black women towards black men. The theory behind these feelings is called *emasculatation*. This theory is two pronged in its attack on black men. One version, primarily followed by females, alleges that black men have failed throughout history to protect their families, shield their women or produce a

strategy that would liberate the group. This theory has concluded that black men are weak, despicable “niggers,” who must be led by black women. (Carey-Bond and Patricia Peery, 1970:113-114). This sentiment is legitimate to those black women who were victims of the sexual misconduct of white men, but it is important to look at why action was rarely taken. As explained, black men were targets of violence to protect society, primarily white women. The notion is that if a black man stands up to a white man he is an “uppity Negro,” and the only sanctioned way of dealing with this “problem,” as Page suggests, is to kill it. What is even more frustrating is that black men have lost the right to protect their families without facing severe punishment, because traditionally a black man is seen as a threat to society when he has any type of power.

The second prong of emasculation also arrives at the conclusion that black men are weak. Unlike the first version, this commands the allegiance of black men and women to face the problems of society. This takes the route that the black woman has “castrated” the black man in areas such as economics. Linked to this notion is the increasing rate at which single black women are heads of households and take over the roles that the men are supposed to fill. (Ibid.:114-115). This version seems more acceptable only because both men and women have to be on board to accomplish anything. If black men are left out of the equation, there is an important element missing in liberating black people.

In conclusion, the evidence presented does suggest that racism and the institution of Jim Crow have greatly affected the gender roles of black men in America. The specific foundation of these socially accepted institutions is to dehumanize and to take away any sort of claim of what it is to be a man in society.

Conclusion

This chapter puts the problem of HIV and AIDS into the context of the many struggles that Black males face and have faced in the United States. Without denying the urgency of the situation, the problems associated with racism, poverty, class and sexism still plague the

United States and the relationship between blacks and whites. The historical experiences chronicled in this chapter, from Jim Crow to Mike Tyson, show the extent to which living conditions are still circumscribed by life-denying social, economic and political factors. At the same time, it has highlighted the historical injustices to show the extent to which we have collectively overcome numerous obstacles. Like some of the other obstacles we have overcome, HIV and AIDS too will pass. In the meanwhile, it is important to strategize on how to overcome it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Under the Spell of Discrete Islands of Consciousness: My Journey with Masculinities in the Context of HIV and AIDS

Paul Leshota

Introduction

According to the Lesotho UNGASS Country Report 2007, the Lesotho adult HIV and AIDS prevalence is critically high. At 23.2 percent, Lesotho has the third-highest adult prevalence in the whole world. (Government of Lesotho and UNAIDS, 2007:5). Multiple and concurrent sexual partnership, intergenerational sex, gender inequality and gender-based violence have been identified as some of the key drivers of the epidemic in Lesotho. (Government of Lesotho, 2006:x).

Epprecht, (2002) in an article on male-male relations in Lesotho, claims that Basotho men possess a reputation for being the most incorrigible womanizers of all the African peoples of the region. While we may disagree with the sweeping nature of the statement, we know for a fact that “going after women” forms part of a discourse that does the rounds, covertly, among boys and men in Lesotho. (Campbell, 2001). These considerations, coupled with other factors

such as women's versus men's biological make-up, social inequalities and power relations at play in HIV and AIDS discourses, clearly point to gender relations as critical in the understanding of the dynamics of the pandemic and the prevention efforts and campaigns thereof. The bigger picture, therefore, suggests that gender relations continue to shape the path of infection and tend to render women more vulnerable as compared to their male counterparts. These tendencies find legitimacy in the ideology of masculinity, which emphasizes male sexual pleasure and prowess, and place both men and women at greater risk of HIV and AIDS infection.

This chapter adds a voice in the chorus of calls to men to make a difference in the lives of women and children in the era of HIV and AIDS. (Segal, 1993; UNAIDS, 2000; Chitando, 2007a:40). Through a weird form of engagement, this chapter—which is a personal reflection on how I journeyed with masculinity discourses—underlines the discomfort of opening up one's soul to others and making oneself vulnerable publicly. This choice—which allows for the revelation of myself and my feelings—enhances my awareness. It also fosters—through subverting the secretive and fearless man—the inhabiting of alternative ways of being a man that are more life-giving, both to me and the significant others. (Dudley-Marling 1996:36; Wolgemuth & Donohue 2006:1024). This choice also serves to brave the long-standing marginalization of the researcher's voice, in research, with its baggage of feelings and experiences as well as vulnerabilities.

Reflecting on my own experiences about hegemonic masculinities at different stages of my growth, I use social constructionism as a working idea that undercuts this study. I argue that masculinities are socially constructed and that through processes identified by Berger and Luckman, (1966:58-60) as typification, institutionalization and legitimation, they come to have reality status. This chapter does not seek to provide definitive answers to problems around hegemonic masculinities, but hopes to contribute to the ongoing journey of finding new ways of being a man in the context of HIV and AIDS.

Hypotheses

My hypotheses are that 1) men's stories about what constitute masculine identity in Lesotho are built around fearlessness, persistence and sexual intimacy; 2) understanding of these stories as social constructs, which is what they are, is an important step in the understanding of the impact of hegemonic masculinities in the HIV and AIDS context; 3) these stories have to be deconstructed and inhabited in ways that are more life giving or entirely evacuated; 4) the evacuation of these socially constructed hegemonic masculinities—which expose men, women and children to HIV—can be done without any compromise to or annihilation of men's alleged finalized masculine identities, and that; 5) the family, the school and the Church do not only have a stake in the formation and deformation of boys and men, they also have an important role to play in reforming and rehabilitating these unbridled and death-making forms of masculinity in the context of HIV and AIDS.

Social Construction Framework

Social constructionism has been adopted as a working idea that undercuts this study. Though its origins can be traced to a number of voices, it found its way into the sociological jargon through the work of Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A treatise in the sociology of Knowledge*. (1966). It was later taken up by and expanded in the works of Kuhn, Geertz, Anderson, and Butler, (1970, 1973, 1990 and 1990 respectively) as well as Bruner and Kenneth Gergen, whose authorship and commitment to social constructionist ideas, especially in psychology, spans close to four decades.

Social constructionism, as a term, is self explanatory. It combines “construct” and “social.” Construct stands for *what we create* in community through language. Social, which represents the communal aspect with emphasis on interaction, sharing, agreements, negotiated creations, is the *locus* of construction, for this is where construction of reality takes place. Through the use of language as a literary and rhetorical device, meaning—thus knowledge—is created

and rendered compelling. (Gergen, 1997). Social construction bids us to be suspicious of the manner in which the world and reality around us have been portrayed. It views the world and reality as results of social processes and interactions, the description of which—through power and knowledge—sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others. (Burr, 2003:4-5). It bids us to make “connections between the world we live in and the meanings we use and that use us as well.” (McLean et al, 1996:x).

At the heart of social constructionism is the view that reality is constructed by people, in social interaction with others, and that language is a crucial factor. Who we are, how we talk to others about who we are, the concepts, metaphors that we use to refer to ourselves, others and the world around us, are determined by culture and history. It is not something that we were born with. It is rather something that we, over a long period of time—maybe even unconsciously—were formed into. This, therefore, means that people are at the origin of culture and history, and culture and history in turn form people into who they are and how they perceive themselves and the world around them. This knowledge, which is culturally and historically determined and sustained by social processes, is institutionalized and legitimated through language. (Freedman and Combs, 1996:23).

Masculinity: Ideological Definitions

Before I proceed to relate my journey with masculinities, let me define some of the terms that feature prominently in this chapter, namely masculinity and hegemonic masculinity. In his seminal article on hegemonic masculinity, Mike Donaldson (1993:644) observes that the notion of masculinity is as elusive and slippery as its natural adjective, hegemony. This observation finds validation in McLean, Carey and White and Segal in their articles on masculinity. According to McLean, Carey and White, (1996:16) “masculinity is often most clearly defined in terms of what it is not—what it is afraid of being.” Segal concurs and adds that a “pure” masculinity cannot be displayed

except in relation to what is defined as its opposite first and foremost, in relation to “femininity.” (1993:635).

In the world of men nothing could be as ill-omened as being and behaving like a woman. For a man to be portrayed as a woman is demeaning and contemptuous. This is simply because a man can only become a man by not becoming a woman, who is fainthearted, powerless, emotional and weak. What is this masculinity? For purposes of this discussion, we propose to define masculinity as a gendered category or identity that feeds on the differences in what women and men within a particular culture can or cannot do. It can also be seen as the sum of men’s socially produced and gendered characteristic practices at work, with their families, in their communities, in groups and in institutions. (Edley & Wetherell, 1995:95).

But gender identities are socially constructed. (Morrell, 1998:609; Dube, 2003:86). Butler (1990) would add that gender is also a performance and a show we put on. If masculinity is a gendered identity, it can only be a social construct. This already excludes masculinity from categories of nature and biological determinism. Because of its association to culture, masculinity is allergic to universalistic categorizations. There are, therefore, as many masculinities as there are cultures, classes, times and places, and their contours change over time. (Morrell, 1998:607).

The notion of masculinity is susceptible to power and this power aspect finds expression in what we call hegemonic masculinity. Morrell identified it as the form of masculinity that is dominant in society. (Ibid.:609). As such it is most revered and desired. (Pitones, 2004:3). It is, as Morrell suggests, renowned for its predilection for the oppression of women, as well as the subordination of other versions of masculinity, while bestowing power and privilege on men who embrace it. (1998:608). It is to these hegemonic masculinities, alive in my own life and those of others, that this chapter addresses itself.

Cultural Constructions of Masculinities

The construction of our identity takes place at a very early stage in families, which are a further prolongation of a clan, a community and a nation. It is in this sense that a family is called the basic unit of a community, a rudimentary community of people, a primary social group. A family is important in the transmission of what a family is, how it should conduct itself, and how relations should be between its different members, and how to understand and relate with the world out there. It is within these domestic relationships that human personality is formed, deformed and transformed. (Clinebell, 1979:31).

The family has a history, and its potential as a human construct is given shape and life by the society and culture it inhabits. Our perception of it evolves from what we have learned from it and what others have made it. It is, therefore, a social construct. What it is, what it does, what it says and what it transmits to children born and bred within it, is the result of cultural and historical conditioning. Weadon candidly drives this point home.

In conservative discourse the family is the natural basic unit of the social order, meeting individual, emotional, sexual and practical needs, and it is primarily responsible for the production and socialization of children. Power relations in the family, in which men usually have more power than women and women have more power than children, are seen as part of God-given natural order which guarantees the sexual division of labour within family. (Weadon, 1987:38)

My journeys with masculinities would, therefore, rightly begin at home. I too was born and brought up in a family, through and within which I was socialized. This family was part of a bigger system, which also played a role in defining and determining the boundaries of what goes and what does not. Looking at myself through the lens of my family and its evolution through time, I can see different phases of my identity emerging as a result of my connectedness to it. I was born male, I guess, but I was made a man through what I would

refer to as the politics and promptings of maleness. Following upon this identification of my maleness, I was classified (typified) and an institution called masculinity was built around that classification. Masculinity was then, through language and practices, given a reality, natural and divine status. (Dube, 2003:86).

From very early in life, I was gradually and in very subtle ways moulded into a male that would behave in a particular way. I was taught not to cry and how not to cry.¹ I was impressed upon me through various means that I was a man and that real men do not cry; they are courageous and secretive. Real men do not express their emotions in public. (Dube, 2003:87). Every time I did the opposite, I was reprimanded for behaving like a woman.

I watched as my elder sister stayed at home to take charge of the domestic chores while my brother and I went out to look after the cattle, even as it rained. When my sister went to school every day of the week, my brother and I took turns in looking after the cattle during the week; we both embraced it as normal. What we ate or drank while looking after the cattle was nobody's business. We had to fend for ourselves. Any man passing by could, for no reason, just spank you and you were not expected to complain or tell anybody about it. I thought that was how it should be. All this impressed upon me that, as a male, I do not belong to the domestic arena. All this was part of the training intended to bring about an ideal man who would not be a misfit. It required of me to be tough, secretive and nonchalant, as opposed to women who are just the opposite—as I was socialized to believe.

The idea of my mother being one of *these* women could not be easily effaced. It occurs to me now that it was from her that love and security in my life were drawn. "This woman" was now degenerating into something I had completely to evacuate because she represented failure and unmanliness, insinuating a world that was both desirable and repulsive, (McLean, Carey & White, 1996:17) and thereby putting me under the spell of discrete islands of consciousness at

¹See the chapter by Chitando in this volume.

odds with each other. Perhaps, I thought to myself, this inner split within my male psyche is deliberately intended to take out of me the heart of flesh (feminine) and put in the heart of stone (masculine) through which I would be able to survive the harsh, competitive and violent world of men. This was “about toughening” me so that I learn to ignore pain and emotions, and use being “like a girl” as the ultimately humiliating reprimand. (Ibid). Thus I was prepared and trained to share in the rituals of masculinity essentially exclusive of women. The power—of the language—and the sacredness with which these rituals were proposed, promised only marginalization for me should I be guilty of violating the rules.

I was made to internalize expressions that sponsored these stereotypes. I was told that *monna ke nku haa lle* (“a man is a sheep; he does not cry,” i.e., he is brave and resilient) and that *monna ke tšepe e ntšo* (“a man is a black iron,” i.e., he is physically strong). I also learned at that early stage, in my interactions with peers, that *monna ha a tšoere sethole ha a se tlohele* (“When a man has got hold of a female animal”—circumlocution for a girl or a woman—“he does not let it go”); *monna ke leholimo, o koahela tseo a li boneng* (“a man is the sky, he covers what he has seen,” i.e., he is secretive); *monna o pata sehlotso* (“a man hides his limp,” i.e., he does not show his weaknesses). By implication these proverbs suggest that women, through whom men are defined, are timid, physically weak and vulnerable, passive and unreliable (not secretive).

These proverbs, which are not only entrenched in culture but are also expressive of it, find resonance with the notion of masculinity captured so well in the title of Campbell’s article, “Going underground and going after women.” (2001:282). These two agentive acts sum up well what constitutes a man. Going underground—which demands bravery—and entertaining an insatiable urge for multiple sexual partners are, strangely enough, both seen as signs of manhood. The answers from Campbell’s interviews with Basotho men working in the mines, serve to validate the above proverbs. (Ibid.:277-282). They also confirm the link that men establish between bravery and manhood on one side and the fearlessness that expresses itself in

macho behaviour of “a man must have flesh-to-flesh” on the other. (Ibid). In all these proverbs, which are not politically neutral, a man is an active agent and a woman, by implication, is that which a man is not. They spawn binary opposites, with the man at the centre, presented as an ideal form that determines all meaning, and the woman, by implication, is marginalized. (Powell, 1997:21). The problem with centres, as Derrida would say, is that they exclude, ignore and marginalize. In the man-woman binary continuum, not only is the central term (man) privileged, it is also instituted as good, normal, strong, preferable and natural, while the marginal term (woman) is appended as bad, abnormal, weak and both a biblical and cultural accident that came to the scene because a man was lonely. A deconstructive question is in order, as to who decreed and determined this binary arrangement and who benefits from it.

Because language has the ability to produce, as these proverbs were said over and over the identity of a real man was created in me. As Butler would say, “identities are created through performative repetitions”. (1993:231-232). The proverbial expressions came in to constitute and sustain the institution of masculinity and to shape my perceptions about it. They told me how to see masculinity and what to see in it. (Freedman and Combs, 1996: 28-29). They further guarantee that our formation becomes total, for language and culture are like oxygen to the body. They are not only expressive of a person, they also form a person.

We saw and we never complained when our sister was bought new dresses three or even four times a year and we had to be content with only one suit for Christmas. I did not think about it then but it dawns on me now that a female has to take more care of herself because she is always watched and looked upon. In Foucault’s language, she is an object of gaze. She is an object of display for men to see, be impressed by, propose love to and marry, thereby confirming Mulvey’s words,

Pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female

figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (Mulvey, 1975:9)

In fact, not to be married is considered an embarrassment not only to the girl herself but to the family that banked on her. A girl who conducts herself well becomes the pride of her family. One who gets pregnant out of wedlock is a disgrace to the entire family. It is said of her in Sesotho, *o senyehile* (literally, “she is spoiled”) and her chances of getting married are slim. The male easily gets away with it, as if to say, “be quiet: she is your object; do not take the matter to heart,” (2 Sam. 13:20) we will pay a little amount of money and you will be free to experiment with other objects of gaze.

Through this labelling (*o senyehile*), which reflects an oppressive social climate, such a girl is constructed as an object, disempowered and sequestered. It brings about an identity that owes its existence to relations of power at work in our society. Language that expresses itself through such labelling becomes an instrument of power and knowledge that serves to subjugate the female voice and leaves that of male, who only impregnates, intact.

Understood within the larger context of gender discourse, where language plays a part in the operation of discourse and vice-versa, the language around an unmarried girl—who is expected to wash, watch herself, behave—is constructed for purposes of representing and perpetuating certain systems of meaning that in this case are biased in favour of males. (Galvin, 2003:153). The phrase *ngoanana ea senyehileng* (spoiled: girl pregnant out of wedlock) evokes very intense and negative images not only about a girl in question but also about women. It perpetuates internalized oppression. As a label it stigmatizes and within a discourse in which it operates, it silences and serves to centralize and naturalize the male term at the expense of the female term, which is marginalized. (Galvin, 2003:157).

This was part of what the family—acted upon by culture and society—made of the fact that my brother and I were male and my

sister was female. It dawns on me now that my sister too was a product of what my family—acted on by culture and society—made of her, a biological sexuality transformed into product of a masculine gaze. This went to confirm a popular discourse in advertisements and media studies, that gazing upon another person says much about the relation between the gazer and the gazed. It corroborates Jean-Paul Sartre's famous *le regard* (look or gaze), from his book *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre maintains that "to be caught by the gaze of another is to be objectified and rendered a thing rather than a subject or person." A gaze signifies a psychological relationship of power in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze. (Schroeder, 1998: 208).

Already at this early stage, I felt it my duty to protect and—in the absence of my parents—to watch over my sister. I knew already what my sister was supposed to do and what she was not supposed to do. It was dangerous for her to be seen in the company of boys. It was not only unbecoming, it was offensive and it interfered with and challenged my role in protecting her. She was weaker and unable to take care of herself. She needed my constant supervision. Obviously, my masculinity needed this hierarchical relation to what it can subordinate, in order to have its symbolic force and familiar status. (Segal, 1993: 635). It allowed me and other men to exert control over my sister and other women and their bodies. In this manner it determined relations of power and authority. It therefore upheld my superiority over my sister, irrespective of our ages.

Masculinities at School

The school is also seen as social space for the formation and reinforcement of specific versions of masculinity. Not only did it further the entrenchment of the features of hegemonic masculinities already absorbed, it also took the discourse to another level. At this time I was at the heart of adolescence, with its temptations and challenges. It was common for young boys at this stage to experiment with proposing love to young girls and all that went with it. These practices received validation in our conversations.

Every time we had a trip to another school, each one of us boys was expected to propose love to a girl. That was referred to as *slaughtering for the school*. With every trip that we took, we were expected to slaughter for the school. The number of girlfriends one had, their attractiveness, and one's ability to exert control over them through manipulation or violence were seen as signs of a good "slaughterer." A male as the active partner, and the female as just passive, found further validation in the metaphor of slaughtering.

True manhood and entitlement to partake in what McLean et al (1996:17) called "the rituals of masculinity identity" were measured by one's ability to "slaughter" as many girls as possible. We did not want to appear to be doing things differently lest we call upon ourselves the most degrading comment: *U tšaba banana* ("you are scared of girls"). In fact, the worst insult a man of any age could ever suffer was to be called a girl or a woman or be told one is doing things like them. Whoever outshone others in this regard became a role model who could be consulted by the fainthearted. (Barker & Ricardo, 2005:16). This military language, which also conjures up the abattoir scenery, found further validation in the proverbs shared among men. One such proverb, which did rounds in the context of slaughtering for the school, says, *lerumo la monna ha le ome mali* ("a man's spear is always dripping with blood"). The spear in this case represents the penis, and the proverb corroborates Campbell's going after as many women as one possibly can and having it "flesh to flesh" with each of them. The picture has all the ingredients of a violent competition where victory has to be earned by any means, even if it means surrendering all compassion. (McLean et al, 1996:17).

Masculinities in Church

Though the Church may not be positively preaching and incensing patriarchy and male dominance, its silence on issues of violence against women and children and its failure to challenge the stereotypes that fuel this violence—some of which are not only bred but happen within its precincts—are equally harmful. As altar boys, we already

knew the reason why girls would not make good candidates for altar serving. We did not have to ask the priest. Their flow of blood during menstruation was so unpredictable and defiling that no parent or brother would allow themselves to be disgraced by a daughter caught unawares. Again, altar serving was a rudimentary step towards priesthood. An altar server was some kind of *clerus minor* and, because no woman could be ordained a priest in the Catholic Church, it was wasteful for a girl to even want to be an altar server. As boys, how could we do things together with girls when we did not wish to be like girls in word or deed? We could not imagine ourselves sharing cassocks with girls. That was utterly unthinkable, for it entertained the production of the inferior breed of men. These convictions, so entrenched in us that they smacked of a revealed truth that could not be challenged, authenticated the cultural discourses that marginalized girls and women and confirmed their inferior status.

It is from this total formation achieved through language, the repetition of stylized acts and practices that the ontological masculine identity—which is fearless, physically strong, nonchalant, emotionally robust, daring and virile—was institutionalized, inhabited and legitimated. By inhabiting it, our attitudes and behaviours were formed.

Masculinities with Reference to HIV and AIDS

The kind of man that these associations and discourses form is one who looks at women and sees what he is not and what he would not like to be. They bid us to see women as objects of our sexual pleasure, weak, unreliable and passive. These perceptions took root in us and influenced us in very profound but unconscious ways. They informed our attitudes and behaviours, which are lived in relationships.

In the context of HIV and AIDS, these attitudes translate into actions that put women, children and men ourselves at risk of HIV infection. Unprotected sex (“flesh to flesh”) has been associated with ideal masculinity. In fact, use of condoms among young males has become an occasion for derision and belittling by peers. Both STIs

(sexually transmitted infections) and HIV infection are seen as a badge of true manhood and virility. Though the perpetuation of these stereotypes is done by men, among men ourselves, women and children are the ones who bear the brunt. Women are often blamed for HIV infection, something that accounts for the violence perpetrated against women and girls. This further indicates the disparity in power relations between male and female in our society, with the pendulum swinging in favour of males.

Subversion of Hegemony in Language and Culture

It is against this background that Segal asked: Have men changed? (1993:625). Can men change? Will men change? What would it take for men to step away from positions of power and dominance and enter into relationships of equity, both on an individual and collective level. (McLean, Carey & White, 1996:4). These questions are a call to all men to account and interrogate with courage and openness the norms of hegemonic masculinities in vogue in our societies today, especially in this era of HIV and AIDS.

The greatest challenge is how to reform these deformed hegemonic masculinities, which have become a danger not only to women and girls but also to men ourselves in this era of HIV and AIDS. I wish to suggest that hegemonic masculinity implies that there are always subdued masculinities that are bullied into submission by hegemonic masculinities. How do we facilitate the lifting up and thriving of these alternative masculinities? It is obvious that language and practice are key in the formation of hegemonic masculinities. They can be challenged and deconstructed, for they are only supported by particular ideas, beliefs and principles.

I will start by drawing on language and some metaphors and ideas that have not been sufficiently explored, and which, if given prominence, would go a long way in subverting death-making masculinities and the lifting up of alternative and life-giving forms of masculinity. I will also look into what role society—including Churches—can play in rehabilitating these dominant masculinities.

I wish to cite two metaphors that have the potential to subvert and undermine the popular rhetoric that reinforces hegemonic masculinities in Lesotho. The first metaphor is that of a man as a cock. There is a belief that a cock cannot be killed when the hen is brooding over the eggs. If it is killed, the eggs will rot. This metaphor evokes the importance of egalitarian commitment for both male and female in the reproductive process. It challenges and subverts the common parlance that childrearing is a special preserve of women.

In this connection, giving birth ought to be seen as more than just the biological act of a child emerging from the mother's womb. It entails the whole process, running the gamut from copulation to rearing of the child. When the child is born, therefore, it is born to both the man and the woman and not only to one. Both should, therefore, equally assume the responsibility of raising the child (*Botsoetse*). This view is corroborated by the Bible, which cites men as "begetting." The Greek verb *gennaō* (give birth) is used in the Septuagint and the New Testament of both males and females. It is used of Elizabeth (Luke 1:57) and Abraham (Matthew 1:2) to refer to their begetting of children. Just as sparing the life of a cock at this time highlights the importance of both the cock and the hen in the process of brooding, so should humans be both responsible in the begetting of a child.

The second metaphor is that of a man as a stallion. Riding a stallion immediately after its mating with a mare that is heat would cause the latter to abort. This metaphor has been evoked to highlight the importance of abstinence from the side of the husband when the wife is pregnant. Failure to do so is believed to cause miscarriage. This idea squares well with the notion and principle of responsibility and self-control in vogue among erstwhile Basotho. Responsibility and self-control were so important that they defined and embodied the whole rite of initiation among the Basotho, a rite of passage that marks a transition from boyhood to manhood.

Over and above preparing a young man for life contingencies, the initiation rite also involves abstaining from sexual intercourse and other pleasures for an extended period. In fact, the idea of

toughening up young males would make perfect sense within the context of preparation for responsibility and self-control that has its rightful place in the initiation programme for young men. The toughening up does not only “construct” people who can endure all kinds of hardships, it also cultivates discipline and self-control, assets we need so desperately in this era of HIV and AIDS.

Along the same lines, it is believed that a husband who has sexual intercourse exclusively with his pregnant wife helps to strengthen the marrow of the unborn child. If he sleeps around during this time, he puts both the mother and the child at risk. Whether or not these beliefs are scientifically verifiable is immaterial. Traditional beliefs need not be scientific to hold sway on people’s lives. They have been used to wreak havoc in people’s lives; they can also be used to restore people’s dignity, unscientific as they are.

Proverbs such as *mosali ke morena* (“a woman is a chief”), meaning she is respectable even in the eyes of a chief who is respected by all, *bohale ha bo tšele noka* (“one does not have to cross the river to show bravery”) meaning a small body may harbour greatness, and similar others should be given prominence and used to challenge hegemonic, oppressive and aggressive masculinities that express themselves in violence and other oppressive patriarchal tendencies.

Role of Society and Church in the Reconstruction of Alternative Forms of Masculinity

The lopsided gender relations constitute what Abeng would call “a common colonization project which cannot be liberated except by a common action requiring the participation of all.” (1987:224). I wish to concur and add that hegemonic masculinity is a collective project that has colonized persons on both sides of the divide. Its meaning and reification derive strength from wider social relations. It is sustained in existence by rituals and practices of different institutions. It can therefore be ideally matched by a joint effort from government, civic organizations and faith-based organizations that have for a very long time remained “the bastion of patriarchy

and male privilege.” (Chitando, 2007a:26). This project demands a *metanoia* (change of heart) at personal, ecclesial and political levels.

Personal Metanoia

Personal *metanoia* demands a break from the usual train of thought and practice. Systems are normally conceived by individuals, shared with and embraced by the community, and eventually institutionalized and legitimated through language and practice. Masculinity too is a system that owes its origin to humans who embraced, institutionalized and reinforced it through language and practice. Many projects on gender and masculinities operational in our communities today result from the individual and personal initiative. We need a dozen of those commitments to unsettle and frustrate the mechanisms of dominant masculinities. It took the personal commitment of Jesus to change the whole religious landscape of Palestine and indeed of the whole world. It took the personal conversion and determination of Paul to take Christianity beyond the confines of Palestine into the heart of Gentile territory. Each one of us has what it takes to effect similar revolutionary actions, for the time is now.

Communal/Ecclesial Metanoia

Neither atheism nor faith is worth anything if it remains mere ideology. Each must be something more than sterile talk and an intellectual exercise. God is with those committed to justice, not with those who merely sing or talk about it. (Pérez-Esclarín, 1978).

We cannot pretend nothing has been done and nothing is happening in so far as engaging masculinities is concerned. Barker and Ricardo observe that masculinities—in terms of attitudes and behaviours—are clearly changing in Africa and in the rest of the world. (2005:44). They cite examples of educational awareness and support initiatives in many countries of Africa, which focus on gender socialization, critical reflections on gender roles and equity. Some of these initiatives have existed for some time now and are beginning to yield positive results.

Mention may be made of some programs that have made notable difference in the lives of people. Conscientizing Male Adolescents (CMA) in Nigeria; Men as Partners (MAP) in South Africa; Positive Men's Union (POMU) in Uganda; PADARE in Zimbabwe, and PAPA Plus in the Democratic Republic of Congo,² The Men's Sector in Botswana and others have all weathered the storm, despite obvious challenges and costs of vulnerability, marginalization and anger from other men at what is seen as betrayal of the masculine gender. They have put up with momentary discomfort to make life bearable and comfortable for all.

While most of these projects are initiated by and receive massive support from NGOs and the private sector, the Church reluctantly tags along with its eyes fixed one-sidedly on heaven. For all too many years the Church's mission and ministry has been paralysed by this uprootedness and apoliticism. In the process the oppressed and those on the receiving end of lopsided gender relations are taught to be patient and resigned, for their reward will be great in heaven. (Pérez-Esclarín, 1978:96). Is it not this indifferent and disinterested faith consciousness that blinded the Church to the reality of an alienated world that embraces the hegemonic oppressive masculinity, the vulnerable and oppressed woman and girl, and subordinated masculinities? Is it not from these purely theoretical theologies, which emphasize orthodoxy at the expense of orthopraxis, that the Church needs to be redeemed? Was it not against this discrepancy between religious pietism and the emerging challenges that Bonhoeffer raised his voice in protest?

But at the same time, the Church lays claim to a legacy of championing the cause of the marginalized and the oppressed from which it continues to relapse. It is against the background of such *lapsus fidei* that the Church has constantly to search to rediscover its call and mission. The defining moment, the *kairos*, (Kairos document, 1986:1) the moment of insertion for the Church today,

²Lubunga Ewusha in this volume elaborates on the work of this organization.

(Cochrane, de Gruchy & Petersen, 1991:17) is HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS feeds on, among other factors, gender inequality and gender injustices, which express themselves through masculinities that promote women's and girls' vulnerability to HIV.

Chitando (2007b:26) observes that gender injustice is still not given the seriousness it deserves by the Church. Theological rigidity, which accounts for the slow pace at which the Church is moving, and intellectual aridity (Chitando, 2007b:21) have rendered the Church irrelevant and unresponsive to the gender issues that are at the heart of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Commendable commitments and policies on HIV and AIDS, though, have been made and drafted at both the conciliar and denominational levels. They still have to be accompanied by similar prophetic utterances on specific issues, such as masculinities that put the lives of women, girls and men at risk in this era of HIV and AIDS. Such commitments have to go beyond the claim to love one's enemy to a love that manifests itself in social relationships and in concrete, concerted and transformative actions.

To realize this, the Churches do not have to reinvent the wheel. As observed earlier in this chapter, projects and initiatives that address men's issues are already in operation in many countries of Africa. The Church can learn from their experiences. They can also collaborate with them where is possible. Culture is one other resource that has not been sufficiently tapped. Barker and Ricardo believe that the rites of passage, which include the initiation rite, have the potential—if tapped into constructively—to “provide a combination of social control, assistance and guidance to young people making the sometimes confusing and tense transition from childhood to adulthood manageable.” (2005:9).

Their fluidity and flexibility makes them apt for the incorporation of new realities something “which makes them resilient and enduring”. (Ibid). It is a resource that lies within our means. The Church has been renowned for its uncompromising and confrontational attitude towards anything cultural. This attitude has

denied the Church an important opportunity to make faith relevant, meaningful and sustainable. Pope John Paul II puts this aptly thus:

The synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture but also of faith. A faith which does not become culture is faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not fully lived out. (Pope John Paul II, 1982)

The Church has been party to a collective colonizing project. In its desire to help, to convert and win souls for God, it has weakened the very bonds that hold local communities together. It is on account of this that de Gruchy proposes the capacity-focused approach that starts with what people have. (www.cwmission.org.uk/features/260.html). On the issue of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, the Church has to reclaim its prophetic voice. In the manner of the biblical prophet Jeremiah, it ought to stand up and demolish what serves no purpose, to restore what was mistakenly lost and to rectify what was wrongly misrepresented.

Presence and unlimited access to the people gives the Church an edge over other organizations or institutions. Some Churches have in place instruction classes, which have become some kind of age regiments. These have the potential, if put to creative use, to become support groups, educational *fora*, and a point of reference for young people in times of need. Already the Church has this resource to explore and use to form young people into responsible men and women. The Church could create occasions to celebrate the lives of outstanding men in society. In the spirit of the Christophers, perhaps that lighting of a candle can do better than just cursing the darkness. It has been observed that blaming men and boys can only help to alienate them and “promote a backlash”. (Barker & Ricardo, 2005:2).

Political Metanoia

A sustained programme for the comprehensive rehabilitation of hegemonic masculinity would ideally call for the involvement of all sectors of society and a political will to see such a programme

through. HIV and AIDS have been identified by governments as national disasters that merit serious attention. When it comes to some of the factors that fuel the spread of HIV, especially gender injustice, political leaders—especially men—have shown reluctance and, at worst, resistance to efforts aimed at stemming the tide. The acrimony that characterized debates around the sexual offences bills in many African countries shows how emotive and sensitive these issues have become, especially where men feel that such laws are directed against them or the institution of masculinity that is so close to their hearts.³

This tug-of-war has translated itself into retardation or outright frustration of programmes and policies, especially from those who feel that such programs or policies expose their deep-seated biases about gender. (Barker & Ricardo, 2005: i). While there is a sense in not bashing or maligning men in an effort to right the wrongs that result from oppressive patriarchal tendencies in society, the implications of dilly-dallying on such issues means the perpetuation of injustice and the violation of God's image in each one of us. Political will is, therefore, key in making sure that gender programs are introduced in all sectors of society, including the schools that have, in the past, served as institutions of change and purveyors of modernity. (Morrell, 1993:622)

Conclusion

True to Bakhtin's dialogic nature of our selves—which sees each voice always containing the voices of others—I suggest that patriarchal stories and the practices that sponsor hegemonic masculinities are cultural stories; they are my stories; they are the stories of many other people who have been formed by culture and in turn continue to form culture. They resonate with many other stories that call out a response from us. (Bakhtin, 1984:57-58).

³*East African Standard*, 27 April 2006; www.afrol.com/articles; www.irinnews.org/report.aspx

My personal journey with masculinities resonates with stories of other people both within and outside my own culture. One side of such stories—which smack of naturalness, essentiality and God-giveness—is their potential to alienate, dehumanize and kill. The consequences have been devastating for women, girls and men themselves in this era of HIV and AIDS. Decentring and deconstruction of these dominant stories cause the marginalized and more life-giving stories to emerge. They have been negotiated into being by people for the people, through language and practice. They are therefore social constructs and have to be understood as such.

Society is responsible for negotiating these masculinities into existence. It is also better placed to rehabilitate and to challenge with courage the sexual behaviour of many men in sub-Saharan Africa, which put women, girls and men themselves at risk of HIV infection. (Chitando, 2007a:42). The Church has an important role to play in engaging in very constructive and creative ways both the Bible and culture, which have often been used to support and sponsor death-making masculinities.

PART TWO

Thus Says the Lord? Sacred Texts and Masculinities

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Contribution of Tamar’s Story to the Construction of Alternative African Masculinities

Gerald West

Introduction

Tamar said, ‘No’; (2 Samuel 13:12) African women say ‘No,’ the poster proclaims. This is the most recent poster produced by the Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research as part of its “Tamar Campaign.” In the centre of the poster stands a young African woman, holding one of the previous Tamar Campaign posters, which in turn proclaims, “Breaking the chains of silence,” against the background of a circle of the most common forms of gender violence in African contexts.

This chapter recounts briefly the history of the Tamar Campaign, goes on to explain in more depth the way in which 2 Samuel 13:1–22 has been used in the work of the Tamar Campaign, examines how the same text is now being used to address issues of alternative masculinities, offers some reflection on how such community-based work both draws on and contributes to the emerging field of masculinity studies in general and biblical masculinity research more specifically, and then concludes with how biblical stories such as

Tamar's have the capacity to bring what is embodied into speech (and so, perhaps, into a potential resource for social transformation).

All of what follows flows from a sacred story, the unfamiliar story of Tamar, told in 2 Samuel 13:1–22 as part of a larger story about a more familiar male figure, David. The story is drenched in relational language (Hackett, 1992:93), with every character being clearly located with respect to each other. But while traditional biblical scholarship tends to limit its relational analysis to the boundaries of the text (or the text's socio-historical site of production), this chapter transgresses these boundaries, allowing the biblical text to encounter actual present-day bodies.

The Tamar Campaign

The Ujamaa Centre,¹ which is located in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, first used the Tamar story in a workshop we were invited to facilitate in 1996. (West and Zondi-Mabizela, 2004:103). The theme of that workshop was “Women and the Bible in Southern Africa,” and the participants came from South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Kenya and Brazil. The vast majority of the participants were women, numbering more than ninety, with a few men. The workshop was facilitated in the majority languages, Zulu, Sotho and English.

The workshop was divided into three sub-themes: “Women and Culture,” “Women and Violence,” and “Women and the Church.” It was for the second of these sub-themes that we chose to use 2 Samuel 13:1–22. Phyllis Trible's *Texts of Terror* (1984) provided us with an overall orientation to this text, but we had never before used it in a workshop context. In constructing the Bible study on this text we were guided by our contextual Bible study methodology, which begins with the participants' initial receptions and appropriations of the text, then moves into the literary dimensions of the text, from which we then move into the socio-historical dimensions of the text,

¹Formerly the Institute for the Study of the Bible and Worker Ministry Project.

and then finally back in-front-of-the-text to the participants' "new" appropriation of the text. (West, 2006:11). These methodological considerations led to the following contextual Bible study questions.

1. What is the text about?
2. Who are the male characters and what is the role of each of them in the rape of Tamar?
3. What is Tamar's response throughout the story?
4. Where is God in this story?
5. In your own words, retell the story of Tamar.
6. What effect or impact does the story of Tamar have on you as a southern African woman?
7. How do society and the Church react to a raped victim?
8. The media, NGOs, women's groups and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are advocating that women should break the culture of silence about violence against them. Do you find the legal system, the police, courts, hospitals, etc., helpful when reporting a rape?
9. What message does the story of Tamar have for us?
10. In what ways does the story of Tamar empower us?

Though somewhat cumbersome in its initial form, there was plenty of time for participants to engage in small groups with this contextual Bible study and each of its questions. And because this contextual Bible study took place on the third day of the workshop, the participants had already begun to establish their small groups as sacred and safe sites in which some level of trust and accountability could be presumed. The few men present formed their own small group. Each small group had the opportunity to report back in plenary at various stages in the process but were encouraged to share selectively, respecting the confidences of the group. Professional counsellors were available after the Bible study and for the next two days.

The impact was massive. From the very moment the biblical text was read aloud in three languages there were murmurings among the participants. Most did not know that this text was in the Bible,

and no one present had ever heard the text read aloud. So there was considerable excitement and energy as we worked our way through the questions. The Bible study took most of the day, and the counsellors were busy for three days. Such was the impact of the Tamar story that we continued to use the Tamar contextual Bible study as part of the work of our Women and Gender Programme within the Ujamaa Centre. More and more local communities invited us to facilitate this Bible study, which enabled us to continually rework it, making it more compact and coherent. During one such workshop with a local community, we were challenged by the young women who had invited us to take the process further. What more, they wanted to know, would we do to provide resources for them to break the chains of silence? Then and there, those of us from the Ujamaa Centre sat down together and began to reflect and plan. The result was the birth of the Tamar Campaign, which has grown to include dedicated personnel, gender “literacy” training, gender violence information, the Tamar contextual Bible study in leaflet form (in various African languages), a range of posters, workshops throughout the year and the training of community identified resource people in basic counselling and referral skills. (West and Zondi-Mabizela, 2004:9-11).

This last resource, the training in basic counselling and referral skills of someone identified by the local community themselves, has been the constant request of local communities over the past nine years of the Tamar Campaign, and we finally managed to raise the funds to begin this training process in 2008, under the leadership of our Women and Gender Co-ordinator, Maria Makgamathe.

The Tamar Campaign continues to be a resource across our country and further afield in the African continent. A number of our funding partners, particularly the Norwegian Church Aid, now allocate us specific funding to work in Africa beyond the borders of South Africa. In the past three years we have launched the Tamar Campaign in Kenya, Zambia, Cameroun, Nigeria and Angola, and a whole array of resources have been developed by us and others

for this work.² But central to all this work is our primary resource, the biblical story of Tamar.

The Tamar Contextual Bible Study

Central to the work of the Ujamaa Centre is the notion of praxis, an ongoing cycle of action and reflection. (Frostin, 1988:10). What we mean by action is actual action in a particular struggle, and integrally related to this action is reflection on the action. Integrally related to this action-induced reflection is further action, refined or reconstituted by the reflection on and reconsideration of theory (and so on goes the cyclical process). In this case, the Ujamaa Centre is involved in the ongoing struggle against gender violence, using the Tamar contextual Bible study as one of its “weapons of struggle.” (Mosala, 1986:120; Mofokeng, 1988: 40). The action-reflection cycle has resulted in a contextual Bible study on the Tamar story that has a fairly stable shape.

A contextual Bible study consists of two related kinds of questions, community consciousness questions that draw on a particular local community's resources, both experiential and interpretive, and critical consciousness questions that draw on the structured and systematic resources of biblical scholarship. (West, 2006:140-145). The resultant Tamar contextual Bible study thus looks like this: 2 Samuel 13:1–22 is read aloud to the group as a whole. After the text has been read a series of questions follow.

1. Read 2 Samuel 13:1-22 together again in small groups. Share with each other what you think the text is about.

Each small group is then asked to report back to the larger group. Each and every response to question one is summarized on newsprint. After the report-back, the participants return to their small groups to discuss the following questions.

2. Who are the main characters in this story and what do we know about them?

²See www.ujamaa.org.za.

3. *What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?*

4. *What does Tamar say and what does Tamar do?*

When the small groups have finished their discussion, each group is invited to present a summary of their discussion. After this report-back the smaller groups reconvene and discuss the following questions.

5. *Are there women like Tamar in your Church and/or community? Tell their story.*

6. *What is the theology of women who have been raped?*

7. *What resources are there in your area for survivors of rape?*

Once again, the small groups present their report-back to the plenary group. Creativity is particularly vital here, as often women find it difficult or are unable to articulate their responses. A drama or a drawing may be the only way in which some groups can report.

Finally, each small group comes together to formulate an action plan.

8. *What will you now do in response to this Bible study?*

The action plan is either reported to the plenary or presented on newsprint for other participants to study after the Bible study.

The contextual Bible study is framed by community consciousness questions (questions 1, 5–8), with critical consciousness questions in-between (questions 2–4). Question 6 is a difficult question to pose and to answer and is only used in situations that are especially safe. Though disturbing and difficult, this question does allow the group to “do theology,” which can be empowering, drawing as it does on the incipient and inchoate embodied “theology” of the participants. If the site is sacred and safe, questions 5 and 6 provide space for in-depth sharing of experiences of abuse and some of the contours of how particular women “theologize” their embodied experience. (West, 2008).

Besides question 6, the other questions are standard in the Tamar contextual Bible study. Question 1 allows for participants to respond from their reception history of the text (if any) and from their immediate engagement with the text. Each and every response is received by the facilitator and written up publicly on newsprint, affirming each person's contribution and confirming the participatory nature of the contextual Bible study process. The rest of the contextual Bible study is done in small groups, usually divided along gender, age and language lines so as to create as safe a space as possible. There is regular reportback to the full plenary of participants, so the distinctive groups are able to hear the contributions of the others.

Questions 2–4 move the Bible study from a focus on “the reader/hearer” to a focus on the biblical text. Literary critical consciousness questions provide the entry point for a deeper and more detailed reading of the text than is common in most local communities. But because the biblical text is considered in some sense sacred by most African communities, participants eagerly return to reread it. Character analysis is an accessible form of literary analysis, and participants readily list and examine each and every character, and in so doing discern something of the plot, particularly in narratives such as this in which the plot and its pace are driven by the characters and their dialogue.

Question 2 is a general question and provides participants with a sense of confidence in their own capacity to do this kind of analysis. Question 3 begins to shift the Bible study in the direction of the Tamar Campaign, requiring further character analysis but adding a relational component. Question 4 has gone through various formulations before we settled on its current form. Tamar is remarkably articulate, and so we searched for a question that encourages participants to probe both what she does and what she says. When we introduce and read out question 4 we usually supplement it with a provocative comment like, “Tamar says at least ten things!” When the groups report-back on question 4 they have usually managed, among them, to pay attention to each element of what Tamar says in verses 12–13 and 16.

Though this contextual Bible study has no overt sociohistorical question, going behind the text does take place during reportback. Some groups will have wondered, for example, whether brothers and sisters had separate living quarters in this culture and whether sisters were allowed to visit their brothers in their living quarters without a female chaperone, or whether in this society Amnon would have been allowed to marry his half-sister (or was Tamar simply stalling?), or whether the word often translated as “love” (verse 4) is an appropriate translation of the Hebrew word. Such questions, the information available and guesses made within a group allow the facilitator an opportunity to provide some sociohistorical information, difficult as it may be to be definitive on aspects of the text’s sociohistorical setting.

Having reread the text more carefully and closely, and with some socio-historical input, the participants then move back into their own experience and their own appropriations of the story through questions 5–8. Question 5 is the pivotal question, providing an opportunity for the participants to share with each other from their experience. There can be no doubt that Tamar’s story enables such sharing, though the depth of sharing depends entirely on the level of safety within the group. As one woman said, “Because this story is in the Bible we will no longer be silent.” But the purpose of the Tamar contextual Bible study is to mobilize the sharing around questions 5–7 into some form of planned action, whether personal or communal. The overall purpose of contextual Bible study is empowerment and social transformation.

But as we have been told repeatedly over the twelve years we have been working with this text, women are the survivors, not the perpetrators of gender violence. So we have been searching for a biblical text with the power of the Tamar story with which to address men. We have tried a range of biblical texts, mainly from the Second Testament, with some success, but have returned recently to the Tamar story itself as a resource.

In Search of Redemptive Masculinities

The Tamar contextual Bible study has proved to have an amazing capacity to draw men into the story without them becoming too defensive. (West et al, 2004:61). Because, I think, the story offers men a range of male characters with which to identify, besides the rapist, they are able to accept some sense of culpability (for each of the male characters in the story participates in the rape of Tamar in some way) without being condemned as the rapist. Building on this capacity of the story to include men without alienating them, we have begun to develop a new contextual Bible study based on 2 Samuel 13:1–22 as part of a series of Bible studies on “Redemptive Masculinities.” We hope in time to have a Redemptive Masculinities Campaign.

The emerging contextual Bible study has a similar shape to the Tamar study, but has a quite different focus:

1. Have you heard this text—2 Samuel 13:1–22—read publicly...on a Sunday? Share with each other if and when and where you have heard this text read.
2. Who are the main characters in this story and what do we know about them?
3. What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?
4. How would you characterize Amnon's masculinity in this text?
Consider:
What prevents Amnon initially from acting on his desire/lust for Tamar (v2)?
What is it then that enables him to act on his love/desire/lust (v4–6)?
How does he react to Tamar's arguments (v14)?
How does he behave after he has raped Tamar (v15–17)?
5. What does Tamar's response to Amnon's assault tell us about her understanding of masculinity? Consider:

6. What does she say (v12–13, 16), and what do each of the things she says tell us about her understanding of what it means to be “a man”?
7. What does she do (v19), and what do each of the things she does tell us about her understanding of what it means to be “a man”?
8. What are the dominant forms of masculinity in our contexts (in various age groups), and what alternative forms of masculinity can we draw on from our cultural and religious traditions?
9. How can we raise the issue of masculinity in our various gender and age-groups?

Question 1 performs a similar function to that of the first question in the Tamar contextual Bible study but draws attention to the absence of the text in the male-dominated world of religious life, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim (this Bible study has been done by participants from each of these faith traditions, in each case at their own initiative). Questions 2 and 3, as in the Tamar study, draw attention to the text itself and provide an overall orientation to the story. Questions 4 and 5 slow the “reading” process down considerably, posing two related and quite difficult questions. In working with this *Redemptive Masculinities* contextual Bible study, we have kept reformulating these two questions in order to devise a form of question that combines a careful reading of the text with the participants’ own understandings of notions of “masculinity.” So far we have settled on a general question and then some prompting sub-questions.

Because the notion of masculinity is somewhat elusive, as any introductory textbook in the emerging field of masculinity studies readily admits (Bourdieu, 2001), we have tried to come at it from a number of angles, using the biblical text as a resource. A complicating problem is the socio-historical questions that hover in the background of the biblical text, and the paucity of studies on masculinity in the Ancient Near East. As the helpful classified bibliography by Janice

Capel Anderson, assisted by Stephen Moore and Seong Hee Kim shows (Anderson et al, 2003), there is a rich array of materials on masculinity studies in general and on the Greco-Roman period, as well as an emerging body of material on the New Testament, including the excellent Semeia Studies volume on *New Testament Masculinities*, edited by Stephen Moore and Janice Capel Anderson in which this bibliography appears. (Moore and Anderson, 2003). Unfortunately, the material available on the Ancient Near East is rather sparse (Anderson et al, 2003:33-35), and so it is difficult to provide a “thick” sociological setting for Hebrew Bible representations of masculinity.³ However, this socio-historical problem is an additional incentive to do community-based work, for our Redemptive Masculinities contextual Bible study has the capacity to suggest questions about masculinity with which we might interrogate the available Ancient Near Eastern material.

Notwithstanding the socio-historical difficulties, the text itself offers plenty to work with, and the Bible study has already proved to be a powerful resource for communities to talk about masculinity, something they don't usually do. As a part of patriarchy, masculinity is an almost invisible thread woven through our African cultures and so addressing it and thereby rendering it visible is itself a significant feature of this Redemptive Masculinities contextual Bible study. (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001). But while participants do not find it easy to grasp the notion of masculinity, they seem to have little difficulty in accepting the implication of our questions that there is more than one kind of masculinity. This too is a significant recognition. By grappling with the notion of masculinity and interrogating what local realities constitute the term, the communities we work with are also making a contribution to the emerging field of African masculinities, furnishing questions from their understanding to be taken up by socially engaged biblical scholars and other social

³But see the suggestive work in cognate disciplines: Linke, 1992; Roscoe, 1996; Melville, 2004.

scientists. (Morrell, 2001; Lindsay and Miescher, 2003; Ouzgane and Morrell, 2005; Richter and Morrell, 2006; Cole et al, 2007).

The biblical story provides a powerful dialogue partner in this regard, offering a number of potential lines of connection with their sociocultural contexts. The first sub-question under question 4, for example, is especially significant, pointing as it does to a feature of the text seldom noticed by the reader. By focusing on the moment of Amnon's restraint, before he acts on his desire—however this desire is characterized—Amnon is normalized. Amnon is not initially the demonized “other,” the rapist; Amnon is the ordinary male who has desires but does not act on them. The second sub-question under question 4 then creates space for participants to discuss what aspects of masculinity enable men to disregard sociocultural norms of restraint. The third and fourth sub-questions are especially productive among participants as they draw attention to the irrational responses of Amnon to Tamar's rational arguments and the role of physical and sociocultural force. What emerges from question 4 is some interrogation of how masculine power operates.

Question 5 shifts the focus from the male Amnon is to the kind of male he should be, as envisaged by Tamar. Each of the elements of what she says, for example, in verses 12–13 summons forth a different kind of male, and participants eagerly construct the characteristics of this imagined male. Tamar summons forth, anticipates, hopes for, a man who understands “no,” who understands what it means to be in relationship as a “brother,” who is able to resist using force, who respects the sociocultural traditions of his community, who is able to discern and desist from doing what is disgraceful, who considers the situation of the other, who considers the consequences of his actions for himself, who is willing to pause and examine other options, who is willing to listen to rational argument. These characteristics in turn provide a potential reservoir from which to draw in their responses to question 6.

In our work with this contextual Bible study thus far, male groups have been remarkably frank and even vulnerable within their own gender and age groups in responding to question 6 and

imaginative and practical in their responses to question 7. For example, in responding to question 6, a number of groups of young men across different sociocultural communities have admitted that among themselves as young men they often play the part of Jonadab with each other, urging each other “to take” a woman who seems unattainable. They confess that though they do not usually intend their compatriots to act on their advice, they nevertheless talk in this way among themselves. Younger men have also indicated in our workshops that they are able to envisage a range of masculinities, while many of their elders found it difficult to grasp what was meant by “alternative masculinities.” But among male participants across all age groups there has been a genuine willingness to talk about these issues, surprising themselves even, for most acknowledged that they would never have imagined themselves talking about “such things in church.” This has been our experience of contextual Bible study in general, whether we are dealing with issues like gender violence, unemployment, land, or HIV and AIDS; participants find themselves talking about things they would not normally discuss in religious settings.

From Embodiment to Speech

While Pierre Bourdieu is right to remind us of the socially habituated body and its limited capacity to recognize and resist its socialization, particularly in the case of masculine domination, I want to argue here that the social space produced by the Tamar contextual Bible study is significant for enabling what is embodied to come to some kind of articulation and for this articulation to lead, potentially, to some kind of social transformation.

“The world is comprehensible, immediately endowed with meaning, because” says Bourdieu, “the body...has the capacity to be present to what is outside itself, in the world, and to be impressed and durably modified by it,” and because the body “has been protractedly (from the beginning) exposed to its regularities.” (Bourdieu, 2000:135). Bourdieu goes on immediately to argue that the body,

Having acquired from this exposure a system of dispositions attuned to these regularities ... is inclined and able to anticipate them practically in behaviours which engage a *corporeal knowledge* that provides a practical comprehension of the world quite different from the intentional act of conscious decoding that is normally designated by the idea of comprehension. (2000:135)

This is what Bourdieu calls the “*habitus*” of an embodied social group. (Fowler, 2000:4). In brief, the *habitus* is “society written into the body”; (Bourdieu, 1990:63) stated more fully:

By *habitus* Bourdieu understands ways of doing and being which social subjects acquire during their socialization. Their *habitus* is not a matter of conscious learning, or of ideological imposition, but is acquired through practice. Bourdieu’s sociology rests on an account of lived “practice”, and what he terms “the practical sense”—the ability to function effectively within a given social field, an ability which cannot necessarily be articulated as conscious knowledge: “knowing how” rather than “knowing that”. *Habitus* names the characteristic dispositions of the social subject. It is indicated in the bearing of the body (“hexis”), and in deeply ingrained habits of behaviour, feeling, thought. (Lovell, 2000:27)

As Terry Lovell notes, however, while contemporary feminisms of difference share with Bourdieu’s sociology of practice “a common focus upon “the body,” Bourdieu’s embodied social actor lacks the agency that feminists posit for their subjects. (Ibid) Poststructuralist and postmodernist discourses, says Lovell, “celebrate flexible selves, permeable or semi-permeable boundaries, the journey traversed rather than origins or lasting determinations.”⁴ However, argues Lovell, “Bourdieu’s theory, although resolutely non-essentialist and insistent that we are always dealing with “cultural arbitraries,” nevertheless makes it difficult to understand how one might ever appear,

⁴Ibid.:30. For Bourdieu’s reply to postmodernism see Bourdieu, 2001:103.

convincingly, to be what one is not," for, she goes on to say, "his account of the acquisition of social identity through practice, *habitus*, emphasizes its corporeal sedimentation."⁵

Lovell acknowledges, as do I, that what is compelling about Bourdieu's position is that it offers "a way of understanding *both* the arbitrary, and therefore contestable, nature of the social, *and* its compelling presence and effectiveness." (Ibid.:31). "Social reality" is both socially constructed and real. But while "Bourdieu's strength lies in his insistence upon the well-nigh permanent sediments and traces which constitute embodied culture...he draws attention away from those other areas of social space where the constructedness of social reality may be tacitly acknowledged or exposed." (Lovell, 2000:32). As Lovell notes, for Bourdieu the "scope of human freedom...is not large,"⁶ and while he recognizes that "there exist dispositions to resist,"⁷ he insists on the necessity "to examine under what conditions these dispositions are socially constituted, effectively triggered, and rendered politically efficient." (Ibid).

His work on masculine domination is no different. In it he argues that "if it is true that the relations between the sexes have changed less than superficial observation would suggest" (Bourdieu, 2001:vii), then we must envisage forms of "political mobilization" which go beyond "the introverted revolt of small mutual support groups" (Bourdieu, 2001:viii, 103) to work within a broader social movement so as "to invent and impose forms of collective organization and action and effective weapons, especially symbolic ones, capable of shaking the political and legal institutions which play a part in perpetuating their subordination." (Bourdieu, 2001: ix, 117). Notwithstanding his condescending tone here and throughout his

⁵Lovell, 2000:30. For an entirely different sociological orientation from Bourdieu's see Scott, 1985 and 1990.

⁶See Lovell, 2000:34 who is here citing Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:199.

⁷See Lovell, 2000:34. who is here citing Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:81.

book towards activist, especially feminist, projects, Bourdieu wants to offer a larger more political project. At the core of his sociological project on masculinity is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the process by which there has been a reversal of cause and effect so as “to make a naturalized social construction (“genders” as sexually characterized habitus) appear as the grounding in nature of the arbitrary division that underlies both reality and the representation of reality.” (Bourdieu, 2001:3, 23). Responding to the critique that he is some kind of essentialist, Bourdieu belabours his point, arguing that,

[I]n order to escape completely from essentialism, one should not try to deny the permanences and the invariants, which are indisputably part of historical reality; but, rather, one must *reconstruct the history of the historical labour of dehistoricization*, or, to put it another way, the history of the continuous (re)creation of the objective and subjective structures of masculine domination, which has gone on permanently so long as there have been men and women, and through which the masculine order has been continuously reproduced from age to age. (Bourdieu, 2001:82-83)

Central to this task, says Bourdieu, is “the history of the agents and institutions which permanently contribute to the maintenance of these permanences,” particularly the family, the educational system, the Church and the state. (Ibid.:83; 85-87). The importance of the task, argues Bourdieu, lies “in the strength of the masculine order,” which is seen “in the fact that it dispenses with justification: the andocentric vision imposes itself as neutral and has no need to spell itself out in discourses aimed at legitimating it.” (Ibid.:9).

Society does write the dominant (and dominating) masculine order into our bodies, and it does compel a set of practices. But, I would argue, social reality does not always (or ever, if we are to follow the alternative sociological analysis of James Scott) produce a unified *habitus*. (1990). Bourdieu admits as much in his analysis of the “contradictions and suffering” occasioned by “fathers and mothers who project their desires and compensatory projects on

their son, asking the impossible of him.” Indeed, he says, “A great many people are *long-term* sufferers from the gap between their accomplishments and the parental expectations they can neither satisfy nor repudiate.” (Bourdieu, 1999:508). And it is just “such experiences,” Bourdieu goes on to argue, that “tend to produce a habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and with its ambivalence, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities.” (Ibid.:511). “This explains,” continues Bourdieu (and here he echoes Scott),

...the way that narratives about the most “personal” difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions. This is never so obvious as it is for occupants of precarious positions who turn out to be extraordinary “practical analysts”: situated at points where social structures “work,” and therefore worked over by the contradictions of these structures, these individuals are constrained, in order to live or to survive, to practice a kind of self-analysis, which often gives them access to the objective contradictions which have them in their grasp, and to the objective structures expressed in and by these contradictions. (Ibid.:511)

So while most of Bourdieu's work does “not adequately equip practical agents with reflective and critical abilities which would make it possible to describe how they might initiate...transformative processes, or to understand how they might succeed in enlisting the cooperation of other agents in transforming social identities and conditions,” (Bohman, 1999:143), the above case shows Bourdieu in a more nuanced light. Here we have what James Bohman finds generally lacking in Bourdieu's sociology, namely, “reflective agency, the capacities of socially and culturally situated agents to reflect upon their social conditions, criticize them, and articulate new interpretations of them.” (Ibid.:145).

Bohman critiques Bourdieu's emphasis on cultural misrecognition, “the sort of mechanism which inhibits deliberation,

criticism, and revision” of one’s social reality, for he argues that “there is no reason to believe that practical and public reasoning cannot detect at least some of these cultural biases and constraints, and that at least some reflective agents may be able to convince others that suppressed forms of expression and alternatives absent from deliberation ought to be seriously considered on their merits.” (Ibid.:147). In taking this stance he is close to the kind of position advocated above by Jean and John Comaroff, who argue that “silent signifiers and unmarked practices may rise to the level of consciousness, of ideological assertion, and become the subject of overt political and social contestation.” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991:29). In making this argument, however, Bohman, like the Comaroffs, recognizes the powerful sociopolitical constraints emphasized by Bourdieu, acknowledging that “misrecognition and biases can be built into...public institutions and their practices, especially if groups do not have free and equal access to epistemic authority or effective modes of public expression.” (Bohman, 1999:147).

Important as it is to hear Bourdieu’s call for a project that rigorously interrogates the sociopolitical institutions that construct masculine domination, we must not, I would argue, minimize the contributions of the disruptions and the contradictions that characterize the Redemptive Masculinities contextual Bible study on 2 Samuel 13:1–22. For within such sites we find many examples of a body/*habitus* divided against itself. These sites, I would argue, are opportunities to bring to speech what is embodied, and while they may be localized and on the periphery of the kinds of social movements Bourdieu envisages, such sites, James Scott reminds us, are integral to larger-scale political change. The negation of any dominant ideology, including dominant forms of masculinity, requires “an offstage subculture” in which negation can be formed and articulated, argues Scott. (1990:119). Once this now-articulated disruption to the dominant performances of masculinity becomes the property of a small group, “it will be further disciplined by the shared experiences and power relations within that small group,”

and in so doing may “carry effective meaning” for a whole category of subordinates, enabling a movement “from the individual resisting subject...to the socialization of resistant practices and discourses.” (Ibid.:118-119).

At the very least, Tamar's story read from the perspective of a search for redemptive masculinities, in the very face of dominant forms of masculinity, provides resources with which “the inertia of habitus” might be overcome. (Bourdieu, 2001:89).

Conclusion

In the conclusion to her discussion of Tamar's story, Phyllis Trible invokes Proverbs 7:4–5, in which “wisdom” is designated as “a sister” who preserves the young man “from the loose woman, from the adventurer with her smooth words.” (Trible, 1984:56). “If,” asks Trible, “sister wisdom can protect a young man from the loose woman, who will protect sister wisdom from the loose man, symbolized not by a foreigner but by her very own brother? Who will preserve sister wisdom from the adventurer, the rapist with his smooth words, lecherous eyes and grasping hands? In answering the question,” Trible insists, “Israel is found wanting – *and so are we.*” (Trible, 1984:57).

Trible captures rather nicely here, I think, the way in which Tamar's evocation of another kind of masculinity, albeit one that only partially deconstructs patriarchy, is an alternative form of wisdom. That such wisdom might be recovered from our socio-cultural and religious traditions is the hope we cling to in facilitating contextual Bible studies like this. We have been found wanting, and so we strive to hear and provide a site within which such alternative forms of wisdom might be articulated, owned, and become the social property of a movement of change.

CHAPTER NINE

Batswana Masculinities from Men's Interpretation of Hosea 1-3: A Case Study of the Africa Evangelical Church

Sidney Berman

Introduction

This study examines the masculinities of Batswana men from the Africa Evangelical Church. It does so by analysing their interpretation of Hosea 1-3 against the background of the so-called “passion killings” in the current Botswana context. Hosea 1-3 is the biblical text that presents the metaphor of a patriarchal marriage between the prophet Hosea and his wife Gomer. The prophet uses the marriage as his object lesson to convey God’s message to his people, Israel. God’s message was that Israel had acted like an unfaithful wife by worshipping other gods and forsaking him. In the metaphor, Gomer is promiscuous, and the loving husband Hosea uses different means to control her and eventually to bring her back. In reading the metaphor with the Church-going men, I asked them questions relating to the gender inequalities and violence in relationships between men and women as reflected in the Hosea marriage and in their own social contexts. The Hosea metaphor and Botswana’s passion killings have the same main ingredient—the suspected unfaithfulness of the female. Following such accusations,

the metaphor contains threats of physical assault and murder. (Verses 3 and 10).

“Passion killings” generally start with accusations of unfaithfulness and the male partner’s attempt to assert his dominion over the female. The conflict then leads to violence, murder and suicide. The term is used popularly in Botswana to describe the recent outbreak of incidents of boyfriends killing girlfriends. These killings started about seven years ago. Botswana police statistics reveal that from January 2003 to June 2009, the nation lost 481 lives to passion killings. 437 – 90.9 percent —were females while 44 – 9.1 percent— were males. The statistics indicate that “females are the most likely victims” in the spate of “passion killings” in Botswana. (Mbae, 2005:2). Males are therefore the almost exclusive offenders in this case. Therefore, the present study investigated Botswana men’s masculinities, how they affect their reading of patriarchal biblical texts, and how they interact with issues of gender inequality and violence. Do the masculinities confront gender inequality and violence or do they perpetuate and defend them? Do the masculinities of the men of Africa Evangelical Church shed light on the mentality behind the scourge of passion killings in Botswana? Firstly, the chapter discusses the key concepts of the research, namely gender-based violence and gender and social location. Secondly, it discusses the general background of masculinity in Botswana’s context. Thirdly, it gives background on Africa Evangelical Church. Fourthly and finally, it analyses Botswana men’s interpretation of Hosea 1-3.

Description of Key Concepts

Gender-Based Violence

Cheryl Kirk-Duggan (2003:1-7) describes gender-based violence as “that which violates, destroys, manipulates, corrupts, defiles and robs us of dignity and true personhood.” She says that it “involves the use of thought and deed within a continuum of the physical, the philosophical and the psychological that oppresses an individual or community of their gift of freedom and of the sacredness of their

person.” (2003:26). Michael Flood (2002) explains that many domestic violence agencies and services argue that men's physical violence to women and children in the home “very often is accompanied by emotional, psychological and verbal abuse.” Violence is a principle that manifests itself in many ways—emotionally, psychologically, physically, socially and economically.

Gender

According to Rao Gupta, gender is “widely shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate male and female behaviour, characteristics and roles.” (Chilisa et al, 2005:15). Gender is therefore a set of values, attitudes and worldviews held by a society concerning male and female. It is constructed by the society and is not natural. (Ibid.:15). Gender analysis is an attempt to understand and document the differences in gender roles, activities, needs and opportunities in a given context. Like masculinity, the gender context of Botswana grants much power to males and almost none to females in social relationships.

Social Location

Social location as used here means the reader's social context or standing. It is the whole make up of a person that influences his or her worldview encompassing biological (gender, sexuality or age), cultural, economic and political realities. (Dube, 2003:103). Dube describes one's social location as one's place or location in one's society and explains that “every person is socially located and socially constructed into a number of relationships that empower and disempower them.” (Ibid.:109). The question, therefore, is, do Botswana men's social locations lead them to embrace and perpetuate gender-based violence? If so, what are the factors of their social location that lead them in that direction? Does their reading counter gender violence? If not, how can they begin to read Hosea 1-3 in ways that combat gender-based violence and empower women? The study assumes that Botswana men's social location inform their

masculinities and influence their interpretations of biblical texts such as the gendered marriage metaphor of Hosea 1-3.

General Background of Masculinity in Botswana's Context

The general masculinity of a Motswana man reflects the power imbalances between male and female and patriarchal ideologies that are found in Hosea 1-3. Therefore it is important to bear in mind the Motswana man's cultural and traditional background as he reads the text of Hosea 1-3. Masculinity itself is the term that commonly refers to maleness. This meaning is widely contested in current scholarship because of the term *masculinity's* divergent uses. Michael Flood has grappled with the term and outlined well the three clusters of phenomena to which "masculinity" refers, namely "beliefs, ideals, and discourses; traits which differentiate men between and women; and, a strategy for maintaining men's power." (2002:204). The most important step in dealing with masculinity is to bear in mind that it is not natural. It is a "gender identity constructed socially, historically and politically." (Leach, 1994:36). Passion killings and gender-based violence in the Botswana context testify that Botswana's masculinity grants power almost exclusively to men.

A Motswana man is traditionally constructed in a patriarchal and gender-imbalanced framework. This is evident in societal values and practices. For example, the Woman Affairs Division of Botswana's Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs observes that traditional and cultural values of Botswana men "perceive women as subordinates, needing protection and having their sole purpose as procreation, but not having any rights of custody." (1995:6). One notes that in the Hosea text, the wife is "taken," (Hosea 1:2-3), her children are named entirely by the husband, (Hosea 1:4-9), she is dependent for provisions on her husband, (Hosea 2:9), and she seems powerless against all the husband's rough and tender actions prescribed upon her throughout the narrative. Similarly, Botswana men are traditionally socialized to believe that women are subordinate to them. In his book *Thutapuo ya Setswana*, Kgomotso Mogapi uses the Setswana proverb *susu ilela suswane gore suswane le ene a go*

ilele twice to explain the relationship between the husband and the wife. (1991:9, 10). The proverb says that the older child should respect the younger child so that the older child can reciprocate, but when used this way means that position-wise, the husband is older than the wife. The condition of “young” and “old” in Setswana culture grants considerable powers to the older person at the expense of the younger one. Mogapi, in the same context of the proverb, reveals this power imbalance when he says that all commands are the prerogative of the man to which everyone in the family should submit. (Ibid.:9).

Setswana culture also constructs the man as “tough” against his wife and children. The Hosea husband threatens toughness against his wife such as detaining her, ruining her fields and punishing her. (2:3, 6, 12 and 13). The Motswana man is also expected to be in control of his women and children. Ornulf Gulbrandsen reports Ngwaketse women's fear of the cruelty of men, which explained why some marriages failed. (1996:267). Gulbrandsen further notes that “the woman has to perform many tasks under the threat of punishment from her husband.” (Ibid.:268). This reveals that a Motswana man's socialization encourages violence against women. Men who are gentle with their women are harassed by their fellow men and labelled sissies, and “those dealing equally with their wives are henpecked.” (Women's Affairs Division, 1999:19).

A poem about the boy child by L. S. Cedric Thobega says, “*fa e le go laolwa ke basadi gone, ga se mo ba go tsaletsweng.*” (1976:29). It says that a boy child should learn not to be controlled by a woman (or girlfriend or wife). The poem goes on to say that real boy children are “very few—who know proper relationships between men and women... who know how to build a family.” Thus, a Motswana boy-child is warned that in order to build a proper family, he should be tough and never submit to a woman. Schapera reveals that upon marriage, the man becomes “his own master [but] the woman passes from the legal control of her parents to that of her husband, who now becomes her guardian and as such responsible for her actions.” (Isaac Schapera, 1994:150). Likewise in the Hosea

text, Gomer's passivity demonstrates that she is under her husband's guardianship. These are the kind of values that Kgomotso Mogapi says a child learns by "*go tsaya malebela mo batsading ba bone.*" (1991:10). That is, the Motswana child learns Setswana cultural values by observing his/her parents. Mogapi believed that the kind of relationship in which the man has all authority was a good model for children, ignoring its violent consequences for Batswana women. Another proverb says, *ga di ke di etelelwa ke manamagadi pele, di ka tloga tsa wela ka mamena*—cattle are never led by a cow, lest they fall into a gorge—meaning that a woman is not fit to be the leader.

The Motswana man is also expected to be the economic provider and the physical protector of his wife and children. Gomer seems completely dependent on her husband's provisions, namely grain, wine, oil, jewellery and clothes. (Hosea 2:5, 8, 9, 21 and 22). Among Batswana couples, it would not be a social problem whether or not the wife brings income to the family. Yet it is considered serious failure on his part if the husband or boyfriend depends financially on his. Schapera says, "It is the special duty of the husband to provide his family with the necessities of life, including food, clothing, household goods and chattels." (1994:153). Ornulf Gulbrandsen also reveals how Batswana men are expected to support their wives and children. (1996:267). In this reference, the women reported that they wanted to marry because "I need a man to look after me and my children," and that they rejected men because of "poor ability to support a wife and children." (Ibid.:267). Kgomotso Mogapi uses the proverbs *korwe ke je ke bapalela tsetsi* and *photi tlaa o je lethodi* for the man's primary role in the family. (1991:9). They mean that the woman joins the man only to consume and that wherever the man is, he should be working towards providing for the wife. That seems also to be the expectation between Hosea and Gomer. As for the Motswana man, he has been taught "*Ba tla a thubega*"—that is, women are fragile and will break. (Thobega, 1976:29). Therefore, they need to be protected and provided for.

This is the same ideology used to equate the women with children, for the man should also command and the woman and children should obey. (Mogapi, 1991:9). The man is in one category by himself while the wife and children are in the other as the recipients of his provision, protection and commands. One notes that Hosea alone names the children, and terrible names they were—Not loved, Not my people, and Jezreel (a promise of punishment). (Hosea 1:4, 6 and 9). These targets of his provisions and commands easily become the targets of his violence in this framework. Such an ideology restricts women's lives to being at the beck and call of their husbands. (Schapera, 1992:282). The Women's Affairs division (1995:6) bemoaned the fact that even the children the woman was raising were not hers, for they were legally the husband's alone. Likewise, Gomer's children legally carry her husband's name alone.

The Motswana man's background also views the promiscuity of a woman as more atrocious than that of a man. Isaac Schapera says of Batswana husbands, "It is recognized that a man is inclined to be promiscuous," but says of women, "Adultery on the part of the wife is held to be a more serious offence, and her husband has the right to claim damages from her paramour—a right which she cannot exercise against her husband's concubine." (1994:156-157). As for Hosea, his context presents a situation where men could engage the services of a prostitute but would stone to death an adulteress.¹ In Botswana's context, Gulbrandsen presents a Ngwaketse man's rationalizations of his *bonyatsi*: "What do you do if your wife is pregnant or otherwise unsuitable for intercourse? You see, we have become familiar with new forms of sex [and] we need different women for our exercises." (1996:276). This revelation bears witness to some of the gender injustices that have constructed the Motswana man.

In summary, therefore, a Motswana man is constructed to perceive women as lower than him, to equate them with children and

¹Good examples are Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38:11-24 and the woman caught in adultery in John 8:3-4.

to be tough and aggressive towards them. This perception is similar to that revealed in Hosea 1-3 between the prophet Hosea and his wife Gomer. The construction of a Motswana man also makes him the provider for the wife and strips her of all kinds of freedom. The woman's sole purpose is procreation and to be at the beck and call of the man. That social construction is a process in which the individual learns to conform to the moral standards, codes of conduct, role expectations and role performances in a specific society. Tinyiko S. Maluleke and Sarojini Nadar's discussion of gendered socialization in the South African context reiterates that "societal norms for boys and men say that they are to be leaders, authority figures, independent, strong, aggressive [etc], while girls and women are to be followers, obedient, dependent, weak [etc]." (2002, 114:14-15). This worldview concerning women is significant when we examine Batswana men's understanding of passion killings and the text of Hosea 1-3.

Below is the demographic table of the five members of the focus group. The men are adults from rural areas of Botswana aged 30 and upwards. They are members of Africa Evangelical Church. An evangelical Church was chosen in order to discover how evangelical men generally interpret biblical texts that are problematic for relationships between men and women such as Hosea 1-3. The Africa Evangelical Church in particular was chosen because of its accessibility, since the researcher is a member of the Church.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

| Group Members | Age | Marital Status | Responsibilities in the Church | Educational Level |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Rural adult (N=5) | (3) 30-49 (2) 50+ | (4) married (1)not married | (1) Pastor (2) Deacons (2) Committee | (1) Form 5 (2) Form 3 (2) Primary |

The data is presented according to the questions that the discussion followed, arranged under as follows: How do Batswana men's readings of Hosea 1-3 address the masculinity or patriarchy of God?

How do Batswana men's readings of Hosea 1-3 address gender-based violence? What are Church-going Batswana men's views concerning accusations of unfaithfulness? And, what are Batswana men's reading strategies that confront gender-based violence? In order to highlight the evangelical part of these Church-going Batswana men's masculinities, a brief background of the Africa Evangelical Church is presented in the section below.

Background of Africa Evangelical Church

In this section, the background of the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) is presented because it conveys strongly the masculinities of the Church-going evangelical men. These masculinities grant all power and prestige to men and none to women, just as the prophet Hosea's maleness granted him much greater power and status in contrast to his wife. AEC is a product of a European mission organization once called Africa Evangelical Fellowship. According to its current bishop (Nthomang, 2003:1), it was founded in Botswana in 1953. The Church's foundational principles are in *The Constitution of Africa Evangelical Church in Botswana*. The constitution's first two lines state that, "We believe in God's Word, the Old and New Testaments, inspired by God through the Holy Spirit, without error. It is the greatest authority in all matters of teaching and conduct."² These statements reveal that the AEC treats the Bible as a holy, inerrant and authoritative book. In short, it means that typical AEC men are unlikely to find fault with any biblical content. In the matter of interrogating a patriarchal marriage metaphor (Hosea 1-3), the researcher would expect mostly a defence rather than a confrontation of that text.

Concerning God, the constitution reveals that the Church believes in a male God. Under the section "We believe in God," all the sentences begin with "He." That is, "He is the Creator...He has all knowledge and power...He is holy." Even the Holy Spirit is

²Africa Evangelical Church in Botswana, 2001:1.

not neuter, for the constitution says that “the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to believers as He wills.” This comes after the affirmation by the constitution that the Holy Spirit is not a force but is a person. Thus, all members of the Trinity are masculine. This constructs an AEC man as gender-exclusive whereby he could not accept feminine references to God.

Not only is God male, but God “has all power...[and] is the judge of all.” This inevitably constructs an ideal perfect male as one who has absolute power and control over other people. It explains why this God cannot be a woman, for a woman does not normally exercise power or aggression. Herein lies a norm for authority and control, which will most likely be used against “weaker” human beings, especially women.

The AEC constitution excludes the essential leadership of women in the Church. It categorizes its leaders in the following way: the bishop, the vice bishop, the pastor and the elder.³ All these are prescribed as men in the procedures of their elections. The only place where a woman can be elected for formal leadership in the Church is the position of the deaconess. However, the deaconess is the only leader in AEC who cannot attend to the Church’s issues overall. While the deacon can assist and teach all the men and women of the Church, the deaconess can only “teach and train the young women...engage in the regular teaching of God’s Word to other women and children...and provide leadership for women’s organizations in the local Church.” (Ibid.:10,11). A woman in leadership in AEC is allowed to lead and teach only women and children whereas a man can lead both men and women. Concerning ordination, the constitution says that, “Pastors and other full-time male workers may be ordained in the AEC in Botswana.” (Ibid.:20). Thus, leaders of AEC cannot include a woman. It reveals the politics of this masculinity in its gender imbalance and subjugation of women. As of now, there are several theologically trained women in AEC, but despite shortage of leaders in the Church, they have not been

³Africa Evangelical Church in Botswana: 6-9.

assigned Churches. This encourages an AEC man to perceive women as incapable and unworthy of taking the same responsibility as men.

Analysis of Church-Going Batswana Men's Interpretation of Hosea 1-3

This section analyses the interpretations of the Church-going Batswana men from Africa Evangelical Church who participated in the study. The data was collected to discover how these men read and interpret the text of Hosea 1-3 in the light of Botswana's context of gender-based violence, especially passion killings. The analysis will start by presenting the topics discussed during the collection of data, then it will examine the conclusions reached on those topics.

How Batswana Men Address the Masculinity or Patriarchy of God

The question was, "Since Hosea is God and Gomer is sinful Israel, is God only male and never female? Is that not just a question of limited conceptualization by the biblical writers and ourselves?" The question sought to find out if, given the opportunity, the participants would maintain or question the biblical concept of God as exclusively male. This question arises after noting 1:2, which gives the husband the place of the aggrieved God and the wife the place of sinful Israel: "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife...because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord."

The men insisted that God is exclusively male. Four of them held that God is a man and should not be called a woman. "Even if the woman has much strength, such as when Setswana says *Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka fa bogaleng*, the woman is still lower than the man in many ways." The position was that the two are not equal. The italicized sentence means that the woman is a strong defender of her children, even willing to sacrifice her life for them. They explained that the woman is morally lower than the man and society would be morally lax; the woman is short-tempered, impulsive and unable to control her emotions and decisions; and God can only be a man, never a woman. The one who dissented was

the youngest of them all, who held a view of a gender-neutral God. All parties refused to change their stance.

It can therefore be generalized that this group understood God to be masculine. The other four men argued that God made man first and introduced woman only as a helper. They held that the woman is like the man's child in the eyes of God, so God valued the male sex more than the female one. One of the men argued that "as long as a baby cannot manage to beat its father, a woman cannot be equal with a man." This view not only oppresses women but also derides them. It equates them with children in comparison to men and denies them the pleasure of having a God who can be described in their terms. According to such terms, as Hampson notes, the husband is very close to the divine and the wife "far in the opposite direction." (1990:152). Apart from deriding women, these attitudes violate the woman's fullness of humanity. Equating her with the child serves to categorize her as "not yet a full human being".

The men's interpretations betray a patriarchal mindset that categorizes human beings in dualistic opposites. The example that the baby cannot beat its father begs the observation that this way of relating goes hand in hand with violence. The logic is that the baby will not manage to beat its father, but its father can beat it; likewise, a woman cannot beat her male partner, but the male partner can beat the woman. It proves true the argument that violent principles yield violent behaviour. Traditional Setswana society values whipping people on their backs as an ideal method of discipline. This violent attitude is attested by a proverb, *ya basimane ke e nkgwe*, which says that erring boys should be back-whipped. This physical torture was often applied to males, in public, by people of higher authority than them, but in homes it was used to punish wives and children as well.

One of the participants argued that throughout the Bible, multiple names for God are used, but not even one connotes femaleness. He does not view that as an unfortunate fact but finds it something worthy of perpetuation. On the other hand, Johnson notes that the exclusively male descriptions such as "he, king, father, bridegroom,

lord and husband” are idolatrous because they have narrowed God into maleness whereas God is infinite. (1992:34). There should come a time for Christians to recognize this gender-based injustice for what it is rather than to maintain it.

How Batswana Men Address Gender-Based Violence in the Bible

The question under this topic was: “Hosea threatens to strip his wife naked, drag her before her lovers and slay her with thirst. (Hosea 2:3, 10). Recognizing that he threatens violence against his wife, can we conclude that men’s headship encourages them to abuse women, and can we say that the Bible maintains violence against women in the way it presents Hosea’s threat? The purpose of this question was to discover Batswana men’s response to the gender-violent content of Hosea 1-3 and to the challenge that the Bible contributes towards the oppression of women.

Four out of the five men agreed with the violence that is contained in the text because, they held, there was no gender-violent content in Hosea 1-3. If people used the text to oppress women, they insisted, it would be a misunderstanding of the text. This view is the same as that of adult urban men. These men agreed with one of them that, according to God’s plan, “the man is older than the woman, and the woman should recognize the man’s position.” Yet they argued that man and woman were equal. This view is contradictory to the preceding one because the man’s eldership, coupled with the woman’s mandate to respect him, rules out the concept of equality. If they were equal, no one would be older than the other, and both would owe each other “recognition.” As all these men know, in Setswana society, an “older” person holds considerable authority over the younger one and has a claim to many rights over him or her. These include the right to command and punish physically, much like one’s parents. If the Bible says that God made men to be *older* than the women, and “God intends man to dominate and woman to submit” (Phiri, 2002:114-119), then seeds of oppression and abuse are already sown and will eventually bear fruit. The men’s views end up perpetuating oppressive and violent culture against women.

The one participant who disagreed with the rest raised the concern that the prophet proposed to use physical force against his wife, which he found to be unfair because men were created stronger than their women counterparts. This participant was the youngest in this group.

Batswana Men's Views on Women's Unfaithfulness

The question under this topic was, "Why does the man usually react more violently than the woman to unfaithfulness? Does it mean that the unfaithfulness of a woman is worse than that of a man? Should a man respond with physical punishment? What punishment would befit a woman's promiscuity?" This question notes the threats mentioned in the previous question and more in other verses such as "I will block her path with thorn bushes, I will ruin her vines and her fig trees [and] I will punish her." (Hosea 2:6, 2:12 and 2:13). It was meant to discover if the men would condemn a woman's unfaithfulness more than they would a man's. That arose from the fact that Setswana culture often tolerates the man's unfaithfulness and condemns the woman's. The question sought also to discover if the man would react to a woman's cheating with violence. Because of the broadness of this topic, its discussion was long, so its analysis is longer than the rest.

These adult men showed a bias towards men in the first instance, when they said that the greatest of all relationship problems to a man is his woman's sexual unfaithfulness. All these men agreed that the impact of unfaithfulness was greater on the man than on the woman. One of them rationalized biblically, "The woman was created to be loved by the man whereas the man was created to be respected; that is why the impact of a partner's cheating is greater on the man than on the woman. Oneness is created out of sex between people who are not married, which makes it difficult for the man to break the bond." The man explained that this resulted in physical assault and passion killings. Still another man explained that Batswana men say they have invested too much financially in the relationship, so they cannot tolerate cheating or parting. This

gender-injustice is borne from their cultural context, which allows them to sympathize with a cheated man more than with a cheated woman. Setswana proverbs that exalt that status quo abound, such as, *monna thotse o a nama, monna selepe o rema gongwe le gongwe, monna phafana o a amoganwa*, and many others. These proverbs simply describe a man as a person who sometimes has extramarital sex with women.

One can identify in these men's responses biblical and cultural explanations for why the man feels greater pain from a woman's cheating. Biblically, the men hold that the women were created for men. The injustice here is that the man is not created for the woman in return, so that the man can own (and control) the woman but the woman cannot own the man. The cultural context has a strong element of this, too; judging from the above proverbs, a married man or a boyfriend can have secret sexual relationships with other women—this is acceptable and expected—but the same behaviour is totally unexpected from a girlfriend or wife. Furthermore, a Setswana social construct explains why men would want to “pay” themselves by assaulting an unfaithful woman or one who terminates the relationship—boys are groomed to be material providers to females while girls are trained to place themselves under the material care of a male. (Maluleke and Nadar, 2002, 114:14-15). Therefore, even in relationships that are unlikely to be permanent, the man invests much materially and the woman consumes. This scenario renders the woman vulnerable to control and oppression by the man. The man can grant himself license to cheat on the woman because he provides her with what she wants, and the woman cannot do the same because she is seemingly the only beneficiary in the relationship. Nevertheless, the men all came to the conclusion that before God the woman's and the man's unfaithfulness are equally wrong and should be condemned with equal earnest.

The men, except one, gave a response that perpetuates gender injustice in the question of whether the woman's promiscuity is worse than the man's. They agreed that the woman was created to be a helper rather than a troublemaker for the man, so she should be

more wary than the man. That interpretation reveals a double standard in Batswana men, who forbid extramarital sex for their women while they subscribe to it themselves. (Schapera, 1992:280). They also agreed that when in the Bible Sarah gave Abraham her maidservant Hagar to have sex with, this meant that extramarital sex for the man was tolerated. They strongly felt that it would be wrong for Abraham to lend Sarah another man to have sex with. However, it is worth mentioning that Abraham did give Sarah over to another man, Pharaoh, to have as his wife. The men remembered Hagar's example and treated it as a biblical principle, but they forgot Pharaoh's—probably, they would feel uncomfortable if it was right biblically for a man to lend his wife to another man to have sex with.

The group used the Bible selectively to justify a principle that gives a man extra rights and oppresses women—is it possible, therefore, for that group to read the Bible selectively for the impartial affirmation of all life? That is possible, but it is better that all passages are read and a life-affirming one be emphasized for the present context while an oppressive one be exposed for its oppression. The one dissenting voice was that the man's unfaithfulness is seen as acceptable, “only because we are seeing it through the eyes of our culture.” That statement is true because the Setswana culture is gender oppressive and Batswana men view the world through the eyes of such a culture. Thus, principles that promote gender injustice appear natural and right, be they in the Bible or in Setswana culture itself.

As for whether the woman should be beaten for promiscuity or not, the men's response was life-affirming to women. These men held that the best way for a Christian to tackle the problem was through counselling and perseverance. However, they revealed that if they were not Christians, they would probably beat the woman severely because “the pain would be unbearable.” This response reflects the seriousness with which the men regarded the sexual unfaithfulness of a woman. For the last part of the topic, the men actually failed to equate Gomer's unfaithfulness with any satisfactory punishment because they felt that her wrong was immeasurable. They

agreed with the first one, who said that the person “will never forget the hurt and will be haunted by pictures of such an act all his life, therefore, cheating on someone is worse than killing that person.” The view that sexual unfaithfulness is immeasurably bad is the root of all violence and passion killings. Moreover, the argument that the man will never forget is often taken as a valid explanation for why he went as far as killing. These notions have their origins in the belief that the man is hurt by unfaithfulness more than the woman. The bottom line, however, is that these beliefs are constructed by the society and have such unfortunate consequences.

Batswana Men's Reading Strategies that Confront Gender-Based Violence

The question under this topic was, “How can Hosea 1-3 be read in a way that combats gender-based violence? What do you think should be done with biblical texts that contain gender-based violence?” The question sought the men's suggestions of how a gender-violent text such as that of Hosea could be approached for the empowerment of both genders.

The men partly confronted gender-based violence in the book of Hosea and partly maintained it. Their responses to the question of what to do with Hosea 1-3 were divided roughly in half, with two saying that it should be challenged and three saying that it should be left as it is. The latter believed that “we should know the extent of our sin and to what extent of God's punishment of us could go.” Unfortunately, this demonstration of spiritual truth took a form that oppresses the woman and elevates the man in a long-standing biblical and cultural trend, which should change. The example of physical assault and sexual humiliation is not of a man but of a woman, which most likely explains why the man has no problem with it. Needless to say, the average man has not been sufficiently physically and sexually abused by a loved one for him to be hurt by the Hosea 1-3 example. As Renita Weems advises, the man should begin to imagine himself in the position of the woman for him to fully

understand. (1995:111-113). Only then can the man take a stand against the abuse of women.

Conclusion

The study explored Batswana men's masculinities in the context of the outbreak of passion killings in Botswana. It did so by analysing Africa Evangelical Church men's interpretation of Hosea 1-3 in view of the outbreak of passion killings in Botswana. It covered the topics of Botswana's context of patriarchal socialization, gender inequality and violence in sexual relationships; the patriarchal marriage of Hosea and Gomer; and the masculine God and an andocentric evangelical background. These are some of the components that make up Africa Evangelical Church men's masculinities. The study holds that the investigation into Africa Evangelical Church men's masculinities sheds light on the mentality behind the outbreak of violence and passion killings in Botswana.

CHAPTER TEN

Fathering Alternative Masculinities: The Joseph Model

“Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”
(Luke 2:48)

Munorwei Chirovamavi

Introduction

Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus, yet the Bible and Mary the mother of Jesus call him “father.” Before Jesus assumed his prophetic mantle, Luke 2:41–52 gives an account of the loss of the child at a festival and the resulting wrench in his parents’ hearts; the frantic search, culminating in the distancing speech by the adolescent and the parents’ incomprehension of a mandate obvious to Jesus. (Johnson, 1991:60). The narration of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus, highlighting the combined anguish and confusion of Joseph and Mary, provides some key aspects about the identity and responsibilities of Joseph that are critical in facing today’s challenge of HIV or AIDS. Matthew 1:18–25 records that Joseph and Mary are “engaged” but not yet living together. In ancient Palestine, when a woman was engaged, she was bound to a man through formal words of consent. Betrothal

would often occur when the woman was quite young, twelve or thirteen years old. The society, however, already viewed the engaged as the man's wife, waiting for the second stage of moving out of her family home. (Long, 1997:12-14). Joseph is presented as a righteous man faced with a profound ethical dilemma when confronted with the reality of his fiancée's pregnancy. His role as a protector who worries about the missing boy is an elaborate representation of what responsible manhood should be like. The world today faces atrocious cases of the abuse of both boys and girls and presents men with the challenge of partnering with women in ensuring that the security, health and welfare of children is upheld.

Setting the Context: Fatherhood and Masculinities in Shona Culture

In many cultures there is a crisis regarding masculinity, what it means to be a man and a father. The importance of one's paternity is such that some grown up children participate in phone-in programmes on radio in an attempt to locate the whereabouts of their biological fathers. One such in Zimbabwe is the famous radio programme *Ndinotsvagawo baba vangu*, literally meaning, "I am searching for my father." The search for one's true paternity usually emerges from the occasional preferential treatment that foster parents accord their own biological children, making the others feel neglected. There are several Shona wisdom sayings that warn about the challenges of entering into a relationship with a partner who already has children of their own. One that aptly captures this kind of commitment goes, *Kana wada gwenzi unozvuva nemashazhu aro*, literally meaning, "when you take a branch from a tree you must pull it together with its smaller branches and leaves." This is a caution not only to avoid being too excited about the romantic side of marrying a partner who has children from another union but to be prepared also to commit oneself to care equally for the children involved, since they come as a package with their parent. Most children confess that they were shocked, embarrassed or taken aback when they later discovered that the one they thought was

their biological father was in actual fact not he. In other cases, some confess that they had always questioned or suspected that their foster parents were not their biological parents, due to the abusive treatment they had endured at their hands. In one of his sermons, the General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, Rev Paul Msiza, highlighted that it was very comforting for one child who knew not his biological father to learn that Jesus did not have a totem.¹

It is interesting to observe that men usually feature in the public spheres of politics, sport or academic endeavours, but when it comes to the statistics of HIV and AIDS, it is usually adults, women, children and the orphaned who are concerned. Men are captured under the bracket of “adults,” which does not project a clear picture of how men are succumbing or participating in programmes aimed at subverting the negative effects of the epidemic. Admittedly, women automatically get tested for HIV at prenatal clinics, and that makes it easier for hospitals and other service organizations to collate data on women. Women have also been noted to be more open about their health conditions than men, who are in most cases very secretive. Women’s openness makes it easier for them to access support groups, which give them the emotional support they need. Consequently, there are more interventions that target women than men and we can equally say that women make themselves more available to the doctor than men. Men tend to be secretive about their status and in cases where they contract sexually transmitted

¹I owe this idea to Rev. Paul Msiza in one of our conversations at the All Africa Baptist Conference held at Rest Haven in Harare on Poverty, HIV and AIDS from 30 January to 2 February 2008. The issue of totems is fundamental to one’s sense of belonging in Shona culture because, not knowing one’s totem implies that one does not know one’s origins. Being a patriarchal society, children inherit their fathers’ totems and the worst insult that a person can hurl at another is to remind them that they do not have a totem, especially if it’s a male person. It is tantamount to telling someone that they are an “illegitimate” member of the family, a misfit in society.

infections, most would prefer to be treated privately, without the knowledge of their partners. What makes the focus on men topical is that some men use condoms with commercial sex workers but not with their wives, and this is a practice that exposes their wives to HIV and AIDS. Women are more susceptible to infection because of their biological make up, and in some marital relationships, partners tend to “blindly” trust each other, and the levels of risk are equally high for such trusting and unsuspecting partners.

In some African contexts, men are brought up to be treated as chiefs, to be pampered, to rule and to command respect over women and children. (Maluleke, 2003). Masculinity is equated with physical and emotional power and associated with authority in decision-making in the areas of politics, the home and in the Church. Negative manifestations of masculinity have manifested in sexual harassment, child abuse, domestic violence and rape. This chapter concurs with Maluleke, (2003:186), who contends that HIV and AIDS thrive on violence and distorted notions of masculinity. Just as the focus on women has filled an important lacuna in combating HIV or AIDS, it has also made visible the corresponding gap in knowledge about men. Women globally and indeed in Africa constitute one of the systematically disadvantaged groups lacking power and access to healthcare resources. The dominant discourses on HIV as a gender-biased epidemic have focused on the steps that can be taken to provide equitably for the needs of women. (Sherr, L. Hankins, C & Bennet, L 1996). Gender as a category has been equated with women such that gender studies are mostly assumed to focus on women’s problems. (Kolawole, 2004:251). Such a focus has partially eclipsed the role that men should play as equal partners in turning the tide of the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Zimbabwean masculinities are configured by “the strong healthy man,” who is associated with the acquisition of resources; what is

²Muchemwa & Muponde, 1997: xxii. Writing their respective articles in the same context, Gift Masengwe, Tabona Shoko and Jairus Hlatywayo in this volume also make reference to this phenomenon.

popularly known as the three Cs (cars, cash and cell phones), as well as what are commonly known as “small houses”² (extra marital affairs/relations). Traditionally, gender discussions in Zimbabwe inhabited essentialist spaces from which emerge descriptions and distinctions that stress ideologically inflected binaries, polarities and exclusions. Discussions on gender usually imply an adversarial existence of unprivileged genders and a definition through negatives of the privileged one. (Muchemwa and Muponde 2007). Consequently, socially constructed masculinities, in respect to manhood and fatherhood, have failed to capacitate men whose interests they purport to safeguard.

Masculinity has been defined as a set of behaviours that most men are expected to conform to. It has been historically conceived as a form of status that includes toughness, aggressiveness, stoicism and sexuality. (Gilmore, 1990). Masculinity is therefore not a natural attribute but it is a social construction whose variations are loaded with racial, class, age, religious and geographical delimitations. (Morrell, 2001). In most societies, the cultural construction of masculinity is to discriminate against and subordinate women or other men, especially those who do not conform to a certain kind of behaviour. Notions of masculinity are inculcated from generation to generation through life-cycle rituals where certain prescribed ways of behaving or acting are socially constructed. Institutional systems are put in place to ensure compliance with such behaviour, so that those who deviate from the system are seen to be behaving like women and therefore ostracized. The socialization can be so hegemonic that even some women would envy certain male behaviour; for example, during the liberation war in Zimbabwe, masculine virility was celebrated as a source of community leadership and power. (Christiansen, 1997:90).

Recent scholarship has observed that masculinities are a set of ideas that can oppress, repress or liberate, depending on the historical and political imperatives that shape them. Conceptions of masculinity are not a preserve of men alone, since women can also use them either to liberate or to oppress. (Muchemwa and Muponde,

2007: xvi). To reach to the resources of assertiveness and self-empowerment, women often claim to be like men and, for women to do bad things to men, they can also appeal to mannish sensibilities. For instance, when a woman sets out on an aggressive path, she can be heard boasting, *Vachandiona kuti ndiri murume pachangu*, literally meaning, “They will see me for I am also a man.”³ The pervasiveness of multiple sightings of masculinities in both men and women are therefore sites of ideological contestation, which can have both positive and negative implications, depending on how the society uses them. (Muchemwa & Muponde, 2007). Chitando and Madongonda’s 2007 work challenges men to develop alternative masculinities work towards society’s best advantage, where responsible fathers would seek to use their power positively rather than to violate their own children, particularly the daughters. Associating fatherhood with hyper-masculinity that borders on violence, domination and arrogance has no moral and social legitimacy in the face of HIV and AIDS. In pursuit of this ideal, this chapter utilizes the biblical figure of Joseph as an example of progressive masculinity.

Joseph: An Example of Positive Masculinity

In the gospel accounts, Mary is found to be pregnant and Joseph knows that he is not the father of the child. Under normal circumstances, this would imply that she had been unfaithful to him and the Mosaic righteousness laws demanded that he should follow the provisions of the law to the letter. Deuteronomy 22:13–30 prescribed that the woman be cast aside and perhaps even be put to death. Long (1997) observes that Joseph is however a compassionate man, so he intends to dismiss Mary quietly, but he is also a righteous man and he will not swerve from the law. The righteous Joseph will dismiss Mary but just at that point, an angel

³Since patriarchy is a social construction, some women envy the dominant views it engenders and end up emulating them to assert their own authority either against fellow women or the opposite sex.

appears to Joseph in a dream and reveals to him that what appears to be a moral outrage is in fact a holy disruption. In the opening words of the angel, Joseph's identity as a descendant of the royal line of David is underscored. Joseph is to become the "adoptive father" of Jesus, thereby bridging the break in the genealogical chain. Joseph is told not to be afraid to keep Mary, or to violate the Mosaic law in this instance. Indeed, in light of this development, Joseph is given a new commandment, a new and higher law, and urged to a new righteousness. In other words, the angel tells Joseph to shatter the confines of the old law in order to keep the new law. Joseph chooses a new righteousness and walks with God in the new path of obedience. (Ibid.:13). Just as Joseph's dilemma mirrored the predicament of Matthew's readers, who were pulled in different directions by their Jewish roots and their Christian experiences, the world is faced with a similar predicament in response to HIV or AIDS. How shall humanity be righteous? In the old way or in the new? Matthew 5: 20 gives a clear warning, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

By taking Mary as his wife and jointly raising Jesus with her, Joseph stands as the prototype of righteousness and faithful discipleship. In Long's words, (Ibid.:20), Joseph learns that,

Being truly righteous does not mean looking up a rule in the book and doing the "right thing"; it means wrestling with the complexities of a problem, listening to the voice of God and then looking for God's thing. To be a faithful disciple means prayerfully seeking to discover what God is doing in the difficult situations we face. How is God at work here to show mercy and saving power? Being righteous is never simply being pure and good in the abstract; genuine righteousness is always joining with God to do God's work in the world.

Joseph is presented as one who will not cover up his inner hurt, but he responds to the crisis both justly and charitably. He resolves to break the solemn engagement rather than live a lie. However, for

Mary's sake, the engagement is to be broken "privately." Most men would rather live a lie, attributing their sickness to something else other than HIV or AIDS. However most women, due to their frequent visits to antenatal clinics, are tested for HIV and get to access information and assistance on how to manage their health accordingly. On the other hand, most men will hide behind the finger and claim that they have been bewitched. Such an attitude has negative consequences on themselves and those who are supposed to be under their care. This is often done as a way to avoid responsibility because, by ascribing the situation to a realm of "irrational" beliefs, one becomes the innocent victim while others necessarily become the wrong-doers. Chabal and Daloz (1999) rightly note that the "re-traditionalization" of African society, which is often associated with the growing significance of belief in witchcraft, inhibits the modernization process. Children are literally thrown out onto the streets by the fathers they have known all their lives, on account of the mystification of HIV or AIDS. Genuine manhood and indeed fatherhood provides a safe environment for the young to enjoy life in a world full of hardships.

In Matthew 2:13–15, Joseph was once again warned by God in a dream, and fled with Mary and the boy Jesus from the murderous Herod to the safety of Egypt. Joseph demonstrates that he is an example of "higher righteousness." Joseph is alert to the presence of God in the moment and he is ready to obey "God's unpredictable Spirit." (Long, 1997:20). The complexities and challenges of HIV or AIDS require men to be attentive to the needs of the moment and literally leave behind the comfort of familiar surroundings as they enter into the strange lands of their own Egypt.

Joseph's manly qualities should permeate discourses on masculinity in the face of the HIV epidemic. Joseph was also a carpenter, a skilled craftsman and he taught Jesus his trade. Real men do not simply provide, nurture and care, but ensure that others are equipped with the skills and training within their reach and influence. Carpentry is a creative art and it is that trade that shaped Jesus' creativity and work ethic. Although at times Jesus got very

tired, he would still be able to serve other people's needs. The crowds would throng him but he would not turn them away. Joseph raised his son in the Jewish traditions and spiritual observances. No wonder that the boy Jesus continued to grow in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and human beings. (Luke 2:52). Humanly speaking, Jesus grew intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually because his parents jointly provided the requisite environment for such growth to take place. Real men transcend humiliation and rise above circumstances to get tested for HIV, instead of perpetually blaming women or witchcraft for a condition that is now supposed to be accepted like any other chronic condition. Having HIV simply means that "somewhere, somehow, sometime one was exposed to the virus." (Tswana, 2008). Asking someone how they got it might lead to the not-so-obvious answer, "I do not know because sometimes it takes about seven to ten years for one to realize their status." (Ibid). Men need to redirect their prowess and their masculinity to facing and tackling the real societal challenges emerging from the HIV and AIDS epidemic, instead of directing their physical and spiritual capacities towards tormenting innocent and vulnerable people. In the context of HIV and AIDS, there is need for a man who can be entrusted with the responsibility of raising vulnerable people who are left devastated by HIV and AIDS under extreme circumstances of poverty.

Joseph was a man of strong conviction who lived out his beliefs in his actions. He was with Mary when Jesus was born. Paradoxically, some contemporary men simply send their wives and partners alone to the hospital for labour, and abandon them thereafter so the mothers raise children single-handedly. Such men will only start claiming paternity of the child when the child is grown up and, particularly, showing exceptional qualities such as intelligence or success, or in some instances when the daughter is about to get

married so that they may receive and enjoy *roora*.⁴ Joseph's motive is not only one of protecting Mary from rejection and discrimination by society, but he is also conscious of the fact that for Mary to take care of the child on her own would be a mammoth task. Joseph never left Mary's side in the raising of their children. (Dibeela, 2003:57).

God honoured Joseph's integrity by entrusting him with a great responsibility. It is not easy to entrust your children to someone else. There are situations where men have been entrusted with the responsibility of guardianship over their wives' younger sisters or nieces and unfortunately, some took this as an opportunity to sexually molest these young and vulnerable women, abusing the *chiramu*⁵ custom. In other instances, a widow is forced to undergo dehumanizing inheritance rituals, which sometimes entail performing ritual sexual intercourse with another man, even without her consent.⁶

Joseph was not only obedient in entering into a marriage with Mary, but went on to take the initiative to register Mary and the

⁴Roora (bride-price or dowry) is a Shona custom where a groom pays something to his fiancée's family in order to formalize his intentions to marry the bride. It is a gift offered to prospective in-laws by suitors hoping to win a young woman's hand and the blessing of the ancestors. It is meant to be a token of appreciation, a modest gift that unites the two families - loosely akin to an engagement ring. The payment made to the bride's family is meant to signify gratitude towards the bride's family for raising her and a smaller portion of it is to help the bride set up house. It is a process that not only brings the bride and groom together, it also brings the two families together. The process includes negotiations between the two families where they talk about the number of cattle (which represent money) and this payment is now increasingly being paid out in cash or both in cash and in kind.

⁵Chiramu is a traditional practice that involves a married man playing or joking with his wife's young sisters or the wife's nieces. It is not just about them having sex but has to do with the kind of jocular relationship that unfortunately ends up being abused by other men.

⁶Gift Masengwe in this volume discusses this tradition at length.

unborn child. (Luke 2:1-5). The modern man should take a cue from Joseph and make an effort to assist abandoned or orphaned children to be registered. The issue of orphans who do not have the requisite registration particulars such as birth certificates and national identity documents, due to irresponsible guardians, is a cause of concern. Understandably, these are critical documents for travelling from one place to another and to facilitate educational and professional exploits for upward social mobility in life.⁷ People are placed under our parentage and care by an omniscient God and we are to live up to God's expectations by giving them deepest attention and care. God's love in the context of HIV and AIDS has to be demonstrated amidst disappointments and failures, unexpected turn of events, the frustrating delays of life, unwanted demands on our time and the strange behaviour of some people.

Joseph typifies positive manhood in his relationship with other men, women and children. Mary's remark is worthy noting; "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." Both parents, both sexes—"your father and I"—took responsibility in physically searching for the missing son. In the present context, the loss of humanity due to HIV and AIDS calls for equal and complementary efforts in an environment where men have taken the back seat for too long a time.

Male virility and physical wellness is constantly being undermined by disease, death, the absence of community, moral and economic uncertainties (Attree, 2007) that bid us to listen to the triumphal cry of male and female solidarity amidst the threat of losing a dear son. "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." There is no doubt that the male figure and the whole of humanity is retreating from its various sites of visibility and authority to the current economic meltdown and migrancy of unprecedented proportions dispersing and reconfiguring manhood, fatherhoods and

⁷In Zimbabwe, it is very difficult for children to access education and other essential services such as social welfare without the necessary documents such as birth certificates and national identity documents.

masculinities. (Muchemwa and Muponde, 2007). Depression faced by local masculinities call for collaboration between men and women in combating HIV and AIDS and releasing the life-giving potential both at home and abroad. Women are challenged to take men's roles and men are reciprocating in a world where people have been reduced to migrant labourers due to necessity. In a sense, men need to father their own "living stories" (children), because disease and grinding poverty are reshaping socially constructed notions of manhood. (Ibid.: xviii).

Joseph demonstrates that fatherhood is not only a biological process but it is a social, moral and ethical commitment. Simply taking part in fathering a child, the very act of procreation that brings us to the universe does not suffice to make one a "real" father. Conceptions of masculinity based on the construction of an athletic, strong and healthy masculine body are greatly challenged in Zimbabwe and indeed in southern Africa, due to disease, decay and hunger in the age of HIV and AIDS. The challenge is to deconstruct images or representations of the male body, which is often used as an instrument of domination, or seen as only useful for reproductive purposes. It is time to channel the internal and external resources of manhood for more progressive ends such as caring and nurturing.

The Zimbabwean Scenario: National Responses to the HIV Epidemic

In 1999, Zimbabwe declared HIV and AIDS a national disaster and introduced a 3 percent levy on income tax to finance the launch of a National AIDS Trust fund and other responses to HIV and AIDS. The government began providing free antiretroviral therapy to patients at state-run hospitals, with the goal of getting tens of thousands of people on therapy. The epidemic has reversed most of the gains most developing countries achieved socially and economically, by claiming beloved sons and daughters in their prime.

HIV and AIDS does not affect all groups and communities equally because its impact is mediated by structural inequalities constructed in societies worldwide. The age difference between

men and women at their first and in subsequent sexual experiences is particularly high in Zimbabwe. The majority of young women have sexual experiences with partners who are five or more years older and this exposes them to a group of men with high HIV prevalence. This has been observed as a major contributory factor to the relatively high HIV prevalence in young women. (Chirongoma, 2005). However, the National Aids Council in Zimbabwe has noted that changing the age difference in partnerships across the entire population would most likely only lead to a moderate decrease in HIV and AIDS incidence. If young women would start having only partners of their age, the already higher prevalence in young women would increase new infections among young men. As a result, the increasing HIV and AIDS prevalence in young men would make sexual relations more risky for the entire population. It is a vicious circle that can be turned into a virtuous circle through being faithful in getting tested for HIV and AIDS before being intimate. Information educational campaigns need to address the masculine perceptions on age mixing, especially on young women. Men for their part need to be faithful and take responsibility of their own masculinity in a positive manner. (Zimbabwe NAC, 2006).

Polygamy is one other practice associated with the prevailing masculinities in Zimbabwe that makes both men and women vulnerable to HIV infection. In 1999 it was estimated that about 15 percent of married women were reported to be in a polygamous union. While this is a small percentage, it has a huge and devastating effect –the ripple effect could wipe out the entire generation. Other retrogressive practices include widow inheritance, girl pledging and forced marriages, intra-vaginal practices (“dry sex”), abuse of the practice of *chiramu* (a husband having sex with the wives’ younger sister or niece), and post-menopausal abstinence for women, during which the husband may have sex with other women. The largely urban “small house” syndrome and the culture of polygamy also provide fertile ground for multiple partnering, which is one major driver of the epidemic in Zimbabwe. These are some of the practices that certainly need to be revisited in view of the current crisis.

In Zimbabwe, faith-based organizations like the Zimbabwe Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (ZINERELA)⁸ are taking their part in stemming the tide of the epidemic. Currently ZINERELA has about 181 members, but of that number, Rev Maxwell Kapachawo is the only one who has publicly declared his HIV status. Padare/Enkundleni/Men's Forum on Gender⁹ is committed to promoting gender equity in Zimbabwe. It also advocates for positive masculinities. The organization has developed programmes that target behavioural change in men and boys in the area of gender relations. In recent years, Padare has examined the underlying male stereotypes that have led to the spread of HIV and AIDS and asserts that the best way to curtail transmission is through behavioural and attitudinal change in men. It conducts workshops with men to address how men's behaviour precipitates the spread of HIV and how men can become involved in prevention and care. Padare should act as a marketplace for ideas that attempt to include everyone in a spirit of consensus through open dialogue and mutual respect. Africare is

⁸Zinerela (Zimbabwe Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Affected by AIDS) is a sub-branch of ANERELA+ (the African Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV & AIDS). The network has been involved in the training on positive living, how to deliver HIV-sensitive sermons, and to ensure the Church is a sanctuary for the sick and a place of hope for the hopeless. The network also acts as a support group for sharing and strengthening each other.

⁹Padare/Enkundleni/Men's Forum on Gender is an anti-sexist men's organization founded in 1995. The organization takes its name from a Zimbabwean tradition where men gather together in order to discuss community issues and make decisions about the community while excluding women and children from the process. The goal of Padare/Enkundleni is to subvert this exclusively male tradition and to bring men together to discuss cultural and social issues related to gender justice and equality. Their activities include advocacy on children/youth, counselling, food security, gender, health, HIV and AIDS among others. <http://africaprise.org/01/padareweb/index.html>

yet another organization which focuses on involving men in Home Based Care Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS in rural Zimbabwe.¹⁰ The organization adopted the motto, “Man Enough to Care” and acknowledges that men, due to traditional social norms, have played a less direct role in the care of the chronically ill. This has seen women undertaking triple duty, “being responsible for the home, providing the lion’s share of agricultural labour, and caring for members living with HIV or AIDS.”¹¹

The Church in Africa has “remained a bastion of patriarchy and male privilege.” (Chitando, 2007a:26). In spite of the notable absence of men in the membership registers of African Churches in comparison to women, men provide the bulk of the Church leadership. (Chitando, 2007b:41). The existing men’s groups tend to be centres where patriarchy is further perfected and finds systemic and systematic justification. The same men, in most cases, pass decisions about sex and sexuality, often work away from home for long periods of time, and are more likely to engage in high-risk or risky behaviour, putting their wives and families at risk of HIV infection. Social norms and economic forces that encourage—or at least fail to discourage—multiple sexual partners, unprotected sexual intercourse and high mobility related to the search for work in urban and peri-urban areas make men a central vector for HIV transmission. Thus as much as Church and society emphasizes female empowerment, there is need to reconsider the aspect of male empowerment; that is, the development of skills that are not typically associated with men and not highly valued as male attributes. The Church is uniquely positioned

¹⁰Africare is a non governmental organization that works to improve the quality of life in Africa, delivering programmes in agriculture, water resources development, natural resources management, health care, emergency relief, private sector development and governance. It has sought to integrate HIV/AIDS programmes in all Africare Zimbabwe projects and to improve human resources management as part of its main objectives. <http://www.africare.org>

¹¹<http://www.africare.org>

to create new norms with regard to HIV or AIDS since about 75 percent of Zimbabweans subscribe to its teachings. Men need to be empowered to increase their God-given ability to care for people living with HIV or AIDS and to protect their families. Thus traditionally non-male identified duties like feeding, cleaning or exercising a sick person and educating other men about HIV should be transformed into acceptable and desirable male responsibilities.

Since many men are already breadwinners and community leaders, they are already rightly placed to play their part. Chitando (2007b:41) has rightly noted that because of secularization, many educated men in African cities do not feel compelled to attend Church regularly and the struggle for life, especially in the city, seems to leave most men with little time for spiritual realities. Chitando (2007b) further notes that since most men in Africa are used to wielding power, they cannot cope with the idea of being placed under the authority of male leadership. The constant power struggles between the clergy and the men's lay groups is evidence of the aforementioned negotiations and resistances that are rampant in Church. This indeed calls for a redefinition of male power in the face of HIV or AIDS.

The spread of HIV or AIDS is further compounded by the stigmatization that people have come to associate with the epidemic. As was the case in Jewish religion and culture, many believe that diseases, in this case HIV- or AIDS-related ailments, is punishment for sins committed by the affected person or their family. Jesus' answer to those who came asking him "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" is most liberating. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," was his poignant response. People suffer from HIV- or AIDS-related ailments, poverty and other disabilities not because they have sinned. Those who do not suffer such conditions are not morally better than their counterparts. Suffering is a mystery that cannot be explained away by using our prejudice against the sufferer. (Moyo, 2003:129). Rev Kapachawo (2008) clearly states that there is no need for people to hide something that is already in their blood system, which they can not erase. Openness about one's status in Churches might lead to delays in taking the expensive antiretroviral

therapy, because it fosters a healthy frame of mind. Knowing that one is accepted by the community in spite of one's HIV status is very therapeutic. For the ordinary people who are prone to or sometimes suffer from rejection, the knowledge that there is someone who accepts me as I am, especially the pastor and any significant others such as family members and friends, is enough to prevent premature death, or at least curtail the rapid degeneration of one's health. Chitando succinctly sums it up,

African Churches need *friendly feet* to journey with individuals and communities living with HIV and AIDS, *warm hearts* to demonstrate compassion and *anointed hands* to effect healing. (2007b:1)

A Church with friendly feet does not pose questions about the moral standing of those with whom it is journeying. As it journeys with people and communities living with HIV and AIDS on their journeys of faith, it offers them comfort and care, providing them with the inner peace and spiritual healing effected through their anointed hands. (Chitando 2007a).

Conclusion

The identity and responsibilities of Joseph, as recorded in the gospel narratives, show real men as protectors of the vulnerable. The society therefore needs to produce and nurture and co-partner with women in responding to the challenge of HIV or AIDS. The Churches in Africa have not helped the situation because they have led the way in the moral persecution of people living with HIV or AIDS. Name calling such as "harlot" and "promiscuous" have gained currency in HIV and AIDS discourses. Resultantly, many have suffered and died alone rather than getting into a public disclosure and soliciting help in one way or another. The Church needs to emulate Joseph and forsake preaching retribution for a message of love, forgiveness and compassion. Joseph could have acted severely towards Mary's apparent indiscretion but he chose to offer love and mercy, even when he thought he had been wronged. Joseph's response on their

way back from the temple in Jerusalem is phenomenal; being a good and caring father, he worries about the missing boy. Earning his livelihood as a carpenter, he was willing to abandon his workshop and he went to “anxiously search” for Jesus, one who would be regarded in Shona culture as *Mubvandiripo*,¹² literally “the one who was fathered by someone else.” Joseph sets an example of how contemporary men should not be preoccupied with their careers or occupations to the extent of depriving them of the opportunities to love, to care for and protect the vulnerable, especially their children. In emulating Joseph, the Church in the HIV era should also endeavour to conform to “AIDS-competent Churches”. (Chitando 2007a:2-3). In closing, I quote verbatim at length, to illustrate the need for a theology of *accompaniment* for the Churches in Africa at this *kairos* moment.

The Church in Africa...must express solidarity with people living with HIV. It must engage in *accompaniment*. It must travel with people living with HIV and be sensitive to their rights and needs...A Church “with friendly feet” walks alongside those affected by HIV. It courageously proclaims that it is a Church living with HIV and AIDS. It refuses to throw stones (John 8:1–11) and recognizes that the gospel compels Christians to love without limits...It repents of its negative attitudes, as well as the stigma and discrimination surrounding the disease...It interrogates its theology, its attitude to sexuality and its gender insensitivity. It awakens to the realization that it must become an all-embracing community. (Ibid)

¹²A *mubvandiripo* is usually treated with contempt and not accorded any significant value in the family. Such a child is not entitled to inheriting anything from their foster parents and are usually denied the love, attention and affection enjoyed by the biological children

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Paul and Masculinity: Implications for HIV and AIDS Responses among African Christians

Lovemore Togarasei

Introduction

“Men make a difference” was a 2000 UNAIDS slogan for an HIV and AIDS prevention campaign. This slogan came out of the realization that although men were considered to be at the centre of the spread of the virus, they were not at the centre of responses to the epidemic. In the southern African region, the epicentre of HIV and AIDS, various studies have shown that although men are more responsible for the spread of the virus, they are little involved in programmes for prevention, treatment and care.¹ More often these studies have shown that this is the result of prevailing masculinities. A. Simpson, (2005:569-586), for example, noted in his studies in Zambia that childhood and adolescent lessons

¹Brown, Sorrell and Raffaelli, 2005:585-598. The Zimbabwe Herald of 27 May 2008, for example, reported that the National AIDS Council Harare Metropolitan Province 1st Quarterly report of 2008 had shown that out of 9495 pregnant women seen for the first time during their current pregnancy in the last three months, only 344 husbands (about 3.6 percent) volunteered to be tested with their partners.

in masculinity often militate against men playing a positive role in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Thus as a response to HIV and AIDS, there is a need to thoroughly investigate masculinity issues and, if possible, to challenge those masculinities that tend to fuel the spread of HIV and AIDS.

This article investigates Paul's position on masculinity, underlining how this Pauline understanding can be used to respond to HIV and AIDS issues among African Christians. The article is built on two assumptions. The first assumption is the influence that Paul has in Christian doctrine. Paul remains a key figure even in modern-day Christianity. This is because, with thirteen letters of the 27 books of the New Testament claiming Pauline authorship, Paul's influence on Christian morality cannot be underestimated. The second assumption of this paper is the role Christianity plays in sub-Saharan Africa. In most of the southern African countries, Christianity commands a following of not less than 60 percent of the population.² It is not surprising to find people who never attended Church in the past ten years still identifying themselves as Christians. (Simpson, 2007:173-188). Even those who no longer consider themselves to be Christians have in one way or another been exposed to Christian teaching, many through schools, and their conduct is to a large extent influenced by Christian morality.

The Christian context therefore remains one of the most important forums for addressing social issues. In relation to HIV and AIDS, several studies (e.g. Brown, Sorrell and Raffaelli, 2005) have shown that most people believe that religion is better placed to influence behaviour change in contexts of HIV and AIDS.

The topic of Paul and masculinity can be approached in many different ways. One can look at Paul's understanding of himself as

²Statistical figures on Christian population in Africa are very difficult to ascertain, with many people having more than one religious identity: Christian and African tradition. My estimate here is based on World Council of Churches figures (www.oikumene.org).

a man, (Clines, 2003:181-192), at Paul's masculine language,³ at his attitude towards women (Boyarin, 1993:1-33) or at what masculine ideas and meanings specific Pauline texts convey. Since the ultimate goal of this chapter is to consider the implications of Pauline masculinity on responses to HIV and AIDS among African Christians, I examine the subject using all the four approaches. As I am influenced by modern New Testament scholarship that accepts only seven out of the thirteen Pauline letters as authentically Pauline, I use texts from only these authentic letters. Specifically I discuss Paul's position on masculinity using four themes: marriage, sex in marriage and with prostitutes, and equality between men and women. In each case I discuss what Paul's position was from a reading of specific texts, how African masculinity sees the issue and what implications the Pauline teaching can have for HIV and AIDS responses among African Christians. Having discussed these themes, I end by looking at how Paul as a masculine figure challenged his hegemonic masculinity, showing how his example can be used to construct new masculinities for HIV and AIDS response by Christians in Africa. But before doing all this, there is need to say a few words on the definition and understanding of masculinity that guide this chapter.

Masculinity: A General Overview

Masculinity can be defined as a set of behavioural patterns that men ought to follow in each given society. S. F. Meischer and L. A. Lindsay (2003:4), put it thus, "a cluster of norms, values and behavioural patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others." Although in most societies these patterns tend to be the same, thus giving rise to universal masculinity attributes like toughness, aggressiveness, stoicism and sexuality, (Gilmore, 1990), various studies have shown that masculinity is not a natural attribute but rather a socially constructed and fluid one. (Courtenay, 2000; Morrell, 1998, 2001).

³Conway: internet article.

These studies have shown that there are many masculinities in each given society, but of these, it has been observed that not all the masculinities in a given society are equal. Rather, there is always in each society a hegemonic masculinity, that which dominates not only women but also other masculinities. (Morrell, 2001). This hegemonic masculinity is usually a result of the predominant culture in the given society. It therefore gives power and privilege to those who own the culture, putting pressure on all other masculinities to adopt it in order to be considered “real men.” Hegemonic masculinity, like culture, is, however, not static. It is dynamic as it is affected by the cultural changes in society. Especially in our globalized world, hegemonic masculinity is not only affected by changing local culture but also by the changing global culture. The fact that masculinity is dynamic is good news for gender scholars. (Ibid.:7). It means there is always an opportunity to fight and change masculinities that become irrelevant or even dangerous at any point in human history.

The above understanding of masculinity guides this chapter. As is demonstrated below, even during Paul’s time there were also hegemonic masculinities. We will find out what Paul’s attitude to them was and what implications this might have for African Christians and their hegemonic masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS. I then turn to look at Paul and masculinity under the themes I have mentioned above.

Marriage

Paul’s teaching concerning marriage is found in 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8. In the first text, Paul sees marriage as a solution to sexual immorality. Although he considers celibacy to be the higher state of sexuality, (1 Cor. 7:38), he regarded marriage as a fully honourable condition for a Christian. Those burning with passion for sex, he says, should marry. In the second text, he underlines the sanctity of the institution of marriage. Whereas in 1 Corinthians Paul addresses both men and women, in 1 Thessalonians Paul addresses men informing them that they should marry in honour,

not out of passion like Gentiles.⁴ In both texts, Paul sees marriage as the solution to sexual immorality. It is also clear from the texts that Paul advocates monogamy. There are, however, some scholars who, throughout the history of New Testament interpretation have read 1 Cor.7, arguing that Paul was against marriage and thus using this reading to advocate celibacy. Tertullian, Ambrose and Jerome are some of the earliest interpreters to take such a position. Their interpretation continued to be upheld by scholars like L. H. Marshall, (1946:336), who found in 1 Corinthians 7:2 Paul affirming complete sexual abstinence and more recently by H. Conzelmann, (1975:116), who argued that from the reading of 1 Cor.7 it is clear that Paul only offered marriage as an option in order to avoid sexual immorality. Be that as it may, current New Testament scholarship no longer accepts this reading of Paul's attitude to marriage. G. D. Fee, B. Witherington III and G. J. Laughery (1987:266-356, 1988:40-42) argue that Paul was not against marriage. In fact, his view that marriage is the solution to sexual immorality comes in handy in our context of HIV and AIDS.⁵

Paul's teaching on marriage tallies well with African masculinities. In most African societies, a real man is one who is married. As one young man interviewed in Lira in Uganda put, "To call oneself a man it is simplest after (one is) married with children. No children and you are still a boy." (Baker and Ricardo 2005:5). Among the Shona in Zimbabwe and the Tswana in Botswana, an unmarried man was traditionally not allowed to take part at the traditional court (*dare, kgotla*: Shona and Setswana respectively). He was considered a boy as long as he was not married. This position is still prevalent even in some African Churches. As long as one is not married, he cannot be counted among the elders of the Church.

⁴There are various explanations of what Paul meant by "vessel" in 1 Thess. 4:3 (Yarbrough, 1984:68). Here I follow the Revised Standard Version translation of "*skeuos*" (vessel) to wife. In the context of the whole passage it is likely that Paul was talking about taking a wife.

⁵Internet.

The Pauline teaching on marriage and the traditional African way of defining manhood through marriage can therefore be used by African Christians for HIV and AIDS prevention. Although some studies have shown that marriage contributes significantly to the spread of HIV, since it tends to limit condomization, (Parikh, 2007; Chirau, 2006 and Bruce and Clark, 2004), it remains the second most efficient method of HIV prevention after abstinence, especially when those who are married are not infected and remain faithful to each other. The Church, using the teaching of Paul, should therefore promote marriage, especially in the context of HIV and AIDS. Although many Churches are already promoting marriage, (Togarasei et al, 2008), there are cultural practices such as the payment of bride price, which tend to prohibit marriage. Over and above that, the predominant masculinity of manhood being defined on the basis of wealth also prohibits some men who are burning with passion from marrying, as they seek to accumulate wealth for bride price and for social recognition as “a man.”⁶ As I elaborate below, the Church should help construct a masculinity that promotes marriage and if necessary, even call for the abolition of the practice bride price payment.

Sex

Above, I pointed out that Paul’s preferred sexual state was that of celibacy. He only accepted marriage as a pragmatic concession, that is, in view of people’s inability to abstain. For him then, sex was to be limited to the marriage institution. As correctly observed by J. Neyrey, (1990:120), Paul permitted sex but still subjected it to numerous regulations. Three such can be identified. First comes his rejection of promiscuity. Paul is against the promiscuous crossing of boundaries marked by the ritual of marriage. Although not explicitly

⁶I. Niehaus (2002:77-97) argues that for want of money to pay bride price, some young men in South African mines even engage in homosexuality.

stated, Paul's view of marriage is that of monogamy. One's sexual needs should be satisfied within the marriage; "Each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband." (1 Cor. 7:2). In 1 Cor. 6:16, Paul asked rhetorically, "Do you not know that he who joins himself to the prostitute becomes one body with her?" The Corinthian men, according to this text, were having sex with prostitutes, guided by the slogan, "All things are lawful for me." (1 Cor. 6:12). Probably these Corinthian male Christians projected their masculinity as one in which the penetration of women was a legitimate way of satisfying one's sexual needs.⁷ In response to this form of masculinity, Paul then juxtaposed his own slogan, "But not all things are helpful (and) I will not be enslaved by anything." By this slogan therefore, Paul was telling the Corinthian men that if penetration is a sign of masculinity, exerting self-control is even more so. More than anything else, Paul underlined self-control as a sign of masculinity. In Galatians 5:23, he even listed it as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. 9:25, Paul used the athlete, one of the great ideal figures of masculinity in antiquity, as an example of self-control. (L. Foxhall and J. Salmon, 1998). For him then as M. M. Malin further observes, Paul was implying that, "the sexually active male (involved in extra-marital sex) becomes a passive victim of his passions." In a context where passivity was associated with femininity and being active with masculinity, Paul was making promiscuity a sign of femininity. Secondly, Paul says sexual relations are subject to control; "For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does rule over his own body, but the wife does." (1 Cor. 7:4). Thirdly, Paul does not allow married couples to refuse each other sexual intercourse except if it is for a short time to do a more spiritual thing: prayer. (1 Cor. 7:5-6).

In the African context, sex is so very central to constructions of masculinity that Paul's call for celibacy would be a non-starter.

⁷Marin, internet.

In a focus group discussion in Namibia, J. Brown, J. Sorrell and M. Raffaelli say one man had the following to say about manhood, (2005:591), “There is no secret about it (to) “be a man” means to have sex.” Although society often does not promote this definition of masculinity, particularly among the unmarried, it is a definition that boys share with their peers. In a study on masculinity in Zambia, A. Simpson (2007:177), found out that many men recalled feelings of “being a man” when vaginal penetration and ejaculation were achieved. It is not only having sex that defines manhood, but having sex with many partners. In the same Namibian study that I have already referred to, both men and women agreed that a man, both in traditional and contemporary societies, was one who had more than one sexual partner. One respondent had this to say, “Multiple sexual partners are part of tradition and to have just one suggests poverty, low status and weak manhood.” (Brown, Sorrell and Raffaelli, 2005:590). Among many men in Africa this attitude to sex is very strong. Thus an important element of contemporary masculinity is having girlfriends. One may be legally or customarily married to one wife but, over and above this, will have a girlfriend or many girlfriends. Today such girlfriends are called “small houses” and even some Christian men are into this practice. No doubt, the practice of multiple sexual partners is a major contributor to high HIV prevalence.

In light of the danger posed by the above understanding of manhood, Paul’s teaching on sex can help curb the problem. His limitation of sex to within marriage can indeed help reduce the spread of HIV. His association of promiscuity with femininity can be useful in dissuading many African men, who consider masculinity to be defined by the number of sexual partners they have. Also, his call that those burning with sexual passions should marry can help reduce pre-marital sex, which has become prevalent even within the Church. In light of the escalation of the cost of living and the commercialization

of bride price,⁸ many young men burning with sexual passion now resort to pre-marital sex. A study of young men in Nairobi by R. Spronk (2005:44-73) showed a general tendency by young men to delay marrying until they are in their thirties. Obviously this delay exposes them to many sexual partners and in turn to high risks of contracting HIV. In a number of focus group discussions we had under the University of Botswana, Department of Theology and Religious Studies Ditumelo Project on HIV and AIDS prevention,⁹ several people mentioned the commercialization of bride price as contributing to the prevalent practice of co-habitation in Botswana. Burning with sexual passion but having no money to pay *lobola*, the young men said they are left with no option but to cohabit, exposing themselves and their partners to the risk of contracting HIV. Basing their position on the teaching of Paul, that marriage is the solution to sexual immorality, it is my opinion that the Church must speak against commercialization of bride price or even call for the abolition of this practice, as I argue below. Be that as it may, the Church should advocate for measures that encourage marriage so that sexual intercourse is limited to the married.

Gender Equity

More than any other New Testament writer, Paul presupposed and approved an equivalence of role and a mutuality of relationship between the sexes. (Meeks 1974:199-200). This comes out clear in his understanding of the baptismal formula, his teaching on marriage and sex, his teaching on divorce and his teaching on

⁸By commercialization of bride price I mean the high charges made by parents for *lobola* for their daughters. Traditionally, just a token of appreciation in the form of a hoe and later some herds of cattle, today some parents ask for lots of money, several herds of cattle and costly gadgets like cellular phones or even cars, making marriage too expensive for most young men.

⁹2006-2008. This project sought to establish the responses of faith-based organizations in Botswana to HIV.

charismatic leadership of the Church. (Galatians 3:26-28, 1 Cor. 7:2-3, 1 Cor. 7:10 and 1 Cor 11:2-16). Of course these texts have been read differently by others who have found no pointer to gender equity,¹⁰ but the argument of this chapter is that despite these dissenting readings, it remains clear that Paul downplayed gender differences more than any other New Testament writer. In fact D. Boyarin (1993:15) is right when he says the following about the Pauline attitude to gender in his letters, “It is clear that Paul explicitly thematizes two forms of conceptualizing gender, one in which there is explicit hierarchy and one in which there is none.”

The texts cited here are some of those in which Paul shows no gender hierarchy. In Galatians 3:26–28, Paul shows that overcoming the hierarchical dichotomy of male and female, is an essential element of the baptismal oneness in Christ. In her reading of this text, B. Kahl argues that the gender-related part of the baptismal formula is not merely a side-quotations in Paul’s overall Galatian argument about the unity of Jews and Gentiles. (2000:37-49). She says it is rather the re-conceptualization of masculinity and femininity. The same is true concerning Paul’s teaching on marriage and sex. As we have seen in the last two sections of this chapter, Paul equates men and women when it comes to marriage and sex. He maintains the same attitude when he forbids divorce for both husband and wife. Although when he comes to leadership, Paul begins by giving an ontological chain of authority, his overall position is that both men and women can prophesy in Church and that both are interdependent. (1 Cor. 11, 11:3, 11:11-12). Having established Paul’s attitude to gender then, let us now turn to look at gender issues in Africa before we can consider how the Pauline attitude can be used for HIV and AIDS response among African Christians.

Although there are widespread calls for gender equity in Africa, the majority of men are still resistant to these calls, mainly influenced

¹⁰This view is treated at length by Pagels, 1974 and Schüssler Fiorenza, 1999.

by traditional attitudes to gender. Traditionally in Africa (as was almost the case in all societies), women were hierarchically lower than men in the social order. As a result, although women were responsible for the production of wealth through farming, (Chirongoma, 2007:173-186), men owned that wealth. A woman could not directly participate in social decisions, as she was not allowed to attend the traditional courts. As Shoko (2007:21) says, women could only attend courts when they were involved in a case to be discussed. Often, women were represented by their male relatives in public issues. When it comes to sex issues, women were expected to be passive participants. Shoko explains this with reference to the Karanga people of Zimbabwe, "A man may have sex with a woman at will. A man is compared to a bull, which is in charge of other cattle. A bull has sex with many cows and produces plenty of offspring. Likewise, a man can have sex with many women and produce as many children as possible."

Although the traditional view of women is now being challenged through the call for gender equality, inequality is still very prevalent in African societies, often putting women at the risk of HIV. As masculinity is still defined by many African men as dominating women and having many sexual partners, women remain exposed to HIV. They cannot negotiate safer sex and as the 2004 United Nations Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV and AIDS in southern Africa found out, girls and women do not have the right to refuse sex, "making the prevailing mantra of abstinence, fidelity and use of condoms meaningless." (Conroy and Whiteside, 2006:56). Often, married men justify this with the fact that they would have paid *lobola*. Payment of bride price is indeed a masculine attribute. This is because, among many other meanings of bride price, one meaning is that a man has wealth and so is able to look after his wife. S. LaFont (2007:1-19) is right when she argues that today *lobola* is more often seen as payment for a bride, meaning that the husband and his family have purchased the woman, including her future domestic production and children. This practice, therefore, right from the beginning of the marriage, relegates the woman to an inferior

position. It puts her in a powerless position that promotes sexual and physical abuse and also limits her ability to negotiate safer sex, even when she knows her husband's unfaithfulness. It is my opinion that in this era of HIV and AIDS, the Church should call for the abolition of the payment of bride price, as it is a major source of gender inequality in a marriage. As I have already pointed out, this practice also makes it difficult for poor young men to marry, leaving them with few options but to engage in pre-marital sex. After all, traditional marriage practices that could be used by the poor, for example, *kutema ugariri*,¹¹ have become obsolete. It is this reality that makes Paul's teaching on gender very useful in the context of HIV and AIDS. As we have seen, Paul called for Christians to have sexual intercourse on equal basis and in a marriage. (1 Cor. 7:2). Paul's call for equality between men and women should be emphasized by the Church in southern Africa. This equality should not only be on sexual matters but also in Church leadership, as Paul stated in 1 Cor. 11: 5. It is unfortunate that while other spheres of society are opening up for women, a number of Christian Churches remain closed to women's quest for equality in Church leadership. Considering the influence that the Church has in southern Africa, as long as it continues to deny women Church leadership positions, gender equity will be difficult to achieve. This in turn also means it will remain difficult to turn the tide of HIV, as gender inequality remains arguably the most significant driver of the HIV pandemic.

Paul as an Example

One attribute of a Christian is the ability to stand steadfast against the pressures of the world around him or her. This is in accordance with Jesus' teaching that his followers are the light and the salt of the world. (Matthew 5:13-16 par). This is an attribute that Paul's

¹¹A practice where young people who could not afford to pay *lobola* worked for their in-laws for a specific number of years in lieu of the *lobola*. He would be given the wife at the end of that specified period.

attitude to hegemonic masculinities of his time clearly expressed. Pauline masculinity, to a large extent, stood against his contemporary hegemonic masculinity. In light of the influence of hegemonic masculinities upon even Christian men in southern Africa today, Paul therefore serves as a good example for current Christian men.

Paul, to a large extent, was against his contemporaries' hegemonic masculinities on issues like gender equality, so much so that he probably was not considered a "real man." Literature shows that in the world in which Paul lived, manhood was not a birthright. Just as today, it was something to be won over against the danger of being unmanly, which equals femininity. (Gleason 1995:159). M. M. Marin goes further to explain masculinity in Paul's world; "Being a man in antiquity was very closely linked to the role of being an active agent rather than passive. Be it in politics, in sports, in war, in rhetoric or in the vast field of sexuality, what qualified an individual as a man was his active control of the situation. This hegemonic masculinity formed one end of a gradient scale which moved along the combined lines of domination and masculinity." (2006). In short therefore, to be a man was to dominate. In teaching and practice, Paul challenged this hegemonic masculinity and opened alternative constructions of masculinity. This he did in a number of ways. I will discuss his exemplary practice first and then end with his exemplary teaching.

First, against the hegemonic masculinity of his time, Paul did not seek to dominate others, male or female. This can be seen, for example, in "how he waived his entitlements for the sake of the Corinthian Jesus group." (Malina and Pilch 2006:960). In 1 Cor. 9:1–27, Paul argues that he had a right to be supported by his followers but for their sake decided not to demand that, but rather to work for his own sustenance. This attitude no doubt earned him criticism from his opponents, who saw this as a sign of lack of confidence (another attribute of masculinity) in his apostleship. In 2 Cor. 10–13, Paul had to respond to this direct attack on his manhood by his enemies in Corinth. They questioned Paul's role as a public speaker, saying, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily

presence is weak, and his speech of no account.” (2 Cor. 10:10). In a world where physical strength and public speaking were indicators of masculinity, these Pauline agitators were accusing Paul of effeminacy. But for the sake of the gospel Paul accepted this criticism. He even described himself as a slave to all. (1 Cor. 9:19-23). This description of himself as a slave again ran contrary to hegemonic masculinities of his time. Because they were always under their masters, slaves did not measure up to the qualities of a “real” man. Paul also had allowed himself to be flogged, not once but five times. (2 Cor. 11:24). Such statements were inconsistent with the ideals of masculinity. (Marin 2006). Second, for his perfect and full obedience to Christ, Paul even applied metaphors of femininity to himself; describing himself and his followers as a wife/wives of Christ. (2 Cor. 11:2). For Paul then, the male body is not meant for sexual satisfaction and domination but rather is a sphere of intimacy and exclusive belonging to Christ. Paul therefore redefined masculinity to mean submission and belonging to Christ. Last, Paul’s teaching that male and female were now equal in Christ, and his call for gender equality in sex and marriage, (Gal. 3:28 and 1 Cor. 7:1-2), was also inconsistent with the prevailing ideals of masculinity. But for the sake of the gospel, Paul challenged the hegemonic masculinities of the time, providing a very good lesson for Christians living with dangerous hegemonic masculinities today.

The hegemonic masculinities of Paul’s day were in many ways similar to prevailing hegemonic masculinities in southern Africa today. Southern African men are always under pressure to prove that they are men. Manhood, like in the world of Paul, is not a birthright but an achievement. Statements like *hapana zvemurume apa* (“He is not a man”) are often passed on those who fail to meet the social expectations of masculinity.¹² Such indicators of masculinity include the subordination of women, being the provider, having many sexual partners and the amassing of wealth. (Cornwall, 2003:230-248;

¹²Along the same lines, a woman who attains a high status in society is considered *murume chaiye* (She is a “real man”).

Lindsay, 2003:138-155; Spronk, 2005:44-73). These indicators of masculinity are a result of the hegemonic position of patriarchal ideologies prevalent in Africa. The hegemonic position therefore puts a lot of pressure upon men to act as “men.” The emancipation of women and their access to power and influence through various gender equity policies and programmes have put even more pressure on men to be seen as “men.” Indeed, some studies in Africa have shown that, frustrated by lack of jobs and the failure to provide for the family, leaving the wives to do so, has led some men to take an outside sexual partner or to resort to drinking. (Baker and Ricardo, 2005:7). Usually this is done to show their masculinity in situations where traditional masculinities are indeed in crisis. (Helgesson, 2006). African men are always under pressure to show that they are not under the control of any woman whether inside or outside the household. As A. Simpson (2005:569-586) puts it, “They are anxious not to be accused by fellow men and indeed by other family members, both male and female, of acceding to petticoat governments in their households.” Simpson noted among Zambian men that, in order to demonstrate their independence, the men did not allow their wives to know their whereabouts or question them about their movements. Others even engage in extramarital sex with many sexual partners in order to prove their masculinity. Shona men even promote promiscuity and view the contraction of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) positively, using proverbs like *nzombe inorwa inovonekwa nemavanga* (“a fighting bull bears scratch marks”).¹³ In other words STIs are viewed as signs of virility. This obviously puts men at risk of contracting HIV. A study in Malawi actually found out that some young men boasted about the likelihood of being HIV positive, since it would be a badge of manhood before their peers.¹⁴

¹³Shoko in this volume refers to the same proverb.

¹⁴Kaler, 2003. Gabaitse in this volume also indicates that some men in Botswana go out of their way to be exposed to HIV in order to prove their manhood.

In light of the above, Paul's teaching and practice of withstanding hegemonic masculinities is a good example for Christian men. Christian men need to take Paul's example and submit to Christ instead of to hegemonic masculinities that put them at the risk of HIV and AIDS. Like Paul, they should strive for a construction of a public masculinity that excludes any form of oppression of women. As I have argued above, gender inequality is a significant driver of the HIV pandemic in Africa. Instead of giving in to hegemonic masculinities that have proved fatal in this era, Christian men in Africa should strive to construct a masculinity that celebrates gender equality, that limits sex to one's married partner, that values integrated family life, that emphasizes self-renouncement for the love of others, that underscores self-control and above all, that expresses exclusive belonging to Christ. It is my belief that such a masculinity can go a long way in responding to the HIV pandemic in Africa positively.

Conclusion

If the response to HIV and AIDS is to become more effective, no one should be left out of the fight. Men, women, old and young should make a contribution to turn the tide of HIV and AIDS. This chapter has looked at how Christian men can be involved in HIV response, focusing particularly on prevention. It has noted that for a long time men have not been involved in the response. To involve them I have argued that more needs to be done about their understanding of masculinity. As A. Simpson (2005:569-586) has observed, "If men are to be brought into the fight against HIV and AIDS, more needs to be done about their relationship to constructions of masculinity and about how this affects the way they perceive and experience their gender and sexuality." As a starting point for doing this, in this chapter I have argued for a reconstruction of masculinity that is HIV-sensitive. Not only because of HIV and AIDS should African masculinities be reconstructed; there are also other socio-economic realities that call for a reconstruction of masculinities. The advancement of women, unemployment and poverty are other realities that tend to undermine the traditional

understanding of manhood. This chapter has pointed out that these realities lead men to be involved in sexual behaviours that put them and their partners at risk of HIV and AIDS. I have used Pauline masculinity as a starting point for constructing a Christian masculinity sensitive to HIV and AIDS. Paul's attitude to marriage, to sex and to gender and his own example have been used to argue for such a masculinity. In light of the centrality of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa and the centrality of the Bible in African Christianity, it is my conviction that a biblically-centred masculinity may help curb the spread of HIV and AIDS.

PART THREE

Imagined Men: Creative Writing and Masculinities

CHAPTER TWELVE

Redemptive Masculinities, HIV, and Religion in Sipiwo Mahala's *When a Man Cries*

Ezra Chitando

Introduction

The rigid separation between African theology and African literature is unfortunate. African creative writers have been articulate in expressing the African condition. (Shorter, 1996). They have examined the relationship between Christianity and African culture, as well as exposing the abuse of the religion on the continent. Women African writers and theologians share a lot of similarities. (Chitando and Chitando, 2005). African literature is therefore an important interlocutor of African theology.

This chapter builds on the recognition that creative writers are astute commentators on African life. It utilizes Sipiwo Mahala's recent publication *When a Man Cries*, (Mahala, 2007) to examine the rethinking of masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS in southern Africa. The chapter also interrogates the role of religion in realigning masculinities in the era of HIV. It argues that redemptive and liberating masculinities must be nurtured in the face of gender-based violence and HIV. Men must be able to cry if women, children and men are to thrive in environments that are littered with pain and death.

When a Man Cries: An Overview

Set in the township of Sekunjalo, Grahamstown, in contemporary South Africa, *When a Man Cries* is a brilliant exposition of the crisis of masculinity. Through the experiences of the narrator, Temba Limba, readers are taken on an expedition through the social construction of manhood in South Africa. The novel traces Temba's awakening, his embracing of social values relating to masculinity and his eventual transformation. This transformation is vividly expressed by the sharply opposed declarations at the beginning and at the end of the book. Initially, Temba declares confidently, "A man who cries in public not only disgraces himself and his family, he also denigrates the dignity of manhood." (Ibid.:1). However, having undergone life-transforming experiences, he reaches a new understanding of men and crying at the end of the book. He submits, "To cry when hurt. That's what makes a man. Without tears, he is incomplete." (Ibid.:162).

How do we understand Temba's decisive shift in interpreting masculinity? The gripping story of Temba's initial reading of manhood as being defined by sexual conquest to his awakening to a liberating masculinity is well told by the author. After Temba's parents die in a fire, he moves into his maternal uncle, Vusi's, home. However, after Vusi's death, he ends up making passionate love to Auntie Gladys. Having learnt that Auntie Gladys had been part of the conspiracy to murder Vusi, he reports her to the police and she is imprisoned. He moves on with his life.

Temba's quest to become a man is constrained by the prevailing notions of masculinity. He is preoccupied with possessing social status, material wealth and seducing women. More crucially, he subscribes to the version of masculinity that associates being a man with the suppression of emotions. In this scheme, real men are made of steel; they betray no emotions at all. Temba proudly buys into the dominant masculinity when he introduces himself. He announces,

I have given my utmost best to hold on to things that make one quintessentially a man. I was circumcised according to the custom of

my people and had my foreskin removed without uttering a word in agony. I was man enough to hold back the tears as I watched the charred remains of my parents retrieved from the ashes after their house was engulfed with fire. But today I have betrayed the very manhood that I worked for so diligently. Today I cried. (Ibid.:1)

Temba confirms the contention that manhood is not given once and for all: it is something men have to fight for, and consistently strive to retain. (Morrell, 2001). Initiation rites provide a forum for the dissemination of hegemonic masculinities. Men are enjoined to become tough and uncompromising. Temba has imbibed these values and pursues women with reckless abandon. He believes that manhood is defined by the capacity to endure all types of pain. (Mahala, 2007:38).

Temba's marriage to Thuli is unplanned—she falls pregnant and he has an obligation to marry her. He begins teaching at Sinthemba High School and is chosen to be a councillor. As he makes progress up the social ladder, Temba is haunted by his preoccupation with power. In his eyes, power characterizes a man who has “arrived.” Power, respect and social status are key concepts in his definition of masculinity. He enthuses,

I believe in my people's saying that the greatness of a man is not measured by the size of his body or the number of days he has lived, but by his achievements in his lifetime. In a very short space of time I had risen to become a respectable figure in the community. I had become the headmaster. The principal, the highest ranked official in a school. The recent developments in my life surely secured me a place among the great men of our society. (Ibid.:85)

For Temba, power is not for service. Power enables him to access the bodies of schoolgirls and other young women. He shamelessly regards the position of sports teacher as an opportunity to fantasize and experiment with the bodies of young girls. When Nosipho approaches him for counselling, he assumes that she is interested in sex. Temba suppresses her pleas and proceeds to impose himself on

her. Temba also pursues Dolly, the mayor's secretary, and Thandi, a target from high school days. In all these quests, Temba is motivated solely by his "hot blood." (Ibid.:76). Without any remorse, he remarks that his "hormones had become more attuned to the soft and tender bodies of young girls." (Ibid.:96).

Temba's fall from grace is both swift and humiliating. Apart from losing Thandi to the better-resourced mayor, he is demoted from being the acting principal. He is also relieved of his duty as a counsellor. However, it is the Thuli's decision to desert him and take the children that overwhelms him totally. As a social worker, Thuli has been counselling Nosipho, who has revealed Temba's abuse of her. Since Nosipho is HIV-positive, Thuli demands that they go for an HIV test. As he stubbornly refuses to do so, she walks out of the home with their children. Temba's world collapses around him when he learns that in fact the dying Nosipho is his daughter. (Ibid.:135). He undergoes transformation, speaks at his daughter Nosipho's funeral and reunites with his wife.

Mapping Out Masculinities in *When a Man Cries*

Mahala has succeeded in highlighting the dominant views regarding masculinities in South(ern) Africa. Apart from the main character, Temba, it is worthwhile to examine the attitudes and behaviour of some of the other notable male characters in *When a Man Cries*. Zakes, Temba's cousin who becomes his brother and mentor, is an eloquent representative of troubled masculinities. Having left home in Grahamstown for Johannesburg after having a fall-out with his mother over her boyfriend, Zakes develops into a "player." Chapter six focuses on Zakes' escapades. Zakes has no qualms about using and discarding women. When one woman phones to announce the birth of twins, Zakes asks, "Which one?" (Ibid.:45). Zakes is a sexual predator. He regards women as sex objects. He misleads the diabetic Miss Patheka, headmistress of Sinethemba High School, into resigning under the illusion that they had a future together. He pretends that Temba's car is his and seduces women from all walks of life. Although he has other children with different women in

Johannesburg, his visit to Grahamstown is an opportunity to sample different women. Like the Apostle Paul who became “all things to all men”¹ in order to reach them, Zakes becomes “all things to all women” to quench his sexual appetite. His philosophy is simple but devastating,

Just tell my girlfriends that I am what they want me to be. If they want me to be a lawyer, I become one. If they want to see a rich man in me, I become one. Dealing with women is quite simple: if you can't convince them(,) confuse them, that's my mission. (Mahala, 2007:52)

Having Zakes for a mentor, Temba's preoccupation with sex is understandable. Zakes lives up to the popular image of a man as one with the “responsibility” to have sex with as many women as possible. Although Temba expresses his misgivings regarding excesses by Zakes, they play in the same league. Temba is equally insensitive in his interaction with women. They both regard women as objects for their sexual gratification. For Temba, “Any man who says he never gets attracted to a beautiful woman is a liar.” (Ibid.:73). Temba essentializes masculinity. For him, all men are fatally attracted to women. It is therefore “in the blood” for men to have multiple sexual partners.

The mayor, Bongani Vabaza (BV, as he is fondly called) is a man who represents the tragic failure of postcolonial African male politicians. He is a great philosopher, with a following all over Grahamstown. An eloquent politician, BV is a graduate of the Robben Island College of political knowledge. (Ibid.:72). It is disappointing to note that such liberation credentials do not equip BV to deliver. If anything, he is a caricature of the Big Man syndrome in postcolonial African politics. While apartheid is gone, poverty remains very much

¹1 Corinthians 9:22. See also the chapter by Lovemore Togarasei in this volume.

the daily bread in Sekunjalo. BV and his generation of “liberators” have a new preoccupation—liberating their sexual juices!

The mayor, like Temba and Zakes, is a serial womanizer. Instead of enhancing service delivery in his city, he misdirects his energy towards the pursuit of women. His clash with Temba over Dolly demonstrates that he is majoring in minor things. The development of the city is compromised while the two men childishly seek to score points over each other in meetings. The author highlights how petty men can become. While residents wallow in misery, their eloquent mayor concentrates on seducing women.

The mayor’s protruding tummy is indicative of the author’s distaste for the conspicuous consumption of the black ruling elite. BV’s humiliation comes when he is caught in bed with the garbage collector’s wife. He is frog-marched naked to Church, where a meeting is taking place. He endures a beating and bolts of out of Church; “The mayor ran so fast that he did not seem to feel his big round belly that hung in front of him like a sack of maize.” (Ibid.:127).

The men in charge of civic and political affairs in postcolonial Africa are truly uninspiring. Instead of regarding access to power as an opportunity to transform the world, they are prisoners to base instincts. BV’s stomach is filled with fat that is surely enough to feed the whole of Sekunjalo, (Ibid.:82), but he is oblivious to the suffering of his fellow citizens. Where he must develop and implement policies that overcome poverty, he is keen on increasing taxes. The mayor epitomizes the failure of leadership by men in Africa. Instead of fulfilling the dreams of the struggle, men in positions of power are busy satisfying their personal desires.

Temba, Zakes and BV are painful reminders of the havoc that many men have caused because of their “troublesome testicles”. (Ibid.:127). Regrettably, they are not in the minority. The taxi driver who abuses Nosipho belongs to the same category of men who have no respect for women or for themselves. The taxi driver hoots and waves to every girl he passes on the way. He reserves the passenger seat exclusively for girls. Readers are told, “He would press and pinch their thighs as he changed gears.” (Ibid.:99). Men who

patronize MaDlamini's shebeen are equally reckless. They have no problems exchanging women and some men even share the same women in one night.

Skade, Temba's political opponent, and old Jongilanga represent liberating masculinities. Skade is consistent in his political philosophy and is actively involved in the struggle to improve the living conditions of the majority. On the other hand, Jongilanga is a reservoir of positive cultural values and wisdom. He is a voice of reason (although he talks for too long) and embodies progressive masculinities. It is not surprising that it is Skade and Jongilanga who accompany Temba on his path towards awakening.

Men Must Cry: Putting HIV and AIDS into Context

Sekunjalo, with its poverty and human waste, provides an enabling environment for the rapid transmission of HIV and AIDS. There is no entertainment and men turn to pleasures of the flesh to wile away time. The context robs people of their dignity and worth. Men in particular have lost respect for themselves and for women and children. Men in positions of responsibility have failed to understand their obligations. Teachers, mayors, taxi drivers and others have reneged on self-control. Temba epitomizes this preoccupation with women's bodies and sex. He confesses,

I can't help it. I find it divinely pleasurable to view the structure of a woman's body from the rear. Whenever a beautiful woman passes, I can't help the temptation to turn and look at what she has to offer from the back. My wife has smacked me several times in public because of this. At one stage she even threatened to smash my testicles. (Ibid.:89)

It is in pursuit of fulfilling the notion of a "real man" that Temba and other men find themselves exposed to HIV. From the above statement, it is clear that Temba believes that men are "wired" in a particular way. They just cannot help it. When they see women, they

instinctively think of sex. In this paradigm, masculinity is defined by an insatiable appetite for sex.

Nosipho, the one who dies young, is an indictment of dangerous masculinities in the time of HIV and AIDS. Nosipho points an accusing finger at fathers, teachers, mayors, taxi drivers and men in general. Temba is a failed father in many respects. Apart from letting down Thuli and the children, he is an absent father to Nosipho. Unknowing. Uncaring. Ironically, he is like the dogs that are out there with Lily, the ones that will leave her to raise fatherless puppies. An irresponsible bastard! (Ibid.:143).

Temba's failure as a father is coupled with his failure as a teacher and community leader. When Nosipho approaches him for counselling, he refuses to hear her cry for help. From abuse at home to abuse at school—the story of Nosipho. As a teacher, Temba is supposed to protect young girls like Nosipho. Unfortunately, with the taxi drivers and the men at MaDlamini's shebeen, teachers are at the forefront of the abuse of girls. Where they are supposed to provide protection, they champion victimization. Temba's fragile masculinity comes to the fore when he steadfastly refuses to undergo the HIV test. He is in the company of many men. While they are keen to express their manhood, they are hesitant and even afraid to be tested for HIV. It is paradoxical that men, who are socially constructed as brave, have no heart to take up the test. Their 'courage' is mostly in the direction of unsafe sexual behaviour. However, when it comes to facing the consequences of their actions, most men lose their bravado. Temba puts it aptly, "My manhood was overwhelmed with fear—the fear of knowing." (Ibid.:129).

It is shocking to note that despite having a number of explicit sexual scenes, nowhere is the condom mentioned. Although there is an increase in the use of condoms in the region, most men continue to resist using this method of prevention. Men in *When a Man Cries* continue to have unprotected sex, exposing their partners and themselves to HIV. Definitions of sex as the exchange of sexual fluids, as well as men's insistence that "live" sex is more fulfilling, account for the resistance to condoms.

HIV and AIDS thrives in contexts that are characterized by gender imbalances. Men in Sekunjalo, Grahamstown and indeed the entire region, enjoy a lot of power. Women and girls must constantly negotiate with men and boys from positions of powerlessness. When Nosipho turns to Temba, her teacher (and unknown father), she is abused. Thandi, the secretary, has to grant sexual favours to the mayor to attain financial security. There is an urgent need to deconstruct power in the era of HIV. The Southern Africa AIDS Training (SAT) programme stresses this by saying,

Power is fundamental to both sexuality and gender. The power underlying any sexual interaction, heterosexual or homosexual, determines how sexuality is expressed and experienced. Power determines whose pleasure is given priority and when, how and with whom sex takes place. There is an unequal power balance in gender relations that favours men. This translates into an unequal balance of power in heterosexual interactions. Male pleasure has priority over female pleasure, and men have greater control than women over when and how sex takes place. An understanding of male and female behaviour requires awareness of how gender and sexuality are constructed by a complex interplay of social, cultural and economic forces that affect the distribution of power. (SAT 2001:8)

Small Part, Big Troubles: Challenging Masculinities in *When a Man Cries*

According to Buddhist teaching, the founder, Siddarta Gautama, the Buddha, undertook various futile engagements until his enlightenment under the bodhi tree. In his moment of pure bliss he discovered the fundamental human problem (desire/craving) and found the solution. He recommended the Noble Eightfold Path as an effective strategy to extinguish desire and liberate human beings.

Like the Buddha, Temba receives his enlightenment in *When a Man Cries*. His awakening does not occur out of deep philosophical reflection or a prolonged religious quest. After playing with Lily, he realizes he needs a shower. In the context of loneliness, Temba

discovers that the masculinity he has been subscribing to is not life-giving. He captures his awakening as follows,

I take my clothes off and open the cold tap. I like cold water at times like this because it refreshes my mind and perhaps my soul as well. As I stand naked in the shower with cold water running down my body, I look at my shrunken penis. It's much smaller than usual. It is such a small part of my body, but ironically it is the reason I find myself in all the troubles that I am embroiled in today. (Mahala, 2007:142)

As he reflects on his deflated penis, Temba interrogates a masculinity that is erected on such a shaky foundation. Temba realizes that his understanding of masculinity that is based on sexual gratification is dangerously inadequate. There has to be a lot more to being a man than to have a penis, he realizes. Temba questions his macho masculinity and concludes that his pursuit of women has been futile. In these lines he lays bare the futility of his endeavours,

Was there pleasure or was it just satisfaction—satisfaction that I had managed to add another woman to my long list of sexual victims? Is there satisfaction when you make love hurriedly in fear of getting caught? Perhaps satisfaction is not the right word. What about pride? Is there pride when you triumph over a helpless soul? Did making love to a girl as young as fifteen make me a better man? Was it lovemaking or was it just sexual intercourse? I don't remember kissing Nosipho. What is sex without a kiss? Is it possible to make love without loving? (Ibid.:142-143)

In his critique of his lifestyle, Temba moves away from the predominantly masculine trend of divesting sex and sexuality of emotion. He awakens to the value of intimacy in relationships. He appeals to the male concern with pride to challenge the reckless pursuit of sex. For Temba, there is loss of honour and pride when men fail to control their sexual urges. By framing the issue in this

way, Temba challenges the popular view that a “real” man has multiple sexual partners.

Alongside his questioning of macho masculinity, Temba also converts to a masculinity that is not competitive but seeks to collaborate to improve society. His rivalry with Skade epitomizes the pettiness that male politicians tend to specialize in. Instead of combining their different skills for the benefit of their communities, they waste time in debates that seek to boost their inflated egos. Fortunately, they both realize that self-aggrandizement must be subordinated to the noble goal of rescuing the community from poverty and underdevelopment. The book ends on an optimistic note, with Temba and Skade working together. (Ibid.:156-157).

The conventional wisdom is that men do not cry. Men themselves have been socialized to suppress their emotions, and crying is regarded as a sign of weakness. Hegemonic masculinities on the other hand place emphasis on strength and emotionlessness. By accepting that without crying a man is incomplete (Ibid.:162), Temba rewrites masculinity. He begins to present an alternative interpretation of what it means to be man. This is not a burden that he carries alone. Jongilanga, the old man and Thuli, Temba’s wife, are also advocates of a liberating masculinity. Jongilanga expresses this in the following way,

Before I say the grace, I want everyone to understand the significance of Temba’s profound deed today. Some men find it inappropriate to say I’m sorry; Temba just did. Some men find it difficult to express their emotions; Temba just did because he is a human being. With that, I believe that Temba’s repentance is most sincere and for that he deserves forgiveness from all those who have begrudged him for his past deeds. (Ibid.:158)

It is significant that Jongilanga, a reservoir of cultural traditions, plays a leading role in pressing for life-giving masculinities. This confirms the capacity of tradition to inspire social transformation. Jongilanga questions the prevailing notions of manhood and

recommends a more progressive understanding. According to him, men must search deep inside themselves to ask for forgiveness when they have done wrong. They must be able to express their emotions. Jongilanga calls for “sensible and sensitive masculinities.” He represents the older generation’s call for liberating masculinities.

Thuli has been at the receiving end of Temba’s dangerous masculinity. She has been exposed to HIV and AIDS, denied love and companionship, as well as experiencing acute emotional turmoil at the hands of Temba. That she is a professional woman does not spare her from the pain authored by aggressive masculinities. She is a representative of the many women who have been sacrificed at the altar of patriarchy. However, she is willing to forgive him when she realizes that he has changed. She says,

Yes, I was at the funeral today. I was so proud when you admitted that Nosipho was your child. I had always wondered why Nozizwe looked so much like her. I was so proud that you said “I am sorry.” The monster that I was married to could not have pronounced those words. And I was proud that you cried in front of many pairs of eyes staring at you. Crying is the expression of a true self. A man cannot cry unless there is pain embedded deep down in his heart. That’s why I am proud of you. (Ibid.:162)

It is of course highly problematic that Thuli forgives and reconciles with Temba. The author is guilty of seeking a “they lived happily ever after” ending. Many Thulis actually die due to behaviour such as Temba’s. Furthermore, women should not be expected to wait for the Tembas of this world to have all the fun, come back with a few tears and expect a warm embrace, or to be lovingly called, “honey.” Nonetheless, one appreciates the author’s key concern: men can, must and do change.

Thuli describes the initial incarnation of Temba as a “monster.” This is a heavy label that seeks to capture the dehumanization that characterizes men who are preoccupied with satiating their own cravings. They lose their humanity, thereby allowing them to violate

women, children and other men. Thuli confirms that Temba has been converted/reborn. Whereas initially he was tied to a suffocating and death-dealing masculinity, now he has embraced a masculinity that is redemptive.

Religion and Culture: Shaping Redemptive Masculinities

Temba's realization that his masculinity is erected on the shaky foundation of his diminishing sexual organ leads him towards repentance and rebirth. This is why Thuli can refer to the "monster" she had been married to. The author appropriates cultural and religious symbols to convey Temba's emancipation from a deadly masculinity to one that enhances life.

Temba's journey towards redemptive masculinity entails having his hair cut by Skade. (Ibid.:153). In an African cultural context, this is not a plain event. Hair is a potent religious symbol. In Rastafarianism, dreadlocks communicate deep spiritual message. This is consistent with the significance of hair in African spirituality. It is closely related to personality and identity. In some African communities, shaving one's hair is a sign of mourning.

By shaving his hair, Temba is symbolically killing his former self and rising to a new life. His ideas regarding the traits of a "real man" have undergone profound transformation. He has discarded the tendency to combine aggressive masculinity and predatory aggressive sexuality. The act of shaving off his hair underlines Temba's commitment to a new vision of life. In terms of indigenous spiritual beliefs, he cuts off his old self and embraces a new personality.

As he walks towards the Church where Nosipho's funeral service is being held, Temba is cleansed by the rain. Across the different religious traditions, water has multiple religious significance. (Eliade 1959). In African indigenous religions and Christianity, water facilitates purification. Temba's subjugation to debilitating masculinities is washed away by the rain. This is confirmed when he says,

The sky is overcast with heavy clouds and I can feel drops of rain and a cold breeze on my shaven head. My head feels so fresh and free. I feel so free. It was as if a heavy load has been lifted from my shoulders. (Mahala, 2007:154)

Free at last! There is freedom when men do not shirk responsibility. There is release and liberation when men have the courage to jettison ideas of manhood that demean women. Heavy loads are lifted from the shoulders of men who no longer subscribe to oppressive masculinities. In the rain, Temba is released from his bondage to dangerous ways of expressing his manhood. Freedom characterizes men who work for gender justice and accept responsibility. Like Temba, their heads feel fresh and free.

It is not accidental that the drama of Temba's redemption is played out within the sacred space offered by the Apostolic Church. The Church has become an integral part of African identity and has played a role in the shaping of masculinities in Africa. In Temba's case, the Church provides him with a platform to ask for forgiveness from the community. The Church provides a safe space for Temba to acknowledge his mistakes and vulnerability. It is a forgiving and loving community that does not stigmatize and discriminate against the individuals who have made mistakes.

The sacred space provided by the Church enables Temba and Skade to overcome their political rivalry and pledge to work together for the good of the community. The Church offers a forum for the two to publicly announce their reconciliation. Symbolically, the Church tones down the bravado and competitiveness that characterizes hegemonic masculinities. It humanizes both Temba and Skade. Having reconciled with himself, Skade and the community, Temba is ready to be reconciled with Thuli and the children.

Jesus Wept”:² Towards Sensitive Masculinities in the Time of HIV

When a Man Cries traces Temba’s journey from the declaration that “real” men do not cry at the beginning, to his admission that a man needs tears if he is to be complete at the end. It is crucial to note that the theme of men crying occupies a central place in the definition of masculinity. It goes to the heart of how men understand themselves and respond to their feelings. According to Musa W. Dube, this is a product of social construction. She writes,

Men have been constructed to take it “like a man”, that is, you never cry unless your heart is going to break. So men are socially constructed not to express their feelings of fear or pain. They are to be fearless and brave. They are not to show emotion. (Dube, 2003: 86-87)

The reality of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa calls for a radical review of such versions of masculinity. It is critical that men are socialized to feel and express pain. Numbness accounts for men having multiple sexual partners and perpetrating gender-based violence. It is when men express pain that they become effective and sensitive leaders. Men who can cry are an invaluable resource to the struggle against the pandemic. They are caring fathers, loving partners and sensitive leaders.

Given the popularity of the Bible in the region, it is important to promote liberating readings of the sacred text in the era of HIV and AIDS. One key text that can empower men to become more sensitive in the time of HIV is John 11: 1–44. The story focuses on the dramatic raising of Lazarus by Jesus. New Testament scholars will debate the historicity of the text, quibble over “resuscitation” or “resurrection” and other technical issues. For the purpose of this chapter, I wish to focus specifically on verse 35: “Jesus wept.”

²John 11:35.

Like Temba at the end of *When a Man Cries*, Jesus wept. Jesus, the incarnate God, cries. The Son of God weeps. Jesus, the miracle worker, cries. Jesus, the God-man, cries! He is moved by emotion. He mourns Lazarus, and feels for Martha and Mary. Jesus, “the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us,” (John 1:14), freely expresses his emotions. He does not remain indifferent to human pain and suffering. As a man, Jesus does not become a prisoner to social norms and values. He breaks free and expresses his emotions.

Men must follow the example of Jesus and Temba. They must cry—in practical and figurative senses. Like Jesus who wept when he realized that his friend Lazarus had died young, men must mourn the young people who are succumbing to AIDS. If they are men in positions of authority, they must follow the example of Jesus who was moved by compassion to bring Lazarus back to life. If they are leaders of pharmaceutical companies, they must be moved with compassion to ensure that the poorest of the poor access antiretroviral drugs.

When a Man Cries describes hegemonic masculinities in a clear and convincing manner. Zakes, Temba, taxi drivers and the men who patronize the shebeens are consumed by the quest for sexual conquests. Vulnerable girls like Nosipho have fallen prey to their predatory instincts. Jesus weeps for such men, and he invites them to weep with him. They need to become more sensitive and caring in the time of HIV and AIDS. They must, like Temba and Jesus, embrace redemptive masculinities.

Jesus weeps in solidarity with Martha and those who came with her. (John 11: 33-34). He demonstrates that he is a man in touch with his feelings. This is unlike the earlier Temba, who holds back his tears as he watches the charred remains of his parents being retrieved from the ashes after their house was engulfed with fire. By weeping, Jesus is challenging men to accept their vulnerability. Jesus weeps in order for men to confess openly like Temba,

I would like everyone to understand that I am a man. I am a human being. I have moments of joy; I also have moments of despair. I appear strong, but I am as soft as any other human being inside. I laugh most of the time; I cry sometimes. (Mahala, 2007:157)

The picture of the son of God in tears must empower men to resist popular readings of masculinity that project men as superhuman. In the context of HIV and AIDS, “real men” should make similar confessions. Men must cry, in the sense of taking up responsibilities. As fathers, they need to be there for their families. As community leaders, they must craft and implement policies that promote gender justice. As politicians and government officials, they must ensure that effective strategies are put in place to respond to gender-based violence and HIV. Men must cry. Like Jesus, they must take up practical steps to restore life, health and well-being.

Conclusion

When a Man Cries provides a brilliant analysis of hegemonic masculinities in South Africa. It exposes the dangers posed by unrestrained masculinities. In detail, it describes the pain that women and children experience at the hands of dangerous masculinities. Nosipho’s death is a poignant reminder of the consequences of wrong notions of manhood. The author succeeds in alerting the community of the need to rethink masculinities in the time of HIV and AIDS. Temba, the confident womanizer, ends up emotionally crushed. However, the author does not give up on men. He is convinced that men can and must reform. The book ends with Temba acknowledging the need for men to cry. Indeed, men must cry. In their tears, they will be energized to counter gender-based violence, abuse of women and children as well as the abuse of power. Crying men become a resource in the response to HIV and AIDS.

PART FOUR

Deadly Men? Masculinities and Gender-Based Violence

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Liberating Masculinity from Patriarchy: Insights from Zimbabwean Literature in English

Percy Chinganga

Introduction

This chapter deals with the challenging task of disentangling masculinity from patriarchy, with the specific objective of developing a male image which positively heeds to the call to be proactive in the global human response to HIV and AIDS. The interest in this subject partly arises from the observation that “the important fact of men’s lives is not that they are biological males, but that they become men. Our sex may be male, but our identity as men is developed through a complex process of interaction with the culture in which we both learn the gender scripts appropriate to our culture.”¹ This critique forms the basis of this chapter, wrestling with the question of how ought we reconstruct “cultural males” to be palatable to the present context of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe and sub-Saharan Africa in general?

Zimbabwean literature in English, with a colonial context, provides a useful analogy for this discussion. Selected texts which

¹Kimmel and Messner as quoted in Stuart Oskamp and Mark Costanzo, 1989:89.

express the excruciating and overwhelming experience of a colonized people will be used in this chapter to lay bare the imaged face of patriarchy, manifested in a type of masculinity which, “even when the original conditions that gave rise to the social structure have changed, institutional arrangements perpetuate the system.” (Lipman-Blumen, 1984:5).

Such a scenario is analogous to male responses to HIV and AIDS in most parts of Zimbabwe and sub-Saharan Africa in general. Power in sexual relationships between men and women continues to be genitalized. (Nelson and Longfellow, 1994). If the global call to respond to HIV and AIDS is to be understood as wholesome and inclusive, then such an image of masculinity which emerges from the Zimbabwean context and in sub-Saharan Africa in general, as imaged in the selected and analysed Zimbabwean texts, needs reconstruction. It is however acknowledged that the advent of colonial occupation in Zimbabwe and the subsequent response of the indigenous people to the forces of repression are invariably represented in Zimbabwean literature. For instance, *Harvest of Thorns*, (1989), a text by Shimmer Chinodya, portrays the Zimbabwean liberation movement as one of a concerted effort by indigenous men and women, thus conceptualizing mutuality in human relationships across the reality of gender. Indeed, it is acknowledged too that in real terms, our African communities are not totally without men who care; men who value the ontological being of women.² These are men who are bold enough to bear the societal denigrating brand *mbwende* (Shona for “spineless men”). The HIV and AIDS experience demands more men of such moral fibre.

The climax of this chapter provides a theological critique of male sexuality premised on abusive and oppressive patriarchal paradigms. The skewed masculinity characteristic of the Zimbabwean context and sub-Saharan Africa in general will then be assessed and evaluated in the light of the practical challenges emanating from the

²See Morrell, 2001 and Connell, 1995.

HIV and AIDS epidemic. The ultimate objective is to suggest a creative male sexuality grounded in a spirituality of relatedness with the sacred.

Context, Theme, Literature and Methodology

What emerges from the above observation is that “cultural male” (*murume* in Shona; *Indoda* in Xhosa) derives its root from “biological male.” The resultant male image in this process is a manifestation of patriarchy. In essence, the genitals become the basis of a distinction of what is “man” and what is not; manhood is genitalized. In most Zimbabwean communities, particularly in the rural areas, there is much more ululation and celebration on the birth of a male child than would happen if the child was a girl. The cultural value attached to this differentiation is that a male child is a source of pride and happiness for his father, the clan and indeed the whole family ancestry. In such communities, the continued birthing of female children demeans the manhood of one fathering only girls.

Secretively, through rumour, you hear people talking about how such a man is overpowered by his wife on the marriage mat. In the vernacular, people say about the man *haana simba* (“he is powerless”). Such a statement is not neutral. What is implied here is not general physical inability but a lack of sexual energy. In response, the man under such societal scrutiny feels challenged to seek means of ensuring that the blame is not on him, he is in fact a “real man” with sexual robustness. One option would be to secretly start what is commonly known as a “small house”³ with another woman.⁴ Such an attitude has worked in partnership with HIV and AIDS. If the male genitals are of such value as to determine one’s social status and position in the community, and also to be regarded as a safeguard

³The term “small house” is a common term used by Zimbabweans to refer to the term mistress, implying that the marital home is the main house and the mistress’ home is the “small house.” Gift Masengwe in this volume also makes reference to this term.

⁴Interview with Peter Mapundo, Ruchera, Zimbabwe, December 2007.

of posterity, ought they not be a much more useful, and certainly a God-ordained “instrument” to use in the global call to all humanity to respond proactively to the HIV and AIDS challenge?

The connection between literature and contemporary challenges in any given society is worth our observation and appreciation in this discussion. At the end of his book entitled *The Dignity of Human Sexuality and the AIDS Challenge*, Dr Henry Tabifor had this to say to his prospective readers,

Thank you for reading this book. You are the reason for its conception and existence. It captured your voice and enabled you to discover many things you have always wanted to know. You now have all it takes to make well-informed choices. (Tabifor, 2002:212)

While it is acknowledged that the above text is one example of many valuable sources of information on HIV and AIDS to emerge from individuals and organizations in their different capacities, there still remains a gap in such literature, where it cannot adequately and profoundly explain the spirituality of the human body, particularly the genitals (both male and female) in connection with HIV and AIDS. A reading of the text *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection* (1994), edited by James Nelson, consolidates convincingly the quest to engage in efforts aimed at unravelling the spirituality of human sexuality, arguing that it is not by coincidence that we have been gifted with “maleness” and “femaleness” in humanity. As this chapter contends, such theological insights, appreciated in dialogue with HIV and AIDS matters, would go a long way towards demystifying and reconstructing the patriarchal heritage which safeguards dominion over relationships between men and women as a preserve for men, even in cases of abusive sexual relationships which expose the marginalized (mostly women and children) to HIV infection.

A glance at Dr. Henry Tabifor’s book cited above would heighten one’s anticipation to be informed about the core subject in this chapter: the spirituality of human sexuality in connection with the HIV and

AIDS epidemic. The book, like many other such books, is descriptive of HIV—and AIDS-related issues. The author also seems to be somewhat timid to delve into the finer details of what it means to be a sexual human being. However, it is appreciated that this particular text has a target readership in the youth, hence the inclusion of transparent and elucidated sketches of the human sexual anatomy, both male and female. An in-depth explanation of the spirituality of such human giftedness in a dialogue with HIV and AIDS related concerns would have helped to provide a blend of information on the latter and its relatedness to the human body as “the temple of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 6:19). The foreword to this book, by Mary Ann Burris and Babatunde Ahonsi, interestingly captures the vein of argument presented in this chapter when they critically observed that,

Africa is not so different from the rest of the world in its awkward approach to the sexual socialization of its young. So often the dictum “do as I say, not as I do” is the ruling mantra of parents and other adults toward the curiosity and confusion of becoming a sexually active human being. (Tabifor, 2002)

The point underlined in the statement above is that the parental approach “thou shall not be exposed to information on sex” has only worked to provide virgin ground for the spread of HIV. The challenge and the relevant response needed here should be unveiled, exposed and looked at critically: Parental “power” over children, as well as patriarchy, need to be reconstructed in order to effectively respond to HIV and AIDS across the globe. Writing as a pastor, teacher and a father, I strongly concur with the sentiments of the above two authors and also with the general methodology Tabifor used in compiling material for his book. If parents and custodians of our children in both Church and the secular community expect children to survive the rising tide of our time, then our “time” demands necessary adjustments and reconstruction of our socialization approaches on issues of sexuality. Change is always resisted,

especially on issues with cultural attachments, but it is here argued that this is a matter of life and death. My experience with teenagers in high school and Church in Zimbabwe and some parts of South Africa on matters of sexuality and HIV and AIDS has given me a solid foundation to use a direct, creative and participatory approach in the interactions and research processes that happen on this subject. (Nelson and Longfellow, 1994). On many occasions I have had to confess to my respondents, telling them that it had never occurred to me that they could be free to discuss such a topic with an adult using the approach articulated in this chapter.

Genitalized masculinity is imaged in many texts in African literature in English. For instance Okonkwo, in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, (1958), wields all the power in his homestead, village and surrounding communities. He is a popular man in this community with wives, children, material and physical prowess. Habitually, and also as a sign of psychological consciousness of his communal status and circumstances, he carries a gun around which, interestingly, he seldom uses. When one of his wives ridicules him for carrying a gun that is never shot, he goes berserk and shoots at her, missing her head by a whisker. For a patriarch, in this case represented by Okonkwo, the woman's statement is not without connotations of sexual impotence and uselessness in the face of an overwhelming crisis. (Chitando, 2007). In Okonkwo's context, the white man had just set foot in Africa, particularly in his community, heralding a new power structure dispensation. In a like manner, Ferdinand Oyono, in *The Old man and the Medal*, (1967), satirizes the well respected old man, Meka, by subjecting him to an embarrassing scenario on the day he receives a medal from the white men. The event, meant to elevate his status to a level tolerable to the white man, alienates him from his people and at the same time does not quite squarely make him acceptable in the white community. He is reduced to being a butt of laughter. His ego bruised, psychologically bent on "massaging, nursing and healing" it, he brutalizes the African women, the powerless in the community. The colonial experience

and the subsequent erosion of relationships in indigenous communities occupies a central thrust in Zimbabwean literature.

Patriarchy in Zimbabwean Literature in English

Masculinities in Bones

In *Bones*, (1988), Chenjerai Hove “creates an assembly of male characters who come across as memorable caricatures who are meant to be a severe antidote to male chauvinism. His artistic strategy is to deflate in a brutal way the self-importance which males have always rushed to appropriate for themselves at the expense of women.” (Zhuwarara, 2001:229). The male voice in this text clearly depicts the social chasm that exists between men and women in a colonized Zimbabwean community, a pattern of relationships that lays bare the gendered nature of the community, drawing root from time immemorial. In a poignant way Hove questions the relevance of such a pattern of relationships in this era of subjugation and indiscriminate abuse by the white man, popularly known in the text as Manyepo (derived from Shona verb *nyepa*, meaning lie). For the black community on his farm, all the white man says is lies. However, there is something which Manyepo has certainly not lied to himself about, which was phenomenal in this Zimbabwean historic period: that by forcibly appropriating fertile land to himself, land with fields “stretching forever as if they were the sky,” (Hove, 1988 cited in Zhuwarara, 2001:217), he would render the black community materially poor and consequently create a source of cheap labour for his material gains. Indeed, the occupation event in this part of the Zimbabwean community is narrated by one of the male characters in the text, Chisaga, with a sense of horror,

Do you remember how the whole Muramba village came here to look for work when they heard a new farmer was coming to open a farm? Some came with their children, their dogs and cats and all they could carry. Manyepo was here, fuming as if the villagers had annoyed him by coming to offer their sweat to him. (Hove, 1988:43)

The white man's attitude portrayed here captures the nature and depth of a colonial ideology that became synonymous with the brutal exploitation of black people. At its worst, this terrible experience gave opportunity to the likes of Manyepo to take advantage of and harness the traditional practices, beliefs and social structures of the indigenous people to maximize their accumulation of capital. (Zhuwarara, 2001:221). Even more brutal was the creation of males who grovelled to be accommodated by the new colonial dispensation, thus exhibiting a slavish and uncritical mentality, which continued to recognize women as weak and dependent on men. Schmidt makes a vital observation that, (1992:99),

By forcing women to submit to male authority, the colonial regime both advanced its own project and mollified a potentially powerful opposition force— that of chiefs, headmen and other senior men. Thus the origins of female subordination in Southern Rhodesia were not solely the result of policies imposed by foreign capital and the colonial state. Rather, indigenous and European structures of patriarchal control reinforced and transformed one another, evolving into new structures and forms of domination.

As Zhuwarara rightly points out, (2001:16-17), “the picture that emerges at this point is that of a generation of African males so thoroughly domesticated by the ideology of colonialism that they have come to doubt their own potential to change or influence their fate.” For instance, the Baas boy, Chiriseri (literally translated to English as *shadow*), is obsessed with obscene words, which he howls at his fellow brutalized brothers and sisters at every given opportunity. In doing so, he is only acting as an alter ego of his master, Manyepo, who shouts at his workers, especially the recalcitrant ones like Marita, the same way he does at animals. In a like manner, Chisaga, in his popular abusive speech in the text, says,

You women over there, stop gossiping about the latest love potions and get on with your work. You were not brought here to share your gossip with baas Manyepo. He brought you here to work. If

you are too old, then say so and baas will get someone to take your place. Do not smile at me as if I am your husband. As for that woman with a terrorist for a son, she will one day feel the harshness of my arm, I tell you. You came here to look for work on your own and, if you think baas persuades anybody to keep you here, you are dreaming. Baas knows all the things you do which you think your terrorist son will help you with. If you think you came here to fill the baas' forests with shit, then I tell you one day you will eat that shit yourself. (Hove, 1988:16-17)

The male chauvinistic mentality satirized in this text underlies this speech. Interesting to note is that Chisaga is bereft of personal independence in what he says and does. He is as useless as an empty sack (as his name suggests). All he can do is to mimic his master, for whom he cooks. As such, his role in the text is a mockery of his pride as a man, “suggesting how colonialism brutally assaulted the egos of African males by offering them roles hitherto reserved for women in a traditional context.” (Zhuwarara, 2001:220). For Chisaga, sheer proximity to the master, regardless of the work which he does in the house of the white man, removes him from the rigours and sweat associated with farm work. Consequently, he can afford to dream, romantically absolutizing the “God-given” nature of his relationship with his boss and, with an infantile mentality, convinces himself that his time to occupy an influential position in the society will come. Thus he daydreams,

Seasons leave room for one another. Rain, dry, cold, rain, dry, cold, rain, dry, cold. Look at me now, poverty is like a stubborn friend. Always with me, but I look with the eyes of my own village and say, leaves fall but they will come back again one day. The stars die, but one day they will come back after the sun, their enemy, has left the dancing arena. (Hove, 1988:37)

The irony underpinning his dreams is that although Manyepo has no legitimate entitlement to the land that he calls his farm, Chisaga naively legitimizes this. What Chisaga also succeeds to do here is to

misuse the Shona idiomatic expressions to rationalize his embarrassing and self-demeaning relationship with Manyepo. He is far from realizing that Manyepo is in fact a representative of a system more complicated than the individuals who sustain it and that Manyepo's "natural" death would not end the brutal colonial system. If Chisaga wanted power that liberates, he was challenged to join hands with those who stand up to Manyepo, like Marita, or follow the footsteps of those who had already gone into the bush (like Marita's son), to strategize means and ways of fighting the oppressor. The natural African rhythm of life had been violated. A new dispensation had dawned. If real power to live authentic lives was to be attained, then working in cohort with the colonizer would not be an option.

Black women suffered oppression from two fronts. In addition to the abuse and exploitation by the white man, they were also tormented by their menfolk. Despite the fact that they were the hardest workers on the farm, they were condemned and blamed for the social incoherence that characterized the black community. Marita, one of the few women in the text, infinitely suffered the terror of both tradition and colonial subjugation. For instance, her biological abilities to bear children created substance for much debate in the black community prior to the birth of the only one child she ever suckled. *Murume* (translated into English as *man*), her husband, suffered a different type of humiliation: being husband to such a "useless" woman. However, unlike her male counterparts, Marita's unending misfortunes and hardships do not succeed in undermining her self-respect and dignity. She becomes the spokesperson for all the workers at the farm, an unofficial role that she plays at the risk of losing her job or, at worst, her life. She stands up to Manyepo and openly challenges him, to the humiliation and embarrassment of her husband, Murume. At the end of the text she is raped by government soldiers, exacerbating the plight of her overworked body and tormented spirit. "Yet what remains of Marita after all the ravages of history have left their mark on her is that defiant spirit, that which

is essential, the bones which metonymically are the bedrock and which can not be destroyed.” (Zhuwarara, 2001:224).

Her husband, Murume, is a mockery of the manhood of its bearer. In such a context of colonial subjugation, a real *murume* (man) would have stood up against Manyepo in solidarity with his wife and son, who is reported in the text to have gone into the bush to join the liberation movement. Ironically, like Chisaga and Chiriseri, Murume is anxious not to offend the all-powerful master, Manyepo. Furthermore, he is keen to cling on to what he perceives as one of men’s privileges over their spouses; “a man with a beard must control his wife.” (Hove, 1988, cited in Zhuwarara, 2001:221). In the context of the farm, he therefore understands his role as that of an unfortunate labourer who has to keep his irrepressible wife on the leash so that Manyepo’s work is done without disruption. This works to protect the white man and so maximizes his capital gain. In addition, the white man is deified. Consequently, patriarchy rules and is perpetuated. Womanhood suffers bearing the historical burdens of the society.

Exposing Masculinities in *Nervous Conditions*

In *Nervous Conditions*, (1988), another Zimbabwean post-colonial text, Tsitsi Dangarembga also offers a narrative that exposes the reader to a type of gender relations which encapsulates a Zimbabwean traditional and historical experience. Here, the author unveils the complexity of such relationships in an extended African family ruled by a “new” patriarchy, which is a blend of African traditions and the colonial-cum-missionary influence. The learned Babamukuru, a traditional Zimbabwean title for the senior man in the extended family, which also becomes the name of the character in this text, becomes “the surrogate voice of the colonial state as well as the authority figure of the mission (where he works as headmaster) and traditional head of the family.” (Zhuwarara, 2001:221).

Tambudzai, a niece to Babamukuru, is the voice behind the narration of events in the text. She matures physically and intellectually as the storyline unfolds. The question which Tsitsi

Dangarembga wrestles with here is, how does a young and innocent African girl still being socialized go about liberating herself from patriarchal and colonial oppression? She is to realize later that Maiguru, Babamukuru's wife, has an educational qualification similar to her husband's but lives under the shadow of her husband, who monopolizes power as the head of the extended family and makes all decisions. Tambudzai concluded that Maiguru's education "only succeeded to emancipate her from the drudgery and toil of peasant life." (Ibid.:236). She was not different from her mother and Aunt Lucia; peasant women or the likes of Marita in Chenjerai Hove's *Bones*. Even with his Master's degree, Babamukuru was still as deeply patriarchal as the other unlearned male folks in the text, Jeremiah and Takesure. Zhuwarara (Ibid.:236) comments that what seems to emerge about Babamukuru is that he becomes in the text "the source of legitimacy and the embodiment as well as the representative of those cultural aspects from both African and colonial life which are meant to contain and retain women in their place."

Being a Man in the *House of Hunger*

In *House of Hunger*, (1978), a text published at a time when the war of liberation in Zimbabwe was at its peak, Dambudzo Marechera images a cascading graphic and dramatic culture of violence, which brutally assaulted the weakest members of a colonial Zimbabwean society. Zhuwarara comments that unfolding in this text, (2001:183),

is a vicious circle of violence initially generated by the powerful and oppressive presence of the whites who harass and humiliate rebellious blacks, who in turn, and out of frustration, terrorize the weak: the latter pass on the violence by beating up the weaker members of society, especially the women and children.

As the text unfolds, the narrator refers to an incident where a husband thoroughly beat up his wife in public, and to confirm his physical domination over her he went on to rape her before an excited and condoning African crowd. At some point, Peter, a central character

in the text, repeatedly beats a woman whom he has impregnated but does not want to marry. The children of the narrator's neighbour also participate in this grave drama by bashing a cat to death, singeing its hair and then hurling it into the narrator's home. Nestar, a victim of the sexual aggression of the male population in this society, is a schoolgirl who got pregnant at the age of twelve, was cast out of her home, school and Church, and ends up known as a whore throughout the country. Indulgence in sex is melodramatized. For instance, the boy narrator describes what he, together with his voyeuristic peers discovered,

One day we followed a woman back into the township. There was nothing particularly interesting about her. It's just that we could see on the gravel road splotches and stains of semen that were dripping down her as she walked.. (Marechera, 1978:49)

This experience traumatizes the boy for the rest of his life. Such is the tone in this society that even the boy's mother does not seem to help matters much. At some point in the text, she vents her frustration at the boy by offering a concise summary of the boy's shortcomings.

You were late in getting off my breast; you were late in getting out of bed-wetting. Now you are late jerking off into some bitch. It must be those stupid books you are reading—what do you want to read books for when you have finished with the University? (Ibid.:78-79)

Mungoshi and the Challenge of Masculinity

The volatility of the environment evoked here is a traumatic experience for the powerless. *Coming of the Dry Season*, (1972), a collection of stories by Charles Mungoshi, images a similar colonial Zimbabwean context where the family is portrayed as falling apart, consequently exposing those it is supposed to protect to oppressive external forces. For instance, in the short story *Shadows on the Wall*, the child narrator “watches helplessly as the bond of affection that should hold the family together gradually and insidiously disappears

as violence erupts between father and mother.” (Zhuwarara, 2001:29). Mungoshi uses imagery vivid enough to artistically represent the circumstances of the child and the society at large.

Outside, the sun drops lower and other shadows start creeping in the hut. Father’s shadow grows vaguer and climbs further up the wall like a ghost going up to heaven. His shadow moves behind sharper wriggling shadows like the presence of a tired old woman in a room full of young people, or like that creepy nameless feeling in a house of mourning. (Mungoshi, 1972:1)

Something bigger and stronger than the natural insidiously tore the family apart. The vulnerable became more vulnerable. Mungoshi is not specific with the source of this “monster”, although his constant reference to rain storms in the short story reminds us of how that doyen of the African novel in English, Chinua Achebe, perceived and expressed the disintegration of African traditions following the onset of colonialism. Talking about the role of African writers, he said they can tell people “...where the rain began to beat them.” (Achebe, 1973:1-4).

Summary

Character relationships in the above critiqued artistic works manifest power dynamics descriptive of a contemporary socio-political status quo. The colonial experience in sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe in particular, emasculated African men to the status of “boys,” who would even be subjected to the most embarrassing duties (as defined by indigenous culture) like cooking for another man (a white man). They lost their erstwhile power and the liberty to individuate; the occupation event overwhelmed them. The result was psychological, spiritual and emotional trauma culminating in brutality against the weak: women and children. This only worked to profit the capitalist and also to reinforce the new social structures born of the occupation event. The energy needed to dismantle the oppressive system was channelled in the wrong direction, resulting in aggravated suffering

of the marginalized. The underlying tone in these fictional narratives suggests a reconstruction of relationships between men and women, aiming to achieve solidarity in order to deal with contemporary challenges effectively. In Hove's *Bones* in particular, the author seems to be suggesting a constructive power paradigm, one that would entrench mutuality between men and women in dealing with the common historical force bedeviling society. The war of liberation in Zimbabwe absorbed both men and women, an experience that is portrayed in other Zimbabwean English fictional texts such as Shimmer Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns*, Garikai Mutasa's *The Contact* and Edmund Chipamaunga's *A fighter for Freedom*. (1989, 1985 and 1983). The subsequent result was victory and the liberation of the country. The suggestion is that collaboration between women and men will result in social transformation in the face of new challenges like HIV and AIDS.

Contemporary Application

The common enemy has since resurfaced in a different “being”—HIV and AIDS. Society has once again been besieged. Patriarchal gender structures entrenching the inequality of power to live between men and women have come under scrutiny, particularly at now, when Zimbabwe is experiencing a socio-political and economic meltdown, compounded by underestimated and politicized HIV and AIDS statistics.⁵ The socio-political “centre” can no longer hold. The Zimbabwean national health delivery system, emblematic of the whole national system, has collapsed. Dirt litters the hospitals. The meagre resources available are far beyond the monetary reach of the majority. Our hope is in the human fabric. If power is to be understood in the light of the liberation and transformation agenda advocated in the fictional texts critiqued above, then it is a shared commodity. It is not about muscles and tendons, about domination and dominion, as Chisaga in Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* or the male community in

⁵"Zimbabwe: Government's Latest HIV and AIDS Statistics Questioned." <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711010795.html>.

Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger* were socialized to maintain, but about compassion and passion to live, particularly in marital relationships. This sounds anathema for patriarchy for it neutralizes monopoly of power, but a panacea for an HIV- and AIDS-sick society, particularly from the perspective of the marginalized. It ensures solidarity and equality in all issues related to the pandemic, both material and non-material.

Shimmer Chinodya, another prolific Zimbabwean novelist and poet captured the pathos characteristic of the HIV and AIDS generation when he wrote,

We were born at the wrong end of the century. We are the AIDS generation. AIDS hit us where it hurts most. AIDS came to us and said, "Now you can't eat *sadza* and *mabhonz*o and *covo*. Now you can't eat!" And we said, "But how can we live without eating?" AIDS said, "You think this is drop or syphilis? All right. Glut yourselves and see what happens. We are the condom generation... For some it is no use. For some it is too late. We are dying like flies. But we live on, clinging to the frayed edges of our lives with our pathetic claws. We live on, hiding our despair behind tired smiles..."⁶

HIV is indiscriminate; both the physically strong and weak have been infected and affected. A cloud of uncertainty hovers above our heads. Macho masculinity has been neutralized. It was rare in the past in Zimbabwe for a man with a mature beard to use a bedroom as both a toilet and eating room at the same time, listening to the pleas of his wife asking him to try to manage a single banana for both lunch and supper; or walking with the aid of a stick at the age of 25, unless disabled or nursing an injury. Chisaga in Hove's *Bones* or Babamukuru in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* could be

⁶Shimmer Chinodya quoted in Dube and Kanyoro (eds), 2004 by Ackermann.

such “victims”⁷ of HIV and AIDS today. Would they continue labelling women weak? The children are more affected. In the past they would grow up in homes with parents, unless something tragic had happened. Today, a considerable number of households are being run by children.⁸ What is macho masculinity in the light of this Zimbabwean reality?

Patriarchy, Legislation and HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean legislative institution is clearly an appendage of the patriarchal society. The men, outnumbering women, sit in legislative chambers to deliberate, design and endorse the implementation of national policies.⁹ The pre-colonial Zimbabwean society subscribed to the customary law that privileged men in terms of access to resources and decision-making in both family and society in general. The advent of the colonial master, with a patriarchally driven agenda, condoned the existing legislative status quo in the country, adding legislation, the Roman Dutch law, to meet the interests of the Europeans only.¹⁰ The attainment of independence from colonial rule in 1980 maintained the two laws, thus overtly allowing the continued subjugation of the marginalized, especially women. This legislative anomaly is no longer a secret in this era of HIV and AIDS. Material impoverishment has actualized the denigration of feminine beauty and dignity to the status of “bits of wood” as the Senegalese novelist, Sembene Ousmane says in *God's Bits of Wood*. (1960). For instance, in a marital relationship a woman is objectified as a

⁷For lack of a better word, the term victim is used here, not to suggest that people infected by HIV are helpless “victims” but it is used to denote the opportunistic nature of how the HIV indiscriminately infects any member of society at any time.

⁸Interview with Gondokondo at Ruda Police station, Mutare, Zimbabwe, April 2008.

⁹Zvingowanisei, S., “The Legal Status of Women in Zimbabwe”, quoted by Chirongoma in de Gruchy (ed), 2006, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 126, 51-54.

¹⁰Ibid.

source of sexual therapy and not as a conjugal partner deserving respect. Patriarchy denies the possibility of sexual negotiations in such a relationship; sex is viewed as a duty for the woman, to physically gratify her husband's sexual needs. She should not enjoy sex; it is an entitlement for the man. So the woman can be raped even in situations with high risk of contracting HIV. If she suggests otherwise, then she is accused of infidelity, deserving discipline.

Neria, an indigenous movie produced in 1993, sent a clear and touching message of the plight of widows and orphans after the death of a male head of the family. Extended family members embark on a property-grabbing "ritual," all done, as they would argue, "in line with the legal pronouncements" of the country. This affects our mothers, sisters and daughters. One feels the harshness of such an experience when the victimized and traumatized is a family member, although less so when she is just another woman.¹¹ To some general level then, men should be considered guilty of condoning the egoistic longings of patriarchy, by both monopolizing national legislation representation and sitting down to craft and implement policies which continue to dehumanize women.

The onus for those who care, hear, see and read these socio-political injustices perpetrated against women—making them more vulnerable and exposed to HIV infection—is to speak out in solidarity with a myriad socio-political female voices emanating from such organizations such as the Musasa Women Project, Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) and others. Padare/Enkundleni—the Men's Forum On Gender (Zimbabwe) has made inroads in creating and facilitating opportunities for men to openly engage in issues of gender with the core objective of questioning and rejecting cultural and institutionalized gender stereotypes and roles that privilege men and oppress women.¹² This is a vital effort in alignment with the global call to all humanity to mutually respond to the HIV and AIDS challenge. The organization has been commended for its grassroots

¹¹Interview with Zivanai, Ruchera, Zimbabwe.

¹²<http://www.padare.org.zw/aboutus/chairman/index.php>.

approach, which has enabled it to reach out and engage with men across the different social groups in terms of age, location and status. A methodology that hinges on the spirituality of sexual relationships would further underpin the course of the organization and others of a similar calling.

Conclusion

Zimbabwean literature in English represents fertile ground for understanding masculinities in contemporary society. Men who have been socialized to control women and to dominate them sexually face the challenge of social transformation. The reality of HIV and AIDS suggests that more progressive masculinities must be cultivated. Through exposing hegemonic masculinities, (Muchemwa and Muponde, 2007), writers are anticipating a new society. The Church needs to listen to such voices and contribute towards the emergence of liberating masculinities.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Macho Masculinity:¹ A Snare in the Context of HIV among the Manyika of Zimbabwe

Gift Masengwe

Introduction

This chapter argues that the use of power to dominate, rather than empower, perpetuates violence and aggression against women in the southern African region, especially the tendencies toward “macho” power that link manhood to careless sexual encounters. (Taylor, 2007). These encounters cause men to be the key drivers of sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS, and unfortunately, many men pass on the infection to their life partners. Worse still, some men cannot maintain faithful marital relationships. This chapter therefore argues for the inclusion of men in all HIV and AIDS intervention strategies. This is because,

¹The term “macho masculinity” in this case refers to the expression of power, bravery and the amount of risk-taking associated with men, especially how to expose oneself to pain in pursuance of dominance in society. It is expressed sexually, militarily, violently and by throwing your weight around on people. It is the use of power to manipulate, suppress and to make things difficult for others and this chapter condemns such behaviour as being instrumental for HIV transmission.

as one activist poignantly states, “As long as our men are not part of the war, then we should forget about ending HIV and AIDS infection and the violence that comes with it.”² At issue is the exclusion of men who are seen as significant contributors to the spread of HIV and AIDS. Thus, the inclusion of men in this public health strategy suggests a new conceptualization of sex, manhood and male fidelity, enabling men to positively intervene through changed attitudes and behavioural patterns.

Patriarchy, Religion and Multiple Sex Partnerships

New religious movements have combined aspects of indigenous culture and Christianity. It is unfortunate that among some of indigenous apostolic Churches, the concept of manliness is measured by the number of women attached to one man. Most apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe are rooted in African culture and, due to cultural influences, they condone polygamy. In Zimbabwe, the rise of polygamy is associated with black consciousness, where monogamy was viewed as a Western strategy to reduce the African population, and polygamy was an indigenous religious counter to Western Christianity.³ Polygamy is one of the fruits of the influence of patriarchy in Maranke, and to encourage it, social status is acquired by increasing the number of wives and children. People in a polygamous union are unable to control the behaviour of every member of the union.

Focus group discussions with the health workers at Mutare General Hospital⁴ revealed that some members of the apostolic Churches were often treated for sexually transmitted infections

²<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=21545>

³Their bodies and minds still live in the past, in the consciousness of war and struggle.

⁴Focus group discussions with nursing students on attachment, and a general review of their research projects in an interview with between Paul Gupure, Nursing Tutor, Mutare General Hospital, December 17, 2006.

(STIs), although the majority resorted to traditional medication.⁵ Some of these infections originate through incest or marriage. With four to ten wives, in a society where sexual relations are not strictly observed and faithfulness is not a virtue among men, the issue becomes critical. Although those infected with STIs in Maranke were not all promiscuous, one member of the circle was most likely living a risky sexual life, putting everyone else at risk. According to Mindel and Miller (1996:11), it is possible that one member of the circle had contact with commercial sex workers and placed all other members at risk of STIs and HIV and AIDS infection.

Although much more needs to be changed about sex and marriage among apostolic Churches, on a positive note, the apostolic Churches have formed the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe against AIDS (UDACIZA)⁶ in response to the advent of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe. It is noteworthy that this initiative has brought ecumenism and unionization among the apostolic Churches. The new movement has brought changes to the form and structure of their teachings. Young couples are now being encouraged by UDACIZA to revert to monogamy. These awareness campaigns have extended to politicians and traditional leaders, who educate their constituencies to respond to the epidemic with serial

⁵Focus and informal group discussions with Sakubva residents and members of local Churches; and in a separate interview with Gift Choba, a resident of Munyarari in Maranke, now living in Mutare, who was involved in diamond mining, December 15, 2006. Many people resort to herbalists and diviners.

⁶The union was formed by spirit Churches as a platform to respond to and curb the spread of HIV infection. For more information, see http://english.people.com.cn/200509/19/eng20050919_209259.html.

monogamy.⁷ Traditionally, in the past, wife inheritance was meant to protect family identity, and also to preserve the deceased's wealth within the family, especially since the father would pay for the son's marriage expenses. However in the current HIV and AIDS era, this practice has become problematic. In the event that the wife to be inherited is already HIV positive, the man inheriting her might also be exposed to the infection, or vice-versa. It is sincerely hoped that these initiatives will empower women to exercise some control over sex, and hopefully influence their men, especially those who engage in extra-marital relations, to consider safer sex.

Despite all successes in the empowerment of women in Zimbabwe, it has been difficult for most women to have any effective say in sexual matters, "both within and outside the institution of marriage." (Chingandu, 2007:4-5). In most African societies, as is the case in most parts of the world, the man decides when and how sex takes place. According to focus group discussions with women at the Nyausunzi Church of Christ in Sakubva, Mutare,⁸ most women do not have the courage to request their polygamous husbands to practice safer sex, even if they suspect that they are at risk of being exposed to sexually transmitted infections.

⁷She explains that polygamy is an accepted form of unfaithfulness that depicts a measure of wealth and is a symbol of power. In this chapter, it is suggested that one's wealth should be measured through the size of one's house and car. Monogamy accumulates wealth and affluence and prevents HIV and AIDS spreading. Others argue in support of this by stating that, "variety is the spice of life" but in this age and time, the spice has become too hot to be enjoyed. Also, the practice of having sexual intercourse with a dead brother's wife or a close relative to cleanse and free her as well as wife inheritance among other cultural practices of men marrying many wives leaves a lot to desired.

⁸Sakubva is one of the oldest suburbs for African people in Mutare, and it represents the epitome of traditional Manyika culture, among other immigrant cultures of Zimbabwe, etc. The Church of Christ has a *spiritual care ministry* for orphans and widows being managed by the pastor's wife.

Furthermore, the challenges posed by the current unstable economic situation in Zimbabwe makes some young girls so vulnerable that they try as much as they can to impress partners who can offer them some socio-economic security. In situations where men have all reasons to resist condom use, young girls tend to feel that it is taboo to act against a set culture. The reason for such resistance to condom use is the misguided belief that the use of latex rubber will reduce sexual pleasure. We may assume that if women were free to initiate sex, they would be able to request condom use, to protect themselves during sexual intercourse. (UNAIDS, 2004:17)

Moreover, some men feel that engaging in sex without protection makes their “macho” power more apparent. This supports conclusions made from a variety of observations that most men are unhappy with women who provide them with condoms, even in situations where they would use them anyway. In these circumstances, some men resist the idea of a woman negotiating for safer sex because of the male perception that penis-vagina intercourse is natural and is definitive of the act of sex. As such, some men are not keen to talk about sex, because they enjoy viewing themselves as the possessors of good techniques rather than equal partners in an encounter. If this masculine mentality is dealt with, the use of condoms will be transformed from something that protects men from being infected by women to something that must protect female partners as well. This will help women engage in the sexual act for mutual enjoyment, rather than doing it for the sake of their partners. When women are not forced to engage in the sexual encounter, their consent brings new values into society where gender sensitivity will eventually reduce the spread and the consequent effects of HIV infection on women. (WCC, 1997).

Gender, Power Imbalances and Unequal Opportunities in the Family

It needs to be emphasized that the economic meltdown and the socio-political situation in Zimbabwe has negatively affected the lives of women and especially girls. In most households, the education

of girls has always been a luxury most patriarchal families cannot afford. In the light of the current countrywide turmoil, some families have had once again to revert to the old-time strategy of “sacrificing” the girl-child’s educational opportunities. Using cultural norms and values, women’s failure to access education contributes negatively to the long chain of causal factors impeding women’s meaningful contribution towards halting the pandemic. Most women find it difficult to negotiate for the use of condoms in sexual encounters. For younger and sometimes illiterate girls, even when not raped, the suggestion to use condoms is an invitation to labelling, unless she suggests condom use as a means to prevent unplanned pregnancy. Following the experiences of most sexually active girls in the region, their first and subsequent sexual encounters⁹ do not employ condoms because they lack information on how to use them and also because discussions on sex and sexual practices are culturally an anathema for both old and young people. Moreover, many parents do not discuss sexuality and condoms with their children, assuming that they are too young to indulge in sex. The lack of exposure of children to reproductive health directly results in many HIV and AIDS casualties among young people in Zimbabwe.

Masculinity has also been displayed in the control of wealth. Among the Shona, the father owns everything in the family, especially cattle, the African mode of wealth. The mother, despite working alongside the husband, has limited ownership. The problem of wealth-power imbalance that makes women dependent on men has exposed prevailing patterns of structural inequality on gender relations. The social construct of male-female wealth ownership has apparently subjected women to male domination, and this has precipitated the spread of HIV infection. Subjective masculinity, rather than the characteristically feminine embracing, argues Chirongoma, has made HIV and AIDS more apparent in the sub-region, infecting more than

⁹Africa university focus group discussions with students from nine African countries: Liberia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Malawi.

half of its adult population, three quarters of whom are young women and girls. She states,

Consequently, the African culture that subordinates, silences and exploits young people exposes them to rape and sexual violence. (Chirongoma, 2006:60)

This is because gender norms and gender dynamics influence people's attitudes to sex, sexuality, risk-taking and fidelity. Even if women, despite the affirmative action plan, suspected unfaithfulness or HIV infection in their male partners, they have less power because the majority depend on men for their financial support and their children's livelihoods. It is because of their limited access to and control of economic assets that even married women stay in sexually risky and physically violent relationships. There is therefore need to ensure that women are gainfully employed and/or economically empowered if the adverse effects of HIV and AIDS are to be reversed in the African sub-region.

Violence against Women and Gender Exploitation

Masculinity has tended to override the place of women in most societies, although their contribution to the survival of the communities cannot be overstated. "Macho" masculinity among the Shona of Zimbabwe has been used to emphasize the power that men should have over women, where men are like bulls that should conquer as many cows as possible in their kraal.¹⁰ Chitando critiques such behaviour in the following words,

Real men are supposed to be fearless, daring, and to have a macho image. These identities are problematic in contexts of HIV and AIDS...The notion of a man as a sexual predator has had disastrous consequences in southern Africa. Cultural factors have led many

¹⁰Tabona Shoko and Jairos Hlatywayo in this volume also make reference to this belief.

men to regard themselves as having uncontrollable sexual urges and many have multiple sexual partners. (Chitando, 2008:52-53)

The problem is that such attitudes understate the danger of having several partners in casual heterosexual populations where the risk of HIV infection increases with increasing numbers of heterosexual partnerships.

This macho power is also displayed by some African royalties through the manner in which they perpetrate sexual exploitation of young women who are lured by their wealth. Wealth and social positions of authority, which are pillars of male power, are fixed expectations for an achievement of manhood, especially among royalty. (Barker and Ricardo, 2005). Although HIV and AIDS awareness has been building, as indicated by the campaigns spearheaded by parliamentarians and community leaders alluded to earlier in this chapter, in many African communities, particularly in Swaziland, kings are at liberty to choose young virgins in honour of their royalty, whenever circumstances allow them to.¹¹ In the case of the Swazi kingship, the king and the women in the harem are in an enclosed relationship, which if not abused by any of the members seeking sex outside the enclosure, does not pose a danger to those involved. The danger comes if any of the women, or the king himself, is not faithful, because once one contracts the infection, it will spread throughout the harem. Other women have already started resisting this royal tradition of having liberty to marry young virgin girls, as reflected in the classic example of resistance by Lindiwe Dlamini of Swaziland¹² and other activists who supported her. For most politicians and community leaders with adequate resources and

¹¹http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/12/03/60II/main_531554.shtml

¹²Lindiwe contested the king's decision to marry her 18-year old daughter and was seen to infuriate the royal family and to "put it on a collision course with Swaziland's judiciary". For more information regarding this issue, see <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/11/04/world/main528049.shtml>.

finances, marrying more than one wife or sustaining concubines is a sign of prestige and boosts their macho power, although this can also make them vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections.

In this chapter, gender imbalance is viewed as the failure of men to accept women as major partners in family building. With the change in laws, and with more women becoming economically independent, men need to be taught to accept women as main breadwinners in families. Addressing this can help redistribute power roles and redress deviant male behaviours. This would need to be buttressed by proper language instead of euphemisms like “males are bulls among cows,” because such euphemisms have made some Shona men sexually reckless, leaving the society vulnerable to HIV infection. In order to achieve this, gender equality and the role of power in sex need to be redressed, as unequal sexual relations negate the very idea of proper sexual activity, which needs to be experienced in “equal relationships.” In fact, sex must be exercised where there is “mutual respect and willingness to accept the consequences of one’s sexual behaviour.” (UNAIDS, 1999). Unfortunately, some men abuse their power and force women to have sex without protection because there is no mutuality.

It is a very sad reality that throughout the sub-region, high levels of sexual violence and gender inequality present a fertile ground for HIV transmission, where rape, at least in marriage, is not a legal offence. For this reason, some married women may fail to insist on protection. From research and fieldwork done by Feldman and Maposhere among married couples in various provinces of Zimbabwe;¹³ other than a lack of mutuality, women have a number of specific reasons not to use protection in their sexual relations. On the one hand, women tolerate and accept abusive husbands as true men because culture stipulates that “true manhood is reflected through strictness and harshness,” hence such behaviour from their spouses is regarded as a sign of true love. On the other hand, some women

¹³Feldman was a visiting fellow of London Bank South University, and Maposhere is an HIV activist and freelance consultant in Harare.

trust their husbands and feel that it is unnecessary to practice safer sex. With these two views, several women engage in unprotected sex, and unfortunately, some have been infected by their unfaithful spouses whilst on their own part they were strictly observing faithful marital and sexual relations and desisting from extra-marital relations.

A critical analysis of the view that abusive husbands are true men reveals that in the sub-region there is a trend that shows that abusive men are more likely than non-abusers to be HIV positive. In fact, as evidence shows, women who are physically abused, sexually assaulted or emotionally dominated by their male partners are more vulnerable to HIV infection.¹⁴ In Zimbabwe, and among many groups of communities in the sub-continent, a majority of infected women have been celibate before marriage and monogamous since, yet the unfaithfulness of their partners—before, during and soon after marriage—has exposed them to HIV infection. In fact, most women are victims of their partners' earlier sexual contacts or those he makes soon after marriage, until the relationship stabilizes.

Traditional Rituals, Culture and Casual Sex

It is significant to note that ritual sexual intercourse has contributed to casual sex in Zimbabwe, and finally to the infamous “small houses.”¹⁵ Men or women who went through initiation rituals fail to get satisfaction with individual persons, especially where their relationships do not allow them to have sex when they need it. Most people, rather, want to blame Western education and technology, which undermined indigenous practices and traditions during colonialism. In Zimbabwe, sensual Western television films and computer pornography have been banned from all local media

¹⁴Musasa Project, 2003. Students' discussions and reports at Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe, 2004.

¹⁵The term “small house” has been popularised in Zimbabwe; it is a euphemism for the term mistress. It therefore implies that the marital home is the main house and the mistress' home is the “small house.”

because of their “negative” influence on morality and social behaviour. This narrow focus negates the positive contribution of Western education and media, which have provided literacy and have exposed some of the horrendous practices against human rights around the world. The same could be used to make a progressive report on the practices and ceremonies associated with female puberty rituals, especially the Chiredzi South Shangaan girls. Their initiation at 12 or 13 exposes them to matters related to the sexual act and might influence them to think about family and sex before they are ready for marriage, and about casual sex when married. After initiation, they are ready for sex, and elderly men often take advantage of them on the assumption that they are not yet infected with any sexually transmitted infections, especially in view of the common myth that having sex with a virgin will cure one of HIV. In Malawi, for instance, (News 24, 2008), female initiation is associated with genital mutilation, which reduces women into objects for male sexual gratification.¹⁶

The heart of this chapter is that men are responsible for the major channels of HIV transmission, even among professionals. Social pressures sometimes force young women seeking a livelihood to exchange sex for a job or promotion, in what is commonly known as a “carpet interview” in Zimbabwe.¹⁷ In some cases, professional men, especially those who live far away from their homes and their wives, are tempted to indulge in illicit sex with younger women who work under their supervision, because that is what most and sometimes all men around them will be doing. This is also the case during workshops wherein they will be booked in the same hotels with younger women under their supervision. With more reports of

¹⁶Lilian Dube in this volume explores this practice at length.

¹⁷Carpet interview refers to the acceptance of women into the job market, or their getting a job promotion, in return of some special sexual arrangements with influential bosses at work. Targeted women are given jobs without going through proper recruitment procedures and sometimes neither their qualifications nor competences are considered.

African men not being culturally required to exercise fidelity, this exposure to more sexual partners through casual sex or extra-marital affairs is detrimental to their spouses, notwithstanding the damage done to the young women and their potential partners. According to research, more than 80 percent of infected married women—professionals included—have known only one sexual partner—their husbands.¹⁸

In many cases, they run the risk of infection by engaging in sex without condoms because of poverty; in many cases, their partners also contribute to their welfare with finances and gifts. In some of these cases, women may be aware of their partners' HIV status, but in some cases other local people are aware of such status but cannot alert the partner, who then innocently indulges in unprotected sex with an infected partner because sexual affairs are kept very secretive and people talk behind closed doors. With the emphasis on confidentiality for fear of labels, sex has tended to be very secretive, creating higher chances of deliberate HIV spreading. Because women do not control sex, the labelling of women as transmitters of HIV is impacted by culture. This is because women are not perceived to have power over their sexuality, and untrue assumptions are made about the HIV epidemic originating with women. Chitando bemoans how, in Zimbabwe, the popular musician Leonard Zhakata in one of his famous songs charged that “female genital organs now resemble a poisoned well, thereby posing a danger to the whole community.” (2008:55). This is so because, currently, most women do not initiate sex with their male partners, rather if they have sex, it is the men's choice and not the woman's.

Rethinking Masculinity: The Way Forward in Responding to HIV and AIDS

The use of religion to respond to HIV and AIDS requires new thinking about masculinity, which must revisit practices among the Shona people. Men enjoy several privileges from culture, religion,

¹⁸<http://www.undp.org/hiv/publications/gender/gendere.htm>

education and family production. This chapter has identified some retrogressive practices among the Shona traditions that allow men to inherit wives, to rape their wives, to have extramarital relations and to control the family's wealth. There is therefore an urgent need to rethink these traditional values, to transform some and even to abandon and reject those that are detrimental to society's progress and vitality. It is by rethinking gender roles that power can be redistributed among the sexes to involve men in women-only areas and to also allow women control over men-only areas. This chapter posits that changed male attitudes towards women, and putting the family institution at the centre, helps to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa. The attitudes of men towards women and the centrality of the family can help in combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

To begin with, sexual power among the Shona rests with the men. The man is in charge of sex, and the best-skilled man extracts many sexual favours from many women. Women accept this thinking, and in most cases it is the man's economic status rather than his personality that influences women to accord him such favours. This presents men with a bigger responsibility than women. One significant measure that men can implement to help reduce early sexual activity for girls is that of facilitating and encouraging their daughters to remain in school long enough to be able to speak out for themselves, including negotiating the terms under which they will have sex. In the family, all children must be accorded the same privileges, and they all deserve to be given enough time to mature before they take up family responsibilities.

For girls who are vulnerable, society needs to design ways to assist them, especially in accessing basic necessities such as education. (Paterson, 1996:31). In a more subtle way, girls need to be given the same inheritance packages given to boys, or at least be part of the family's economic and political system, because some women succumb to commercial sex work as a survival strategy. This change would allow all women to decide about their own sexuality and choose their own marriage candidates. This would

also get rid of all unfair cultural prescriptions imposed on girls, like virginity testing, and where this was practiced, boys of corresponding age groups would have to fulfil similar requirements for marriage. In support of manhood, stricter measures for men can help level the ground on which sexual negotiation takes place, and also how men treat women, even in the home, and what messages men transmit in support of their women and in support of their own activities. (World Council of Churches, 1997:11).

Second, the involvement of men in HIV programmes impacts on their attitudes to sex and to women, and can equip men to become prevention assets rather than liabilities. (Paterson, 1996). With HIV infections capitalizing on human behaviour, driven by various factors, men are an essential component in this matrix. (Ibid). The positive updates on prevention in Uganda and Ivory Coast are a result of involving all the members of society, especially in urban settings, where men and women are engaged in many cases of multiple sexual partnerships. To involve men in implementing all intervention strategies is fundamental, especially if we take cognisance of the fact that scientific methods for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections are male dominated. In Uganda and Ivory Coast, men were encouraged to consistently and correctly use condoms in all their sexual engagements. This was so effective that it brought a ray of hope, especially in Ivory Coast where the prevalence rate among female commercial sex workers reduced by more than 60 percent between 1991 and 1998. The cooperation of men in using condoms when having sex is an essential component in efforts to combat the epidemic.¹⁹

Finally, the centrality of the family produces men who are ready to provide, protect and support women and children. The disintegration of the family, for instance, distances the child's experiences of the world from the loving care and tenderness that

¹⁹UNAIDS, 1999. In most cases, when the family income plummets, hospital expenditure escalates while food consumption also drops.

only a home can provide. Hence a stable family structure where progressive family values are upheld is essential, for it gives individuals a sense of trust and identity.²⁰ In the home, transferable principles are shaped that help the child to connect with the larger community of families; and the family environment provides the behaviour that cares for the weaker ones in the household. This is where sexuality can be celebrated, making incest unacceptable and condemnable as detrimental to the integrity of the family. Children learn and celebrate their sexualities in the home. In rededicating ourselves to homebuilding, men can begin to rethink their risky behaviours in premarital and extramarital sex, and their shameless demand for virgins when they are ready to marry. In fact, initiation schools could also be required for men preparing for adult life, and premarital sex could be regulated by substituting sex with other forms of sexual energy release, such as simulation or masturbation. This initiative could be an open acknowledgement of the depth of the HIV and AIDS crisis, and the promotion of family stability for two faithful partners could reduce the incidence of STIs, HIV infection and other exchanges of microbes during sex.

Conclusion

Following the discussion in this chapter, we conclude that masculinity is a virtue that must be celebrated by religion, culture, family and society. The abuse of “macho” power to extract sex is a betrayal of social trust. Social violence degrades the social being as well the emotional and physical well-being of women. Men are obligated by their power and wealth to protect society. The misuse of “macho” power among the Shona therefore questions the very authority men have over women. Rather, by using “macho,” men are expected to transform all social and sexual relations to attain positive social and sexual engagement that must be exercised between men and women.

²⁰Most young people in Manicaland are closely attached to their paternal homes and they participate actively in the development of those places. However, not enough is done to bring fidelity in marriages.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Passion Killings in Botswana: Masculinity at Crossroads

Rosinah Mmannana Gabaitse

Introduction

Botswana is experiencing increasing problems of violence against women.¹ Statistics show that rape cases are rising year after year and other kinds of violence against women such as wife battering and incest are also on the rise. (Emang Basadi, 1998).² Within the past seven years Botswana has seen an increase in an intense and brutal form of violence directed specifically towards women, commonly referred to as “passion killings” or crimes of

¹Phaladze and Tlou, 2002; Maundeni, 2002. See other studies on the prevalence of violence against women carried out by UNICEF 1993, Women Affairs Division 1998, *National Gender Programme Framework*, Gaborone, Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs.

²See also Botswana Police Statistics, 2008.

passion.³ This is the kind of violence where women are killed by their intimate partners, boyfriends or husbands because of many reasons, such as jealousy and suspicion of infidelity. This kind of violence has highlighted the need to examine and uproot the causes of violence against women in Botswana. Violence against women is a consequence of a destructive system and that system is patriarchy, which “sees the world in terms of questionable oppositions based not on equality but subordination,” (Wren, 1989), and tends to privilege men over women.⁴ Patriarchy manifests itself through many

³This is what is usually called intimate femicide or intimate partner homicide in other contexts, but these kinds of killings are commonly referred to as passion killings in the Botswana context. There have been debates as to whether the use of the term “passion killing” is proper; at one point Festus Mogae, ex-president of Botswana, urged the media to “stop romanticizing these wanton acts of murder...continuing mislabeling of them as ‘passion killings’ only serves to mystify their nature” (Botswana Television News, 2005). The use of the term passion killings is in itself a patriarchal construct. By calling them passion killings, the crime is made excusable. Are the perpetrators (who happen to be men) of this violence driven by passion to kill? The media reports, police statistics and people in Botswana use the term “passion killing.” Thus the term will be used with quotes in this paper.

⁴This paper doesn’t seek to present men as a homogeneous group. One has to bear in mind that there are men who live in patriarchal societies who do not violate women. It also doesn’t wish to suggest that all Botswana women suffer violence just because they live in a patriarchal community. Violence against women may be a manifestation of the complex interaction between patriarchy and individual human agency as well as changes in the societies, such as lack of employment, substance abuse, urbanisation etc. But I still believe that unequal distribution of power because of patriarchy is the main reason for violence against women. It is women, the powerless group, who are at the receiving end of such violence, not the other way round, thus, “patriarchy may be conceptualized as a background factor that serves to increase the likelihood that a conflict situation becomes lethally violent for women in intimate relationships with men.” (Gabaitse, et al, 2005:8)

variables; these may include violence against women, gender inequality and the construction of masculinities that thrive on violating women, other men and children.⁵ “Passion killings” and other forms of violence against women are therefore the result of the patriarchal construction of masculinity, where men are given enormous power, sense of entitlement and privilege over women by their political and socio-cultural systems.

This chapter argues that violence against women and “passion killings” in particular are a result of the patriarchal norms and the construction of destructive masculinities. The chapter argues that the existing hegemonic masculinities need to be transformed if gender-based violence is to be overcome. It offers suggestions on how boys and men could be assisted to counter gender-based violence.

Violence against Women

Violence against women is a global and pervasive problem. Women of all races, colours, classes and religions are faced with this problem. Violence against women includes “many types of harmful behaviour directed at women and girls because of their sex.”⁶ These harmful behaviours include “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”⁷ Nations and organizations have acknowledged that violence against women needs to be confronted so that women and girl-children can live in a safe world where they are in control of their lives and are able to flourish in all aspects of their lives. They

⁵There are different ways of constructing masculinities, some of which do not thrive on violating women, children and men who don't fit the stereotype of hegemonic masculinity.

⁶Population Information Program, Centre for Communications Programs, 1999; Gabaitse et al, 2005:1.

⁷United Nations, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993:4.

are forced to be subservient and they are practically reduced to non-beings. According to Pamela Cooper-White, “violence begins with the personal, with the ‘I,’ and with the point of decision, a crossing of a line where each one of us chooses momentarily to view another living being as ‘It’ rather than ‘Thou.’ The ultimate purpose of each act of violence, each reduction of another person from a ‘Thou’ to an ‘It’ is to control the other.” (Cooper-White, 1995:20).

Therefore, any act of violence against women locates the woman as an “it”; the woman is reduced to an object and therefore can be controlled, possessed and killed, as is the case in “passion killings.” Any form of violence “is accepted as a necessary means of maintaining order in hierarchical relationships, both within and outside the household.” (Anderson, 2004:103). Male dominance and women’s subordination is maintained through controlling the woman, her movement, sexuality and body. (Ibid.:100-103). This goes to show that violence against women is a form of control and it is intended to keep women under control, to keep them subordinate as well as to enforce their otherness.

Violence against Women in Botswana

Women and the girl-child have been on the receiving end of all different forms of gender-based violence such as rape, incest, emotional abuse and sexual harassment in their homes and in the public. Studies have shown that men who beat and rape women do so because they are putting these women in their rightful place. “It is further evident from the data that men use battering and rape to keep women subordinate and maintain their control and dominance. Culture is often used as an excuse to perpetuate violence against women since it apparently gives men the right to “chastise their wives if they misbehave.”⁸ According to Isaac Schapera, a husband has “authority over his wife...if she misbehaves, he is entitled to thrash her.” (Schapera, 1984:282). In the Botswana context, violence is

⁸Women’s NGO Coalition and SARDC WIDSAA, 2005:40.

therefore made acceptable because men are able to claim that the culture gives them permission to violate and control women.

Women are now losing their lives through a “newer” version of violence against them which has recently caught our attention, called “passion killings” or intimate femicide.⁹ In the past seven years, the country has witnessed an unprecedented growth of this kind of violence.

According to police statistics, 56 women were killed by their partners in 2004; in 2005 there were 69 killed; in 2006 there were 59; in 2007 they were 86, and the current figures are even more disturbing; 25 women were killed between January and May 2008.¹⁰ What these horrifying statistics signal is that we are faced with an epidemic. These statistics are just the tip of an iceberg because some of the “passion killings” are not reported to the police and to the media, which means more women are losing their lives to this kind of violence. “Passion killings” are the worst and most brutal kind of violence against women because the perpetrators are the men who are intimately involved with these women. It is indeed “ironic if not tragic that women continue to be warned incessantly of stranger danger when their intimate partners and acquaintances emerge as the greater threat to their security and safety.”¹¹ This is very true for women in Botswana and elsewhere, who are in danger in the supposed safety of their own homes. The irony with “passion killings” is that they occur within relationships that should ideally offer women security and protection.

⁹Newspaper reports indicate that passion killings have occurred in the past, but they were not as intense as they have been since the beginning of 2001. See for example Botswana Gazette 1 July 1988 which reports that a husband killed his wife brutally.

¹⁰Botswana Police Crime Statistics, 2008.

¹¹*True Love* magazine, November 2005.

Patriarchy, Gender Inequality and Construction of Masculinities

A number of scholars have defined patriarchy as a system of power that renders men powerful and women powerless; it is a system that advocates for male supremacy and female subordination. (Dowling, 2007:4).¹² Simply explained patriarchy is an organised system of privilege where most men are the benefactors and privileged by the system and women are not. According to Nyambura Njoroge, “patriarchy is a destructive powerhouse, with systemic and normative inequalities as its hallmark” (Njoroge, 1997:81). Patriarchy thrives on the inequality between men and women and it functions within a paradigm that places women at the bottom of the hierarchy by clearly constructing unequal gender roles between men and women. Men are constructed as aggressive, emotionally strong, providers, and as political, spiritual and economic leaders, while women are constructed as opposites. Patriarchal norms have for a long time given men power over women and have in the process, disempowered women and cast them in very subordinate position. This social construction of images of men and women legislates and legitimizes the subordination and the killing of women by men, although it may not be the overt intention of patriarchy or patriarchal communities.

Men are in control of their own lives and those of women; they have control over women’s bodies. They are bestowed with power in relation to women which gives them a sense of entitlement and ownership. It is this imbalance of power that perpetuates and authorizes some men to violate women and even kill them. History has shown us that where there is inequality, there is always oppression. Whenever there are inequalities between people there will always be a powerful group and a powerless group. The powerful group enjoy all the privileges, whereas the powerless groups do not have any privileges, are most often marginalized, dehumanized and killed. For example, in the 1940s the relationship between the Jews

¹²See also, Wren, 1989:32.

and the Germans was a relationship of inequality and it was that inequality that saw thousands of Jews massacred. The same thing happened during the apartheid regime in South Africa. This system was based on inequality between races, which saw atrocities committed against the powerless races, the blacks, Indians and others. Therefore, patriarchy as a system that thrives on the inequality between men and women marginalizes women to such an extent that it is within this system that some women are “passion killed” by some members of the powerful group: the men. The global community joined hands to denounce and criticize the apartheid regimes of the world, pressuring communities that held onto this system to finally give it up. The same awareness must happen with patriarchy; it is a “destructive powerhouse” that needs to be dismantled in order to dissolve the inequalities between men and women. These inequalities are the breeding ground for violence against women, “passion killings” included.

Patriarchal norms have constructed images of men that are sometimes dangerous and destructive. Men have been socialized to keep women under their control. When some men experience loss of that control, they can become frustrated and act out this frustration by committing acts of violence toward the women in their lives. Frustrated males desperately want to possess and keep control of the female body by apportioning for themselves the right to take women’s lives. It is this power over women that make them so dangerous. Patriarchal norms have endorsed violence against women and allowed some men to resort to violence, including the extreme form, “passion killings,” therefore “violence against women can be seen as the outgrowth of patriarchal social constructs that define the relationship between women and men as one of subordination and domination.” (Anderson, 2004:108).

Dominant Images of Men and Women in Botswana

Botswana is a patriarchal and patrilineal society. Like most patriarchal societies, the Setswana culture privileges men over women and men have enormous power over women. (Maundeni, 2001:73;

Machacha, 2001:88). In Botswana, “men have power at all levels of society, from positions as legal heads of households...to their strong control over women in public institutions” (Machacha, 2001:85). The dominant images of manhood in Botswana society are that men are material and economic providers and women are economically dependent on them.¹³ (Maundeni, 2001:74). In a romantic relationship between husband and wife, girlfriend and boyfriend, men are socialized to provide for the material needs of the women; men are supposed to spend money on “their” women to prove their manhood and masculinity. This creates a “dependency syndrome” in women; they tend to rely heavily on the men for economic survival. But in the end that dependency leads to the subordination of women and this subordination leads to diminished control over their lives. Whereas romantic relationships are supposed to be built on mutuality and reciprocity, aggressive masculinities promote negative power relationships. The tragedy of this dependency is that women have also internalized their powerlessness; they continue to stay in abusive relationships because that is “just how things are,” that is what the culture expects them to do. Women’s ways of knowing, thinking and acting are products of their cultures, such that when they live in a community where women are regarded as “secondary citizens” and “sexual objects,” they accept that perception. Women are expected to keep quiet about their partners’ violent behaviours and abuse. This is reinforced by older married women, who tell the younger ones when they enter into marriage to expect and endure hardship. Because these younger women expect these hardships, they remain in relationships even when they become abusive.¹⁴ (Chirongoma, 2006a:48-65). A newly married woman is advised by elderly women

¹³The socialization of men boys and men is the responsibility of both men and women. When boys are still small it is the women who teach them how to be a boys and/or men by teaching them in speech and in action behaviours, expectations, assumptions and attitudes that are expected from a boy and/or man.

¹⁴See also Chirongoma S. 2006b.

that a wife must not question her husband's about his whereabouts; he can walk in and out of the house anytime. The wife should just ensure that she is always there whenever he comes to the house and meet his every need. They are also taught that a man is like an ox, they cannot build a kraal around him, and a man is like a gourd, which is shared by many people, thus a woman is instructed to be permissive of her husband's infidelity.¹⁵

Women who dare to question the man's whereabouts risk being beaten. If they report the abuse to their families or communities, they are often told to go back to their husbands. Therefore some women have internalized violence against them—emotional, physical and otherwise—as their lot and as part of who they are. For those who might be willing to defy these cultural norms, there is fear to leave the relationship because they may be subjected to violence which may include “passion killing.” Fear of being violated as well as economic dependency on men may also make some women to stay in abusive relationships.¹⁶ Therefore, in the words of Isabel Phiri, in these relationships “there is no partnership but male domination and female submission.” (Phiri, I. 2002:21). Further it is this female submission that exposes more and more women to HIV and AIDS infection as they are not in full control of their lives and sexualities, as such they are not empowered to negotiate safer sex practices with their partners.

¹⁵Tabona Shoko, Gift Masengwe and Jairus Hlatswayo, writing within the Zimbabwean context in this volume also reiterate the same tradition.

¹⁶Machacha, 2001:85; Maundeni, 2001:74-75, problematizes women's dependency on men. She argues that patriarchal values have made women believe and perceive themselves as economically dependent on men, yet so many women support their families with the little they have with no real support from their partners. This is well as long as we also acknowledge that many women are really economically dependent on their partners, that is why they may find it hard to leave abusive relationships. See also WILSA, 2002.

It is socially and culturally acceptable for men, married or not, to have multiple sex partners. (Machacha, 2001:87). The Setswana language, the most powerful tool in the construction of masculinities, is rife with proverbs and sayings that encourage men to have multiple sex partners and thus making it permissible for men to be promiscuous. For example, *monna ke poo ga agelwe lesaka*, meaning “a man is like an ox, and one cannot build a kraal around him” and *monna ga a botswe ko a go tswang*, meaning “a man’s whereabouts should never be questioned by his partner.” These sayings and proverbs encourage men to be promiscuous, and promiscuity is one of the ways in which HIV is transmitted. While the society constructs the promiscuous male, he is also expected to be fearless and this can be catastrophic in this time of HIV and AIDS pandemic. “Men, who have been constructed to be fearless, brave and sometimes reckless, think it is manly when they refuse to admit that unprotected sex can lead to HIV and AIDS infection.” (Dube, 2003:88). Such an attitude is lethal because it obviously can lead to the man being HIV infected thus in turn infecting their partner. Some of my male friends have told me that they have had unprotected sex with women who are believed to be HIV positive, just to prove that they are “strong, real men.” They engage in reckless behaviour that has the potential to expose them and their partners to HIV because as men, they are supposed to be brave and take risks. These very men go back to their partners and have unprotected sex with them. This construction of masculinity is dangerous for both men and women, and especially women; they stand the risk of being infected with HIV because they are not expected to “refuse the sexual advances of their male partners.”¹⁷ Further, it takes away the women’s power to negotiate, suggest and practice safe sex. Women who insist that their partners use a condom risk being accused of unfaithfulness and perhaps violence directed towards them.

The work force of a country reflects society’s patterns of power, understanding of gender and gender roles. In Botswana the institutions

¹⁷Women’s NGO Coalition and SARDC WIDSAA, 2005.

that are associated with law enforcements (which requires fearlessness and bravery), for example the Botswana Defence Force, Botswana Police, security companies and others are predominantly male.¹⁸ This exclusion of women from law enforcements agencies speaks volumes about the construction of images of men and women; it speaks volumes about the bravery of men and the timidity of women. As illustrated above this kind of gender construction may lead to men engaging in risky behaviour (they are fearless after all) which may bring harm to them and their partners.¹⁹

Male superiority makes it difficult for men to accept rejection, because they have been given privilege for so long, rejection equals failure and loss of control. When a love relationship fails or when the woman decides she does not want to be in a relationship anymore, the man's masculinity comes into question as they lose control over the woman, and to regain that, some men may resort to violence such as rape and "passion killing." "Passion killings" then become a deadly mechanism for dealing with failure. After all, they are expected by the patriarchal society to be in control of their lives and that of "their" women and resorting to violence is one way of exercising that control. "Passion killings" are an assertion of the power to control and possess women's bodies by apportioning themselves the right to kill them; if the woman seems uncontrollable, the only way to control her is to kill her. Patriarchal norms have allowed some men to feel powerful and in control as long as women feel powerless. Studies in Botswana have indicated that patriarchal masculinities depend on the powerlessness of women; men depend on the powerlessness of

¹⁸The Botswana Defence Force only recently recruited women in the army; they are still in training in Tanzania. There are some women in the Botswana police and security companies, but these institutions are still male-dominated.

¹⁹Writing within the context of Kenya and the Democratic republic of Congo respectively, Julius Gathogo and Lubunga Ewusha in his volume make reference to this contention.

women in order to continue feeling powerful.²⁰ When women are controlled and subjugated the patriarchal man thrives and feels in control and when the man cannot own and control the woman, it is a sign of weakness, failure and powerlessness.

Passion Killings

The social construction of images of men and women authorizes the subordination and killings of women by men. “Passion killings” and violence against women are the result of Tswana society’s constructed images of men as aggressive, sexually assertive, leaders and strong. A real man is the one who is able to keep “his woman” under control. “Passion killings” are the “culmination of a long-standing pattern of controlling behaviour, and [are] motivated by the need to control and possess one’s partner.” (True Love, 2005). “Passion killings” and violence against women are a result of the pathological and destructive socio-cultural construction of masculinity, where the man is the controller and the woman is to be controlled. When men kill women, power dynamics, and specifically the power dynamics are always implicated. Batterers kill not because they lose control (of themselves, as the “passion” explanation of the murder suggests), but because they want to exert control over their partners. (Gabaitse, et al, 2005:7). Women are systemically abused and violated in intimate relationships because of this outdated socio-cultural construct, therefore “passion killings” are a sign of patriarchal crisis and render patriarchal norms outdated, useless and extremely dangerous. Frustrated males grasp desperately to possess and maintain control of the female body by apportioning for themselves the right to take women’s lives.

Reconstructing Masculinities

Ideologies of masculinity are constructs, and as constructs they can be questioned, reconstructed and deconstructed. Men and women

²⁰Women’s NGO Coalition and SARDC WIDSAA, 2005.

learn how to behave from their communities and cultures; therefore they can unlearn what they have learned. Individuals are both recipients and initiators of culture and social practices, as such, both men and women constantly negotiate their lived realities throughout life. This may be manifested either by conforming to set cultural norms or seeking other modes of behaviour, especially when the set cultural norms are regarded as either inadequate or flawed. What this means is that destructive masculinities can be unlearned, especially when they threaten the well-being and lives of people. "Passion killings" have demonstrated that holding on to patriarchal norms that elevate the status of men and devalue women is dangerous. There is a great need to examine whether the existing constructions of masculinities and femininities are still worth holding on to and maintaining. The hegemonic definition of manhood and a perverted version of masculinity are literally killing women. As a community, we need to develop and nurture alternative masculinities, masculinities which do not thrive on violence against women, children and other men. The starting point for doing this is to re-socialize both men and women so that they have equal responsibility in shaping new masculinities which thrive on life-giving values and principles; the kind of masculinity that will denounce and subvert hierarchies and inequalities between men and women as well as denounce violence of any kind, especially violence against women, as abnormal and evil.

Men and women should be taught the value of *botho*.²¹ *Botho* is a Bantu concept that stresses genuine concern for the well-being of others, both relatives and strangers. It is expressed in ways that respect God as the creator of life and in ways that recognize that no human being has the right to torture or kill another person. According

²¹*Botho*, also known as *Ubuntu* among other Bantu groups, is an African concept that stresses caring for others in need and pain, exercising compassion, patience, kindness, display of non-violent attributes and putting the needs of others before our own. It basically means, "I am because we are."

to Desmond Tutu, a person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs to a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed. (Tutu, 1999). *Botho* or having *botho* is a quality, a virtue of human value that encourages preservation of life and discourages violence and any act that diminishes or takes away a person's life. When *botho* is applied to daily life and challenges; it requires that a person think of the needs and survival of others before seeking their own. It requires that all people, men and women, engage in life-giving activities that enhance and preserve the lives of other people.

When men are taught *botho*, they are taught to respect every living creature and to respect women on the basis that they are simply human, alive and bear the image of God. Whenever a man violates a woman he should know that more than anything they are destroying the very essence and being of God. They will be taught to adopt attributes of a human being that are life-giving and life-enhancing. *Botho* discourages violent masculinities, because they diminish life. As such, men who violate and kill women can be characterised as lacking that value. Communities should be taught that life is sacred and it has to be persevered with at all cost. If it means dissolving gender inequalities and doing away with our constructions of men and women, then so be it. *Botho* requires that men and women have life and have it in abundance, so much so that a community that has *botho* is a community that speaks openly and eloquently against gender injustices, especially violence against women.

The transformation of masculinities to counter gender-based violence needs to be handled at the different levels of socialization. The following section outlines these different areas and indicates how families, communities and Churches need to be actively involved in transforming hegemonic masculinities.

Family

The family is the basic unit among diverse social structures and it offers the first line of socialization. It has been observed that many perpetrators of violence against women witness violence in the family when they are growing up. It is therefore vital for parents and guardians to provide effective leadership in this area. Fathers in particular must refrain from using violence in the home as this sets a wrong example for children. In addition, boys and girls must be treated equally and given the same set of values; they should be socialised in the same way and manner.²² Families should refrain from telling boys not to cry because it's feminine to do so. This may sound and seem harmless, but it is not. It is part of constructing violent men, who act out their anger by using violence.

School

The school system offers a lot of hope in the transformation of masculinities. Unfortunately, in most instances the school system in Botswana and elsewhere has reinforced gender stereotypes, by socialising boys and girls differently. For example boys are encouraged to take science subjects and girls are encouraged to take courses such as home economics. Hilda Rolls notes that South African primary school learners' sexual identity construction is informed by "the nature of the games they played and the extent to which these were gendered and sexualized, name calling, division of labour and the chores they performed in and out of school, and the influence of

²²Children are socialized from before they are born, when a woman is carrying a boy, blue clothes and ribbons are bought, when it is a girl pink clothes fill the house. Boys will play with trucks, cars and guns, while girls play with dolls and teacups. We should therefore ask ourselves what it means to buy a gun for a boy child and a set of teacups for a girl child. These are not innocent gestures but one way in which notions of gender roles are constructed. They are loaded with messages about notions of manhood, womanhood and ultimately who is marginalized and who is empowered.

the media and religion on sexual identity.”²³ (Rolls, H. 2009). It is therefore vital that schools be actively involved in nurturing positive masculinities by speaking against the gendered division of chores, the gendered choice of subjects and games. Schools could make it part of their curriculum to openly denounce hierarchies and socialize both boys and girls against violence, chances are some may resist it later on in life.

Churches

Churches in Botswana have tended to be patriarchal; they promote male dominance and women submission. Women are taught to be submissive and men are told to be heads of households without interrogating what that might mean and how these messages contribute to violence against women. Therefore it is important that the Church start interrogating ways in which the Bible is used to perpetuate violence against women. It should start to be intentional about teachings that are aimed at promoting life-giving masculinities instead of focusing on biblical texts that promote gender inequality between men and women.

Further the Church could start focusing more on texts which promote equality between men and women, such as Acts 2:17-18. Sermons could focus more on the God of life, love and peace; this is the message that the Church in Botswana needs to pursue, instead on focusing on trivial issues like the headship of man. Who cares about the headship of man when women are dying because of violence?

Through the Sunday school curriculum, Churches can play a major role in denouncing violence against women, thus preparing

²³"Masculinising and Feminising Identities: Factors Shaping Primary School Learners' Sexual Identity Construction in the Context of HIV/AIDS," in J. Baxen and A. Breidlid (eds), *HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding the Implications of Culture and Context*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 68.

boys and young men for gender justice. Pastors can also utilize the sacred space offered by the pulpit to promote gender equity and to denounce violence against women. If sermons are to be contextually sensitive, they must address the rising violence against women in the form of “passion killings.” Women’s and men’s groups need to be equipped with proper biblical teachings in order to be able to challenge aggressive masculinities. By taking these steps, Churches will be contributing towards the eradication of violence against women thus allowing women to experience life in abundance as promised in John 10:10 and the gospels in general. The gospel of life that is preached in the pulpits must be able to challenge imposed suffering on women and humanity, it must be able to challenge all forms of injustices and proclaim abundant life for all. Then the Church will become a safe space for all women.

Conclusion

“Passion killings” serve as a chilling reminder of the danger of patriarchy and they confirm that hegemonic masculinities regard women as objects to be owned and disposed of at the whims of men. The increase of “passion killings” in Botswana testifies to the crisis that masculinities are facing. Fortunately, masculinities are susceptible to transformation, therefore life-giving masculinities can be nurtured in homes, schools, communities and Churches. This chapter proposes and anticipates the emergence of life-giving masculinities that challenge gender-based violence to create a new world order based on justice and equality for all.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Youth Masculinities and Violence in an HIV and AIDS Context: Sketches from Botswana Cultures and Pentecostal Churches

Musa W. Dube

Churches need to engage with men in order to transform dangerous ideas about manhood in Africa. The HIV epidemic calls for the immediate action on attitudes to sex and sexual violence.

In the age of HIV and AIDS, masculinity and manhood roles, tendencies and attitudes have become matters of life and death. (Chitando, 2007:46 and Maluleke, 2007)

Defining the Problem: Violent Youth Masculinities in one HIV and AIDS Context

In the past 28 years of living with HIV and AIDS and the effort to contain its spread, Botswana has undertaken an intense promotion of the sexual ethics of abstinence from premarital sex for adolescents and young adults consistent and correct condom use for the sexually active and faithfulness among those in committed

relationships. This promotion has been marked by a parallel male discourse of resistance that has taken three different forms over time.¹ The first stage of resistance was characterized by counter-myth and sayings. One saying, counteracting the promotion of condom use held that *ga o kake wa ja nekere e phuthetswe*, that is, “one cannot eat a wrapped candy.” (Shaibu & Dube, 2002:7). It is not an exaggeration that in an HIV and AIDS context, a penis could be a deadly shot of HIV-infected sperms, hence the promotion of condoms. Be that as it may, the masculinities of resistance insisted on unprotected sex by constructing the penis as a candy—a sweet candy, one that must be fully enjoyed, unwrapped. This is one saying among a whole host within the counter-discourse that sought to resist the promotion of condom use, including mythologies such as “condoms have worms.” (Ibid.:7). In our research, focusing on high school-going adolescents on *Gender, Sexuality, HIV and AIDS and Life Skills in Education*, the boys said they never admit to a fear of HIV and AIDS: “We brag when with friends, claiming to be kings of AIDS.” (Chilisa et al, 2002:112). Memorably, when we asked them what they had heard about HIV and AIDS, one of them answered that some people say, “let us have sex now, for in the future HIV

¹Although I discuss three forms of male resistance, I believe they can be five: the strategy of HIV positive male partners who insisted, against the will of their female partners and during the times when HIV Prevention of Mother to Child Programmes were not available, to have children; and the rise of multiple concurrent partners. The latter are quite different from the traditional practice of the so-called “small house,” which allowed a married man to be involved with another woman who was not his wife but who was officially reported to his wife, family and children and was known to the wider society. The so-called small houses were some form of polygamy; although the man could choose not to marry the second woman, it was a known and life-time relationship. In the HIV and AIDS context, small houses have evolved into the multiple concurrent partners, counteracting the HIV messages. Consequently, the *National Campaign Plan: Multiple Concurrent Partnership* of Botswana was launched March 2009.

will be airborne!” (Ibid.:105). Obviously, this saying is a powerful counter to the promotion of abstinence, and constructs HIV as less dangerous in its current transmission form.

These seemingly playful myths take a turn towards physical violence in the second and third forms of resistance, namely, rape and femicide-suicide. Teaching on abstinence from premarital sex, correct and consistent use of a condom and faithfulness in committed relationships was publicly intensified. However, there was an apparent rise of rape to levels that Botswana had never seen prior to the era of HIV and AIDS. (Botswana Police, 1999). Consequently, the *Report of the Study of Rape in Botswana* states that its study “arises from growing social concern at the increasing levels of violence against women in Botswana at a time when the HIV and AIDS epidemic shows no sign of abating.” (Ibid.:1). The rise of HIV and AIDS and the rise of violence against women in Botswana, in other words, became competing epidemics. The *Report of the Study of Rape in Botswana* points out that,

The most significant finding of the study is that rape is rising. Often rape is preceded by physical violence that begins in public. This violence tends to be ignored by witnesses, especially when the man and woman are assumed to be lovers. This “domestic violence” escalates into rape. This form of violence is firmly and clearly situated on a continuum of violence and is not separate and different from other forms of “domestic violence.” (Ibid.:i)

In the four years covered by the study, there is an observable increase in recorded cases: 1995 had 1056 cases; 1996, 1107 cases; 1997, 1183 and 1998, 1310. (Ibid.:16). The statistics data collected from the police headquarters show the following rape yearly rape statistics: 2003 had 1506 cases; 2004 had 1517; 2005 had 1540; 2006, 1534; 2007, 1596 and 2008, 1875. (Botswana Police, 2009).

The exponential rise of rape thus characterized the 1990s, contradicting the intense teaching of abstinence, condomizing and faithfulness in committed relationships. It is the position of this paper that rape became a masculine discourse of refusal to abstain, to

condomize or to be faithful in this context. It became an insistence on taking women's bodies without condoms and without any faithfulness. It was a rejection of the ABCs of HIV and AIDS prevention—that is, the masculinities of resistance rejected the strategy of abstinence, being faithful and condomizing. According to Marie Fortune, “a definition of rape begins with the Latin root *rapere*, “to seize.” The focus in English is to seize and carry away by force,” or “to force another person to engage in sexual intercourse.” (1996:309). However, Brian Wren points out that rape is not just about a few deviant men, rather “a few men commit rape, but all benefit from the violence of those who do, since it instills in women the need for male protection, thus keeping them in a subordinate place.” This includes ensuring that they are forced to stay in the home, where there is some assumed safety. (1989:42).

In the new millennium and the third stage, the Botswana male discourse of resistance intensified its gender-based violence, bringing it to a new level. It took a turn towards what has become commonly known as passion killings.² This involves young men, mostly teenagers and youths in their twenties, killing their girlfriends and then killing themselves, although the 2008 statistics indicate that only a third of perpetrators committed suicide. Passion killing is therefore the killing of women by men who were their intimate partners. According to police statistics, in 2003 46 women were killed; in 2004, 52 women were killed by their partners; in 2005 they were 73 and in 2006 they were 59; in 2007 they were 86 and in 2008, 80 female victims of passion were killed by 74 males who were once their lovers. (Botswana Police, 2009). These so-called passion killings are a gender-based violence that largely involves the killing of young unmarried women in gruesome ways by their boyfriends. In the 80 cases that occurred in 2008, for example, only two cases involved married couples. Moreover, the statistics from 2003 to 2009 show a rising trend of violence, rather than a decline. If we put this type of violence within a longer time span, the rise of

²See also the chapters by Gabaitse and Berman in this volume.

violence becomes even more evident. The Women in Law report published in 1995 “lists names of 46 women who were killed by husbands and lovers between 1985 and 1991.”³ But now, with 80 cases occurring in 2008 alone, it means that there is at least one case occurring each week. For instance, in the first ten weeks of 2009, fifteen cases had already occurred in which fifteen women lost their lives. (Botswana Police, 2009). The so-called passion killings have become daily bread, forcefully served on our plates.

The methods of killing Botswana women have been brutal. The 81 women victims of 2008 were killed in the following fashions: 32 knifed, 16 killed with a sharp object/instrument, 2 strangled, 4 assaulted, 2 burnt in the house with their children, 2 suffocated, 4 axed, 2 killed with a metal rod, 2 shot, 1 hit with mortar, 1 hit with a spade, 1 hit with a stone, 1 choked, 1 slashed, 1 hit with a stick and 1 had paraffin poured on her and set alight. Where some incidents have been covered on TV, with pre-warning to the viewers, the scenes of murder have been gruesome and cruel. The eruption of these extremely violent masculinities among Botswana youth has been a shock to the Botswana nation as a whole. People ask, “Where is this violence coming from? What is happening to our boys and men?” Parents agonize, asking “Will my teenage son do this? Will my young adult daughter be killed by her boyfriend?” Above all, boyfriends and girlfriends, lovers, cannot escape from the spoken and unspoken text in the air—namely, “Will my lover become my murderer?” And the statistics answer yes to that question.

While Wren says that a few rapists do it for all other men, they also do it to all other women. This became quite evident with the beginning of the so-called passion killings of Botswana: If you were a man in a relationship, you could not escape from the attestation that you were a potential murderer of your lover and that your girlfriend knew and feared for her life. If you were a woman, you could not rule out the possibility that your lover, the one who holds you in warm arms of love, could become your murderer. The need to

³Quoted in Monyatsi, 2006:17.

hide all knives, axes, stones and mortars before you slept was now a silent routine for women. Fear gripped many women in relationships. With each new case reported in the news, one could not help but feel, “I could and can be the murdered woman.”⁴ Since we say, “I am because we are,” our bodies are as individual as they are as social. Each knife that stabbed, each axe that cut, each gun that shot, each woman’s body set alight, has equally damaged the social body, of which we are all parts. I have personally felt knifed, axed, mortared, slashed, torched to death and shot with every case that I hear reported. I bear upon my body the wounds of the women who died and I live in their dying terror. I write this chapter as part of my mourning for the women who have died, for my own loss of security and as an effort to find resurrection from this gender-based violence that harms the bodies of individuals and the body of the community alike.

Indeed as I was writing this chapter, I spotted an article entitled “Passion Killers,” written by a male author and addressed to Batswana males, which is worth quoting a bit, even though the author’s focus on men borders on overlooking that women are in fact the victims. He writes,

It looks like the new season has just begun. The killings have started again and it seems there is nothing anybody can do about it. They have given them all kinds of titles, from passion killings to murder-suicides to crimes of passion to whatever they chose to call them. How do you destroy your life over a lady? Life is so precious and full of opportunities and I can think of so many ways of getting over a broken heart. It is about time Batswana men learnt that the

⁴I have to say that the so-called passion killings have worried every average Motswana woman as they have worried the average Motswana man. Intensified efforts were carried from various quarters to control them, until such a time that no one speaks or seems to notice them, while in fact the numbers are growing higher. We have become, perhaps, a violence sponge community – one that absorbs and lives with it, while it seems to maintain its normal shape.

end of relationship is not the end of the world... I am just trying to show guys that there is light at the end of a tunnel and whether or not they choose to see it is their prerogative. You can always learn to love again. (Tuthpic, 2009:T3)

Passion killing has been a major puzzle to Botswana, a country which once prided itself as a peace-loving nation. This puzzle continues. Consequently, Lieutenant General Ian Khama Seretse Khama, the current President of Botswana, set up a committee consisting of Church leaders and members of the house of chiefs three months after his inauguration, to investigate the social ills pestering the nation. The mandate of the committee was “to consult with the public and determine causes of social ills that afflict communities, such as domestic violence, rape, child abuse, youth indiscipline, and to recommend to government possible strategies for addressing such ills.”⁵ In fact, the former president, Festus Mogae, and the police had also started the process of commissioning a study, consisting of scholars from law, sociology, religion, psychology and social work to investigate the causes of the so-called passion killings, a move that was not pursued due to insufficient funds.

Through the escalating rape and passion killings, Botswana has experienced a violent masculine identity, especially amongst the youth in the HIV and AIDS context. This manhood is expressed by forcefully taking women’s bodies and lives—insisting on unprotected sex through rape, or brutal murder featuring mostly younger adult men. For example, if we look at the 2008 police statistics of passion killings, it is evident that younger men are the perpetrators: Among the 74 male perpetrators, 39 of them were between 19–29, which is more than 50 percent of the total perpetrators. If we stretch the group to include those in their 30s, the number rises to 63, which is more than three quarters of the perpetrators. Out of the 74 perpetrators, only nine were aged between 40 and 59, making it clear that violence is more prevalent among younger men than older men. Similarly, the

⁵*The Monitor*, Monday 7 July 2008.

2009 statistics for the first ten weeks of the year are consistent with 2008 findings. It features fifteen cases, yet 9 of the male perpetrators are in the age range 17–29. If we add those in the 30s, the number rises to 13. Out of 15, only two of the perpetrators were older, aged 40 and 75. The findings of the Report of a Study of Rape in Botswana are consistent with the passion killings statistics; it found that “almost 44 percent of suspects are under 22 years of age and nearly 66 percent are under 28 years.” (1999:ii). There is a strong evidence that violence is much more prevalent amongst youthful populations. In short, it has become apparent that Setswana masculinities and the self-understanding of contemporary Batswana males need to be studied, since gender-based violence is growing among them.

This chapter is, therefore, exploratory. It seeks to examine masculinities constructed in contemporary Churches by focusing on some cases of Pentecostal masculinities: how they correspond or divert from Setswana normative construction of manhood; how they embrace gender-based violence, and their implications for HIV prevention. The chapter will first assess indigenous constructions of masculinity, commenting along the way on the impact of colonialism, Christianity, urbanization and globalization of Western media on constructions of masculine identities in Botswana. The data is drawn from available literature and other fieldwork-based studies. But first, it is important to briefly define the word masculinity or masculinities.

Defining of Masculinity

According to Mike Leach, masculinity

operates politically at different levels. At one level, it is a form of identity, a means of self-understanding that structures personal attitudes and behaviours. At another level, masculinity can be seen as a form of ideology, in that it presents a set of cultural ideals that define appropriate roles, values and expectations for and of men. Most importantly, masculinity is not “natural.” Unlike the biological state of maleness, masculinity is a gender identity constructed socially, historically and politically. It is the cultural interpretation of maleness, learnt through participation in society and institutions.

The social and cultural character of masculinity is evidenced by cross-cultural variations in masculine styles, and by historical changes in the dominant definitions of manhood. (1994:36)

In their study *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Gary Barker and Christine Ricardo also point out that masculinities are,

(i) socially constructed; (ii) fluid over time and indifferent settings; and (iii) plural. There is no typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa and there is no one version of manhood... There are in turn numerous African masculinities, urban and rural and changing historically. There are versions of manhood associated with war, or being warriors, and others associated with farming or cattle-herding. There are both indigenous definitions and versions of manhood, defined by tribal and ethnic group practices as well as historically newer versions of manhood shaped by Islam and Christianity, and by Western influences, including global media. An African young man may perceive gender norms from traditional rites of passage and elders in his cultural group, just as he may receive messages about manhood from rap songs from the U.S. (2005:4)

In his book *What Language Shall I Borrow: God Talk in Worship*, Brian Wren underlines that, “A key word for masculinity as we know it is *control*. A true man is a man in control—of himself, of others, of events, and of the feminine in himself and others. Control is an apt word; it suggests a predominance that can often be taken for granted.” (1989:15). It is easy to see how the context of HIV and AIDS presented a whole range of challenges to masculinity, for it was an epidemic that did not easily lend itself to control. Indeed, with more effort to control the HIV epidemic, the more it escalated, presenting individuals and communities alike with their helplessness, powerlessness and vulnerability. The nature of HIV and AIDS presented itself as a great challenge to masculinity. Further, the many efforts that were put in place to control its spread, such as condomizing and faithfulness, also took away the power of Batswana

men over women's bodies: that is, whereas Setswana masculinities included giving men the sexual freedom to have an extra-marital relationship, with HIV-prevention messages, faithfulness was now encouraged. Whereas patriarchal masculinities constructed women's bodies as being available for the sexual enjoyment of their male partners, HIV prevention tampered with these rights by insisting on condomizing. With condoms, the message was that a Motswana man does not have a right to deposit his sperms in a woman—she was no longer there as his free depository. All sperms were to be captured in the condoms and deposed in the trash can. The result, as the above introduction highlights, was a male discourse of resistance that took various stages and forms. Firstly, there were myths designed to resist the use of the condom. Secondly, there was a determination to take women's bodies by force, through rape. Thirdly came the femicide-suicide approach, which is predominantly common among young adults. I am of course not including in this list HIV-positive married men and those in stable relationships who insisted on having babies against the will of their female partners.

But why did the young male Batswana adults in particular resort to one of the most intense forms of violence—killing their young female Batswana adults in a spate known as “passion killings” in Botswana?⁶ This is an area that, no doubt, still needs careful and thorough research, especially since the data features dead people, hence is more likely to focus on interviewing the surviving relatives and friends to build a profile of the perpetrators and victims. Nevertheless, it seems that the crux of the matter lies in the HIV and AIDS epidemic's impact on masculinity and its cultural rights, as

⁶Log Radithokwa, “Social File,” in the *Midweek Sun*, Wed, 3 June 2009, 8, holds that “because of the social confusion inflicted upon the society by the forces of rapid change, we have lost positive cultural values, which used to keep society intact. As a consequence, we are tormented by expensive social problems like gender violence, family instability, murder-suicide, alcohol and drug misuse, child abuse and lack of respect for elders.”

discussed above, but also in so-called intergenerational sexual relations, where older men use their material power to go out with younger female adults. This is mostly because they believe the latter are less likely to be HIV-positive, because some prefer younger women, (UNDP Botswana, 2000:26-27), and in some instances because some HIV-positive older men believe that having sexual relations with younger girls can cleanse them of HIV. (Seloilwe & Ntseane, 2000:30). Indeed, in a study carried out amongst schoolchildren in Botswana on *Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS and Life Skills in Education*,

During focus group interviews, boys blamed girls for going out with older men who provide them with material things and take them for rides in their cars. The boys said such men like schoolgirls because they believe that “schoolgirls are HIV negative and there is no risk when one sleeps with them.” There was a strong feeling that such men should be punished for spreading HIV/AIDS. Girls were also blamed for sleeping with boys that they knew had other girlfriends. (Chilisa et al, 2006:108)

The intergenerational sexual relations obviously place non-working, young male adults at a disadvantage since they do not have the material power—car, cash and cell—that are supposedly sought by young female adults from older adult men. As the above quote from Tuthpic indicates, most passion killings occur when the female seeks to end the relationship. The male, feeling frustrated, out of control and suspecting that the girl is off to see an older man who has more material power, decides to kill her and then kills himself. The 2008–2009 statistics, for example, indicate that 90 percent of the male perpetrators are from rural areas, where there are less employment opportunities. In *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict and Violence*, which covered Botswana, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa, Barker and Ricardo highlight that there is tension between older men and young men, pointing out that,

The concentration of power in the hands of big men and elders, or the generation of older men, continues to be a factor in Africa, leading to ongoing power struggles between older and younger men... One of the tensions between older and younger men is about access to women. In much of Africa adolescent women often marry older men, sometimes much older than they are, in part because these older men have resources to pay the bride-price... While such data has often been used to highlight the vulnerabilities of young women in relation to their generally older spouses, this data also suggests that older men have greater access to younger women, at the expense of younger men. (2005:12)

From the above definitions, it is clear that the construction of masculine identities is a process, which changes with time and varies according to different classes, ages, places, races and groups. There will be normative and less normative masculinities. It follows that masculinity is a social construction of male gender into socially acceptable values and practices of manhood in a particular place, culture, time, race, class or group. In the context of HIV and AIDS in Botswana, there has been a rise of violent masculinities among young men.

With this introduction highlighting new and violent masculinities among young Botswana males, it is imperative to sketch how Setswana normative masculinities were constructed and how have they changed. It is also important to examine how the normative constructions of masculinities related to violence and its implications for HIV and AIDS prevention. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall also be asking about masculine identities constructed in Churches in general and in Pentecostal Churches in particular. In conclusion, I will give pointers towards redemptive masculinities in HIV and AIDS contexts. Let us now examine the traditional construction of masculinity in Setswana indigenous thinking.

Sketches of Setswana Construction of Indigenous Masculinities

Our quest here is to sketch how Setswana cultures constructed the identity of manhood. Needless to say, Setswana societies have greatly

changed in the past 150 years through the experience of colonization, Christianity, urbanization and the globalization of media that has transformed communities and the way in which identity is formed. Be that as it may, if one seeks to map the construction of normative masculinities among traditional Setswana societies, one would examine the names given to baby boys, the folktales that feature boys, the toys they used and the teaching and practice of initiation schools, which mark the point of crossing boundaries from childhood to adulthood. Further, one would have to understand Setswana masculine identities as a social construction of men within a community-oriented framework of flexible gender relations. (Amadiume, 1987:35). In other words, the society is not egalitarian, but neither is it exclusively male centred—as the discussions of Setswana spiritual space, naming, folktales and initiation teaching will demonstrate.

For the purposes of exploring masculinity among Churches, it is important to point out that the spiritual space of Batswana, and the Bantu as a whole, was not gendered. Consequently, the names of God in Setswana and Bantu cultures resisted gendering the Divine. For example, the names of God—such as Modimo, Mwari, Unkulunkulu, Tixo—had no male or female gender. (Ntloedibe-Kuswani, 2001:78-100; Mbuwayesango, 2001:63-77). Not only did the names avoid gendering God into a specific gender, they also avoided using gender attributes to God—hence God was neither named a mighty chief or warrior, although these usages have now become part of Bantu languages through biblical influence. Similarly, the intermediaries between God/Modimo were not gendered. The Badimo, or the Ancestors, always appeared in plural and without a specific gender. (Dube, 2001:179-185). Moreover, both women and men were eligible to be part of the Badimo community after death.

In the area of religious officials, both genders could assume the priestly positions and become *Sangomas*, *ngaka* and *wosana*. The gender-inclusive and community-oriented spiritual space was vital in sustaining and maintaining the somewhat gender-inclusive social relations. The flexible—rather than rigidly male-centred—gender

relations thus operated within a framework of community. (Mmualefe, 2004:4-17). The community expected certain values and relations to be maintained within family, with neighbours and within the whole society. Such sayings as *Motho ke motho ka batho* (“a person is only a person through other people”), “it takes a village to raise a child,” or the popularly known, “I am because we are,” are instructive here. One’s femininity and masculinity had to be expressed in full respect of the prevailing social relations and values of the community; that in itself greatly controlled occurrence of violence, gender-based violence and irresponsible extra-marital relations, since one was answerable to one’s whole family and community on one’s relationships, including with one’s partner and his/her family. Moreover, one’s failure and bad conduct did not just dent the actor’s reputation alone, but that of his or her whole family and relatives as well. Thus, one thought carefully about negative behaviour, for it had implications for the extended family, who did not wish to disrespect their neighbours and community as a whole. This same extended family and community also offered much counselling and support to help people to live in peaceful relationships, unlike the urban and individually oriented communities of today.

There are three major things, among others, that introduced dramatic change in Setswana societies and the formation of their male and female identities. Firstly, colonial culture and Christianity eroded the flexible gender relations by reinforcing the exclusive domination of male gender. (Amadiume, 1987:119-121). Not only was the British culture male-centred, it brought a spiritual space that gendered the Divine along a patriarchal economy. God the Father and Jesus, his son, were both male, while the gender of the Holy Spirit and its role remains somewhat ambiguous and less powerful. The maleness of God and Jesus made masculine the Setswana spiritual space that was gender-neutral. The priestly leaders in Church were similarly male. This masculine Christian spiritual space contributed to legitimizing male power in heaven and on earth. The masculinity of the Divine space and entities in Christian thinking is, as Wren notes, not inconsequential, for, “if language powerfully

shapes our thinking and behaviour, then the maleness of God-language, where God is traditionally “He,” “King,” “Shepherd,” “Lord,” and “Father” becomes a crucial issue.” (1989:55). As attested in the New Testament text, the Christian scriptures with their Greek-informed household codes, Ephesians 5:21 – 6:1-9; Colossians 3:18 – 4:1; 1 Peter 2:1 – 3:1-7, seek to align the spiritually oriented male-dominated space with the social space. The male-centred spiritual and social identities reinforce each other. Accordingly, 1 Timothy 2:8–11, which constructs a Church model along a model of andocentric household codes, 1Tim. 3, holds that, “I allow no woman to have power over a man. Let her learn in silence.”

Secondly, urbanization, in cities, towns and villages that became urban due to their size, eroded Setswana community structures so that one’s masculinity is not tempered by communal accountability and values. With the weakened community framework, one notes that current and youthful masculinities lack community accountability and support. Thirdly, in the age of global information and media, the construction of manhood among young people is a product of many competing groups promoted by movies, TV, magazines and the Internet, which, once more, do not necessarily abide by Setswana communal values but promote individualism. The glamorized violence that appears in the video games, TV and movies that are highly valued by the so-called “.com generation” socializes younger people to think that violence is cool. In fact, the Setswana models of constructing identities of youth are seriously overtaken by the influence of Western media. Here we need to heed Barker and Ricardo as they point out that, “An African young man perceives gender norms from traditional rites of passage and elders in his cultural group, just as he may receive messages about manhood from rap songs from the USA.” (2005:4). With this background, let us briefly trace the construction of normative manhood in indigenous Setswana cultures by looking at the names, toys, stories and initiation schools.

To start with naming, the Setswana cultures have a both a gender-neutral and a gender-specific system of naming. Thus names

such as Tshepo (the one to trust), Thato (God's will), Kelebogile (Gratitude), Mpho (Gift) are given to both boys and girls. At the same time, there are gender-specific names that align one's gender with social expectations these names construct the femininity and masculinity of girls and boys. In the gender-specific names, girls can be named Bontle (the beautiful one), Segametsi (one who carries water) or Mosidi (one who grinds flour, Dube, 2003:90-91). Similarly, the gender-specific naming of boys was, perhaps, the first stage in constructing their manhood. It is therefore common to have boys named Modisaotsile (the shepherd), Kgosi or Kgosietsile (the leader) or Mojaboswa (the inheritor). The names associate manhood with wealth, leadership and property ownership and spell out the Setswana social expectations for a man.

Toys were also used to reinforce the gender-specific identity of Setswana manhood. Setswana being a cattle-centred society, boys made cattle with mud for their toys and learnt to own a herd of cattle from childhood. Girls, on the other hand, made rag dolls and played at mothering. When one looks at the folktales, there are many that are gender-neutral, featuring animal characters whose gender is not specified, but others reinforce the gender-specific ideology found in naming, in toys and games, by featuring boys and girls in gender-specific roles. For example, the story of Masilo and Masilonyana is about two brothers. The elder brother kills the younger brother for his over-productive cow, thus underlining the centrality for a man of owning a cow. In a sharp contrast to the Masilo story, in the story of Tsananapo, girls kill another girl for beauty. Similarly, some Setswana proverbs distance girls from leadership and cows, through popular sayings that hold that *Ga dinke dietelelwa ke manamagadi, di ka tloga tsa wela ka mamena*. That is, "Cattle and society cannot be led by women, since they would lead people down a sharp cliff to disaster." Back in the days when TV was not the family storyteller, both girls and boys were told these stories, sayings, riddles and proverbs in the evening as family entertainment, sitting around the fireplace in the evenings. The entertainment was a part of socializing boys and girls into their socially expected roles.

The initiation schools were another major space for communal and official education of Setswana youth into normatively ascribed femininity and masculinity. Both girls and boys underwent the initiation schools when they reached puberty, to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. In these schools they were specifically taught what society expects from them as adult men and women. While the above discussed constructions occurred at a family level, initiation schools marked the communal or official construction of teenage boys and girls into socially acceptable femininity and masculinity. Initiation schools were sanctioned by the village chief and the teachers and trainers were chosen officially at the village administrative level. The teaching at the initiation school represented an official or normative construction of manhood and womanhood at community level.

In the schools, they were specifically taught what society expects from them as adult men and women. In his book, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, of 1938, Isaac Schapera gives us a window into how man- and womanhood were officially constructed among teenagers. Describing the *bogwera*, the boys' initiation school, Schapera says,

At the camp the boys were first circumcised... They were then taught a number of secret formulae and songs, admonishing them to honour, obey the chief, to be ready to endure hardships and even death for the sake of the tribe; to be united as a regiment and help one another; to value cattle as the principal source of livelihood, and so herd them carefully; to attend the *kgotla* regularly as this was the place for men and to look after the fire; to honour and ungrudgingly obey old people; and to abandon boyish practices. Much on this instruction also dealt with the important topic of sex, the boys were taught the physiology of sex relations, the duty of procreation and other rules of conduct in married life and the dangers of promiscuous intercourse with ritually unclean women... They were... made to participate in strenuous hunting expeditions with the object of hardening them. (1938:105)

Describing *bojale*, the girls' initiation school, Schapera says,

The initiates...spent the greater part of each day out in the veldt. Here they were instructed by women in matters concerning womanhood, domestic and agricultural activities, sex and behaviour towards men. In the evenings they danced and sang at home, carrying out semi-public masquerades in honour of various deities forming a conspicuous part of their routine. Like boys, they were subjected to severe punishment and other hardship...These regiments, like those of men can be called upon by the chief to work for him or the tribe...They do such tasks as putting up the walls and thatching the roof of the hut at the *kgotla*, drawing water for any tribal or royal work, getting wood for the chief's wife, putting up huts in the chief's homestead. Cleaning the village, fetching earth and smearing the walls of the chief's homestead and weeding his wife's fields.

There is more that can be said about the Setswana constructions of gender identity. Schapera's description indicates that male construction involved obligation to the wider community, family, procreation, commitment to raising cattle, leadership, sexual ethics and the attributes of enduring hardships. The construction of femininity also involved obligation to public office or to the community, the role of agricultural production, house-building and maintenance, sexual ethics and the attribute of enduring hardships of life. Here peer pressure was officially constituted and harnessed for teenagers, and expected to last a lifetime, for the graduating regiment was taught "to be united as a regiment and to help one another." Consequently, each regiment was given a name, and membership constituted a lifetime commitment to one another with a collective reputation and identity within the community.

In this community-oriented and flexible-gender framework, we note that economic production consisted of the division of roles, men taking care of cattle and women focusing on taking care of agricultural production and house-building and maintenance. As said

earlier, the Setswana system was not egalitarian, but neither was it exclusively male-centred. The impact of colonialism and its male-gendered spiritual space was to shift the system from a community-oriented, flexible gender constructions towards individualism and male-oriented social and spiritual power. For example, the initiation schools were cancelled, particularly by missionaries who suspected heathen teachings and wanted to avoid conflict with their own schools. (Mgadla and Volz, 2006:127-138). Secondly, urbanization eroded the community framework and the responsibilities it tied to how one exercised manhood or womanhood. The globalization of Western media has been, perhaps, the latest and strongest competitor to Setswana young people's constructions of normative identity.

One thing notable in the construction of both genders is the capacity to endure hardships—which was taught through activities that included subjecting trainees to violence. It was applied to both genders. It is important to ask what endurance meant for different genders and its implications for sponsoring violence. I recall that when I was growing up, my mother often underlined that I should not cry, for the life of a woman is a hard life. One must be able to endure hardship in marriage and in bearing and raising children, she said. It is, in fact, standard practice that a newly married young woman is counselled by elderly married women to endure marriage. Their advice often includes keeping family secrets, especially where violence is involved—that it should not be easily or publicly divulged. While this perspective was advised, relatives were working closely with the family to counsel against the use of violence in solving problems.⁷

Thanks to the cancellation of initiation schools and to urbanization, among other changes, today's construction of manhood among Batswana youth is largely left to the media, magazines and the individual choices of boys and girls, which unfortunately is largely

⁷Maluleke and Nadar, 2002, rightly warn that sometimes the counselling slides into tolerating and allowing the perpetrators to continue violating their female partners.

produced externally. There is no consistent official intention to teach a particular identity, nor efforts to ensure adherence among Batswana. The impact has been to erode the role of community-framed masculinities in favour of individually chosen and centred masculinities, which are not accountable to the community. In the process, some must have found their places less assured, less supported, and felt left out, hence the eruption of a new epidemic of gender-based violence amongst the younger males whose identity is less informed by Setswana cultural thinking and is certainly buffeted by HIV and AIDS context.

Sketches of Masculinities in Pentecostal Churches of Botswana

Colonial Christianity made deliberate efforts to eradicate the *bogwera* and *bojale*, since they were suspected of being both heathen and barbaric. (Mgadla and Volz, 2006:127-138). Unfortunately, there was no equivalent space established for constructing gender identities in mission schools and Churches. Be that as it may, it might be a good thing to examine the question of contemporary masculinities by examining the type of masculinities embraced and promoted in Churches, especially the Pentecostal Churches⁸ that have a major youth following. (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:31).

In his paper, "Men, Religion and HIV-AIDS in Africa: Complex and Paradoxical Relationships," T. S. Maluleke holds that,

Churches tend to underwrite and manufacture destructive masculinities in at least three important areas: governance and leadership, worship and liturgy as well as scriptures and preaching.

⁸Indeed the so-called killings have occurred even within the walls of Pentecostal Churches. In December 2004 one of the perpetrators was a son of a pastor of Bible Life Ministries, which is a big Pentecostal Church. He killed his girlfriend. One of the gospel singers, Vusi Mtukufa, was "charged with murder in February this year (2009) and is now due to appear for mention on June 8 allegedly for killing his girlfriend," *Mmegi, the Reporter*, 26 May 2009.

Church governance and leadership structures are not only populated by men, but they are often designed for men. The leadership, language, songs and liturgies of many mission Churches are not dominated by men, but they exude a masculine, military and macho ethos—which attributes are also transposed to God. (2007)

In his book *Acting in Hope: African Churches and the HIV/AIDS* Vol. 2, Ezra Chitando writes that,

Christianity, like most other religions, is patriarchal. Before Churches embark on outreach programmes to transform society's masculinities, they need to address masculinities within themselves. The combination of indigenous African and biblical patriarchy has led many men to assert power and authority over women. In most instances, men in the Church are as susceptible to patriarchy as those outside. (2007b:47)

Chitando argues that African and Christian cultures have not been prophetic to each other, but rather endorsed prevailing patriarchal masculinities. Commenting on the implication for HIV prevention, Chitando is adamant that “Churches need to engage with men in order to transform dangerous ideas about manhood in Africa. The HIV epidemic calls for immediate action on attitudes to sex and sexual violence,” for such violent masculinities “prevent women and children from thriving.” (Ibid.:44 and 43).

Mussa Muneja's (2006) research on *Clergy Views on Human Sexuality and HIV and AIDS Prevention in Botswana* gives us a window into the perspective of Botswana Church-going men towards gender-based violence. Muneja's research included reading and interpreting the story of the rape of Tamar by her half brother. (I Samuel 13:1-22). In the story, her biological brother asked her to keep quiet, and her father kept quiet about it and did not confront the perpetrator. Muneja gave questionnaires to male and female Botswana Church leaders. Reporting on their responses to the story, Muneja points out that “seven out of twenty-one male respondents replied to the question, advocating the rights of women for not being harassed,

coerced, or beaten in sexual relations. Surprisingly, when the same question was posed to female respondents, the statistics shows an increase of ten out of nineteen who strongly spoke against the injustice to women.” Muneja points out that “these findings indicate that male respondents answered in fewer numbers because, most probably, they feel that what is defined in Botswana culture and Christian religion as gender relations, equality and violence does not need any transformation.” (2006:126). Muneja’s conclusions resonate with Chitando and Maluleke’s thesis above, suggesting that Church leaders are not strongly against gender-based violence and that African and biblical patriarchal cultures reinforce and consolidate their male perspectives.

While Maluleke, Chitando and Muneja are speaking of Churches in general, what are the Pentecostal Church masculinities? What are their perspectives towards violence and how do their masculine identities promote or hinder HIV and AIDS prevention? Pentecostal Churches, sometimes called charismatic Churches or charismatic ministries (CMs), have histories linked to movements that began early last century. (Anderson, 2004:1). In recent decades, however, they have experienced an exponential global growth. (Anderson, 2004:1-18; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:1-2). According to Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Pentecostal movements “are greatly inspired by North American, neo-Pentecostal, televangelist movements with their mega-Church philosophies, and world-dominating agenda for Christianity.” (2005:1). They are characterized by an emphasis on Bible reading, being born again, speaking in tongues, and of late by preaching the gospel of prosperity. (Ibid.:201-232). According to Allan Anderson, “Pentecostalism is more correctly seen as a movement concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of Spiritual gifts.” (2004:14). Classical Pentecostal Churches in Botswana include Churches such as Assemblies of God and Apostolic Faith Mission, but of late Pentecostalism has experienced a worldwide explosion, with a huge pull on young people and many more new denominations such as Winners’ Chapel, Christ Embassy and Bible Life Ministries, which

are largely founded by Africans. Its massive growth in Botswana, southern Africa, Africa and the world as a whole suggests that it is or will be central in the construction of masculine identities of young Christian men and in their relations to women.

In terms of sexual teaching, the emphasis on holiness includes premarital abstinence from all sex and faithfulness towards one's partner during marriage for both sexes. Consequently, it would seem that the Pentecostal sexual ethic should promote HIV- and AIDS-preventative relations. This, however, cannot be taken for granted since studies elsewhere indicate that youth who have taken abstinence vows are much more likely to engage in unprotected sex in their first sexual encounter than those who did not take abstinence vows. Further, the spread of HIV and AIDS is much more linked to the types of manhood and femininity constructed and how they empower women and men economically, socially and politically. Twenty-eight years of HIV and AIDS research and documentation has consistently shown that gender disempowerment leaves women without control over their bodies, without decision-making powers and without economic powers, making them more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS infection. (Shaibu and Dube, 2002:5-14).

Part of investigating Pentecostal masculinities and their implications for HIV prevention, therefore, includes examining their perspectives on gender justice. Researchers in Pentecostalism do not necessarily set out to give gender-segregated picture of its membership, leadership and theology. They identify its membership as consisting of youth. (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:31). But given that most Churches from all the three families—Pentecostal, Mainline and African Indigenous Churches—are generally patronized by women, it follows that the youth will consist mostly of young women. Similarly, Pentecostal researchers hardly present its leadership in gender-segregated data. Rather, they romantically speak about the inclusive worship that involves all laity through gifts of the Spirit, without closer scrutiny of its gender constitution in leadership. (Anderson, 2004:9; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005:96-131). But even a

casual counting of Pentecostal demigods⁹ in one's country or as they appear on TV clearly points to a male dominance of founders and preachers, with women-dominated membership.

Be that as it may, Asamoah-Gyadu points out that for Pentecostals, targeted "forces of evil include not just Satan and his cohorts the demons, but also...ancestral spirits and traditional deities." (2005:177). A good case in point is how Ghanaian Pentecostals have demonized Maame Wata, a Ghanaian female deity of fertility and water. In his study *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Asamoah-Gyadu notes that "It is thus not uncommon to find the Maame Wata spirit sometimes cast as the "spirit of Jezebel," being cast out of women at deliverance services." (1 Kings 19:2-21 and 2005:172). This brief picture speaks for itself regarding the attitudes of Pentecostals towards the gender-inclusive African Indigenous Religious space. The impact of the exorcism of the female deity is that Ghanaian women are denied a female symbol of power. That is, the empowerment of African women in African Indigenous Religions is dependent on the spiritual spaces that are gender inclusive in the level of Creator of All, deities, ancestors and mediators. In Pentecostal movements, the gender-inclusive African Indigenous Religions' framework of the divine is relegated to the evil space, which must be subject to exorcism. The traditional or indigenous spiritual spaces that empowered African women are thus being eroded through an approach that equates them with evil.

The emasculization of the African spiritual space is one definite move away from indigenous gender identities that were characterized by flexible gender relations, which were more gender-inclusive than single-gendered. Christianization of African societies was and still is a move towards masculine societies that are rigidly male-centred. The masculinization of the African spiritual space through Christianization disempowers women, a position that can only make

⁹This seeks to capture the prominence of founders/charismatic preachers and healers, etc. within the Pentecostal set-up. (editors)

women more vulnerable to gender-based violence and HIV infection. The consequence is characterized by a man who easily resorts to violence in an attempt to subject and control the female, who still insists on her human presence. With this brief background about the impact of male-centred Christian masculinities on African spiritual spaces, let us now explore the masculine identities that emerge from some Pentecostal Churches of Botswana—how they resist or embrace gender-based violence and its implication for HIV prevention.

Sketches of Pentecostal Masculinities and Attitudes towards Gender-Based Violence in Botswana

The data used here is drawn from available literature and other secondary sources, including Olaotse Lekanang's research on the reading of Judges 19, Sidney K. Berman's research on Botswana Pentecostal male biblical Interpretation of Hosea, a prophetic book that seemingly condones violence against women, Gloria Monyatsi's study on the response of the Botswana Church to passion killings, and Rose Gabaitse and M. W. Dube, on the effectiveness of abstinence in Holy Church in Gaborone.

The research studies carried out by Lekanang and Berman involved interpreting a biblical text with men and women, to investigate whether scriptural stories that involve violence against women would be acceptable to Botswana men and young men in Pentecostal Churches. Berman and Monyatsi's studies were prompted by the phenomenon of passion killing in Botswana.

Olaotse Lekanang's 2007 research focused on the story of Judges 19. It is a story about the concubine to a Levite who runs away from her "husband" and goes back to her father, for reasons that are not stated in the text. The fact that she ran away suggests that she was unhappy. The "husband" follows her, holds a discussion with her father and returns with her. On their way back, they are attacked by a mob during the night. Her husband throws her to the mob. The mob rapes her throughout the night and when she is half dead they leave her by the door of her "husband." In the morning,

when the “husband” finds her, he cuts her into twelve pieces and sends each piece to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Lekanang’s research sought to gather and evaluate feminist Batswana interpretations of this story of massive violence against women. Two responses from male Pentecostal Church leaders are notable. First, one pastor underlined that it is in biblical law that women should be subordinate to men, also stated in the New Testament. The interpretation is disturbing because the respondent seemingly suggests that gender inequality justifies violence against women and entitles a man to a woman’s life. Within such an interpretation a woman does not have a life in her own right, and controlling a woman who runs away for whatever reasons can include throwing her to a mob of rapists and cutting her into pieces, even if she might still be breathing. The second notable interpretation involves one pastor who compared the suffering of the Judges 19 woman with the suffering of Jesus, who was also violated and died in silence. This interpretation is troubling, for it reads the central Christian symbol, the crucifixion of Christ, as a story that legitimates violence against women, even to the point of explaining why a woman may be raped and then killed. This interpretation makes it doubtful that such a Church leader would consider violence against women a problem, or the fact that it increases their vulnerability to HIV infection.

S. Monyatsi’s study sought to “assess the response of the Church towards ‘passion killings,’” and to “advocate for the formation of Church programs that are sensitive to violence and that seek to stop ‘passion killings.’” (2006: 11). Monyatsi interviewed 20 respondents, some of whom were from the Pentecostal Churches such as Assemblies of God, Bible Life Ministries and Apostolic Faith Mission. In general, the respondents emphasized that they do not tolerate violence (66) and gender inequality, but when asked if their Churches ordained both men and women the story was different. That is, “though 80 percent of the informants contested that they emphasize equality between lovers,” “85 percent of the informants explained that Church leaders are men,” and some even quoted the

Bible to support male Church leadership. According to Monyatsi, “Genesis 2:26 which says that a woman was made from the man’s ribs was mostly quoted to show that the woman has to be a helper of a man”. Monyatsi points out that “limited roles of women in decision-making in the Church help to reinforce the message to the society that hierarchy and patriarchy are God’s desire for the Church.” Given this picture, Monyatsi concludes that “Although most Churches talk about equality, it is not practiced... This inequality constitutes violence against women and may hinder the effort of the Church to fight ‘passion killings.’” (2006:66-70). Monyatsi’s findings and conclusions are quite consistent with Maluleke observations, stated above.

Sidney K. Berman’s¹⁰ (2007) research sought to read the story of Hosea with men of African Evangelical Church in the light of the vicious circle of violence against women in Botswana, the so-called passion killings. Africa Evangelical Church is a Pentecostal Church. In the story of Hosea, the prophet uses the metaphor of an unfaithful wife to speak about Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Hosea presents himself as having been instructed by God to take and marry his promiscuous wife and to stay with her and have children with her. The metaphor should be understood as a conversation between men – that is, a male God is speaking to the male congregation of Israel, appealing to them to understand the pain of living with an unfaithful partner. (Weems, 1995). In the story, Hosea is obviously shamed and frustrated by a promiscuous wife. He cajoles, begs and threatens to strip his wife and publicly expose her nakedness. (Hosea 1-3).

Berman’s research sought to investigate how both younger and older men from an urban and rural African Evangelical Pentecostal Church respond to the maleness of God, the violence against women reflected in the text and how such an authoritative text might legitimate current social violence against women. Berman ran separate focused discussion groups for the different ages in the different places. In their interpretation of Hosea, older men held that

¹⁰See also Berman’s chapter in this volume.

there was nothing problematic with the portrayal of God as male and that in fact there is no violence in the text. Rather, they insisted it is really a problem of the interpreter if they found violence in the text. To their credit, the young men of Africa Evangelical Church reinterpreted the image of God in Hosea, underlining that God is neither male nor female but is Spirit. Unlike the older men, they also insisted that there is violence in the text and it is unacceptable. In these conclusions, we glean a shift from masculinities that embrace gender inequality and the maleness of God, held by elderly males, to masculinities that distance themselves from the maleness of God and violence against women among young male adults. This may very well be due to the fact that the passion killings have brought the younger generation to be more sensitive towards gender inequality and violence.

The last case study concerns research findings from a certain Pentecostal Church (which I shall call Holy Church) on abstinence from premarital sex that Rose Gabaitse and I carried out in Gaborone. Holy Church is a Pentecostal Church, which teaches its young people to abstain from premarital sex. We sought to evaluate the effectiveness of premarital abstinence among Church-going youth, the challenges they confront and what needs to be done to strengthen adherence to abstinence. Consent was sought from the pastor to distribute a self-administered questionnaire to youth. In a private meeting with 24 youths, after a Sunday Church service, we explained to them the goal of the research, assured them of confidentiality and that they are free to participate or not. Of the 24 youth, nine of them were male. After hearing the goals of the research, six young male adults withdrew, stating that a man's sexuality is a secret.

The reasons given by boys for avoiding the study were an interesting window into youth masculinities in Pentecostal churches. Firstly, it may suggest that they do not abstain from sex. Secondly, their response may reflect the wider practice among Pentecostal churches that tend to excommunicate girls who get pregnant outside marriage, while boys and men in the Church often seem to appear to be holier just because they do not get pregnant; hence their

unfaithfulness to the sexual holiness code hardly gets exposed. This has created an understanding that a man's sexuality is a secret or private matter, while that of a woman can be an open book. That a man's sexual identity is a secret is also consistent with the National HIV and AIDS monitoring system, which, while it includes monitoring men with STIs, largely focuses on pregnant women, a factor that has often led to the stereotyping of women as those who bring HIV and AIDS home, the owners of HIV and AIDS, (Shaibu and Dube, 2002:5-6), since they are most likely to be the first to be tested for HIV and to bring the news home.

Of the 18 Holy Church youth who answered the questionnaire, eight had been virgins from birth. These were largely the younger ones in the age range of 16–20 who were still staying with their parents. Out of these, only one boy was a virgin from birth. Three of the 18 had been abstaining since they gave their lives to Christ. Among these, two were female and one was male. Six of the 18 were in the category of those who never abstained and who have abstained for less than a year; five were female and one male. Of course, it is difficult to draw gender-based conclusions, given that the number of males participating was far fewer, due to the males absconding and to the fact that women and girls tend comparatively to dominate the Church with their membership. However, it is notable that among the three young males who remained, only one was still a virgin, while the rest were among those who were most probably not abstaining.

Towards Redemptive Masculinities in the HIV and AIDS Context

The rising violence among young adults leads to the question, "What kind of manhood is constructed by contemporary Botswana and who constructs it?" While I have alluded to a number of factors, that question is beyond this paper's capacity. New research is needed to investigate what, by whom and how contemporary masculinities are formed. What is evident is that the community has significantly lost its power to construct what would have passed as expected and

desired masculinities. With colonization, Christianization, urbanization and the current globalization of Western media, the power of the community to exert normative values and identities has been greatly compromised. This situation has not been helped by the HIV and AIDS context, for it has greatly reduced masculine privileges and recklessly planted helplessness and lack of control where masculinity underlines control. (Wren, 1989).

However, I believe some of the above case studies give us sketches of the prevailing masculinities of Church-going youth in the Pentecostal movements, how they divert from or are consistent with normative Setswana manhood; how they may or may not contribute to violence against women and the prevention of HIV and AIDS. That some leaders and elders—publically teaching responsibility in the Church—demonstrate tolerance towards both gender inequality and violence is troubling. These findings underline that training Church leaders on gender equality and violence against women as part of HIV prevention is essential. Tackling violence against women is vital, for violence does not only deny women their human rights, it also makes them more vulnerable to HIV infection.

Chitando thus suggests a series of strategies and activities, such as mainstreaming issues of gender justice and life-giving masculinities within various groups of the Church such as Sunday school, youth, women, men and pastors' space and activities. (2007:46-47). Chitando underlines that,

The pulpit should also be appropriated in the struggle to transform masculinities. Sermons that challenge men to embrace gender justice must be preached with clarity and compassion. This is important, since masculinity can and does change. Churches must remind men that true discipleship entails questioning traditional (both Christian and indigenous) attitudes towards masculinity. (Ibid.:47)

On that note, that some younger male readers demonstrated a critical stance toward biblical-based gender inequality, the maleness of God and violence against women is encouraging, although others have

resisted openness to discussing their sexuality—a reflection of patriarchal masculinities. Further training in awareness and for raising a critical mass of masculinities that embrace gender equality with no tolerance for violence can greatly benefit HIV-prevention programmes among Pentecostal and other Church traditions. In her study, *Church Response towards Youth Passion Killings in Botswana*, S. Monyatsi agrees with Maluleke, Chitando, Muneja, Lekanang and Berman, recommending that, “Church leaders should talk to men on the issue of passion killings; create a safe environment for women from their male abusers; hold sermons specifically on passion killings...contribute to the national welfare by working hand in hand with organizations that fight for equality.” (2006:70-71). Maluleke also suggests a strategy of finding male role models from the Bible who give alternative types of manhood, such as Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus. I have suggested that with the increasing urbanization and globalization, we need to find ways of becoming a community that supports, builds and hears all its members. (Dube 2006:146-156). Such efforts will be a step in the right direction in reducing gender-based violence and building redemptive masculinities in the HIV and AIDS context.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Who's Afraid of the Mighty Men's Conference? Palatable Patriarchy and Violence against Women¹ in South Africa²

Sarojini Nadar

Introduction

Man's masculinity in the world today, in this twenty-first-century, is being eroded and broken down. And young men—some young men—don't know what a man is supposed to be!³

So says Angus Buchan, founder of the Mighty Men's Conference, an annual Christian event for men that started off with an attendance of just about 4000 men, with these numbers

¹I borrow the term "wo/men" from the feminist biblical scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who says she uses this term to indicate that "woman/women" is not a monolithic group or a unitary concept but she also uses it in another way— to include "disenfranchised men." She says: "writing wo/men in this way invites male readers always to 'think twice' and to adjudicate whether they are meant or not." Schüssler Fiorenza, 1998:186

²This chapter also appears in *Scriptura* 102/3, 2009. It is published here with permission from the author.

³<http://www.mnet.co.za/Mnet/Shows/cartelblanche/story.asp?Id=3523>.

increasing to 60000 men in 2008, and a whopping 200000 men expected to descend on his Greytown farm just outside of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, in 2009.

So, what is the message Angus Buchan is giving to men, in this twenty-first-century when masculinity, according to him, is being broken down and eroded? What is he teaching them about what a man is supposed to be? And more importantly for me as a feminist, can his message help to overcome centuries of patriarchy within and outside of the Church which has contributed to an immeasurable and varied amount of violence against wo/men? Should we welcome Buchan's steps to "restore masculinity" or should we be afraid of him and his mighty men?

At the end of his essay on "The Social Organisation of Masculinity" in his book *Masculinities*, Robert Connell says the following of masculinity as a discourse and as an object of study,

To understand a historical process of this depth and complexity [of masculinity] is not a task for *a priori* theorising. It requires concrete study; more exactly, a range of studies that can illuminate the larger dynamic. (Connell, 1995:46)

If we are to take Connell's challenge seriously and if we are committed to understanding how masculinity functions in our society, whether as a measure to overcome gendered violence (in all its forms), or simply to find some measure of peace between the genders, then theorising outside of concrete experiences will be futile. A few years ago, Charlize Theron, the South African actor now famous in Hollywood, was part of a campaign against rape that used the slogan, "Real men don't rape." This slogan caused an outcry in certain circles, which felt the campaign was too "hard-hitting." Notwithstanding the critique of the campaign, it seems in the light of the increasing demand for men to be "real men," perhaps the spirit of the campaign Theron supported needs to be revived. There was a focus on masculinity in that campaign to which feminist campaigns to end violence have perhaps paid far too little attention. In wanting to

prove that gender is indeed constructed, we perhaps have focused too much on how women are “constructed” and have been content to accept essentialized views of men and masculinity, that is, that men are violent, controlling and dominant by nature, whereas women are taught by society to be subservient and humble and kind—“sugar and spice and all things nice.” Perhaps Simone de Beauvoir’s famous statement that “One is not born, but becomes a woman” (de Beauvoir, 1952:249), has to pertain equally to men too, so that we begin to unravel the mystery of how a man is made and how this “making” of a man in our contexts can either promote or hinder patriarchal violence in our various societies.

The advent of masculinity studies provides a helpful signpost for how we can begin to do this. Masculinity studies is not to be confused with *masculinism*, although students who enrol for our “Issues of Masculinity and Gender” course in the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal easily confuse the two.⁴ Masculinism is the antithesis to feminism. It is an ideological system that not only believes in, but actively promotes male power. As Haywood and Mac an Ghaill have explained,

Masculinism is an ideology that stresses the natural and inherently superior position of males, while serving to justify the oppression and subjugation of females. This ideology of males being naturally more powerful, competent, successful and fundamentally different from females is one that can be located in various historical periods. (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003:10)

⁴Part of the difficulty is that the course is situated within the “gender and religion” programme that has been traditionally associated with feminist theology. The dilemma is similar to what Sally Robinson has noted: “The problem with lumping masculinity studies in with women’s studies or ethnic studies is that masculinity—unlike femininity or blackness – already equates with power, so the empowerment model of women’s or ethnic studies is almost embarrassingly inappropriate.” Robinson, 2002:142.

Masculinity studies, as opposed to masculinism, then, helps us to understand and deconstruct male power. Understanding the ways in which male power is created and maintained is a crucial link in overcoming patriarchy, together with all its associated evils such as violence; as numerous studies have shown, at the heart of violence against wo/men is male power.⁵

The analysis of the Mighty Men's Conference as a phenomenon of masculinity, which I will endeavour to perform in this paper, is an attempt at a concrete study of the construction of masculinity, as Connell urges us to undertake. However, as Connell says, it cannot be the only study—a wide range of studies are needed. And so, I use the Mighty Men's Conference, and its founder Angus Buchan, as a case study to “illuminate the larger dynamic.” I recognize that there may be other discourses on masculinity happening in the country too, especially in black communities of faith. Hopefully, other studies will pick this up and further illuminate this larger dynamic.⁶ I offer this analysis of this phenomenon as one example of a range of attempts at reconstructing or, as Buchan himself puts it, “restoring” masculinities in South Africa.

Background to the Mighty Men's Conference

The Mighty Men's Conference (MMC) was started in 2004 by Angus Buchan, a South African farmer and evangelist of Scottish ancestry. Unfortunately, apart from Angus Buchan's own book *Faith Like Potatoes: The Story of a Farmer Who Risked Everything for God*,⁹ Buchan, 2006), the subsequent box-office hit movie based on the book,⁷ a few interviews with Buchan in the popular media and the

⁵See the table 3.1. Marin and Russo, 1999:20. There are also various other articles in this book which set violence against women squarely at the feet of male power.

⁶Some have already done so. See for example, Thulani Ndlazi, 2004 and Ntsimane, 2006.

⁷See the official movie website: http://www.globalcreative.co.za/FLP_index.htm.

DVDs of the conference, scant academic resources on the MMC exist. Therefore, in this chapter I will rely heavily on the popular sources of Angus Buchan's theology of masculinity to construct my analysis.

This is how Angus Buchan, in his own words, describes to Devi Sankaree Govender of the documentary programme, *Carte Blanche*, the Mighty Men's Conference and its goals,

Man's masculinity in the world today, in this twenty-first-century, is being eroded and broken down. And young men—some young men—don't know what a man is supposed to be! There are no role models, no mentors to look up to. What is a man supposed to do? How is he supposed to act?... And so what we did was—I believe, not we, but the Lord—restored masculinity. They are men! You have got to stand up and be counted! You have got to represent your family, your business, your company. Stop walking around like a, you know, a whipped dog with his tail between his legs. That's no use to anybody...It's getting back to basics.... And so that's why we had the men's conference, ok? We take the *shambok* [whip] out and we give the guys a big hiding. And they can let their hair down, and they can cry, and they can repent, and they can go back.⁸

There are a number of significant insights that one can draw from Buchan's description of the MMC and its goals,

- That there is a crisis in masculinity.
- That God (“the Lord”) not the MMC, is going to resolve this crisis and “restore masculinity.”

⁸<http://www.mnet.co.za/Mnet/Shows/carteblanche/story.asp?Id=3523>.

- That men have to be leaders in their homes and societies—elsewhere he cites their roles as “prophet, priest and king.”⁹
- That men should love their wives and their wives should respect and submit to their husbands.
- And that men should be able to show emotions and remorse, by crying and repenting.

It is clear from the above that Angus Buchan is determined to “restore masculinity,” and his project looks rather innocuous, perhaps even noble, to the ordinary person on the street. After all, as Gloria Steinem noted,

Make no mistake about it: Women want a men’s movement. We are literally dying for it. If you doubt that, just listen to women’s desperate testimonies of hope that the men in our lives will become more nurturing towards children, more able to talk about emotions, less hooked on a spectrum of control that extends from not listening through to violence. (Steinem, 1992:v)

Notwithstanding Steinem’s plea for a men’s movement, my feminist hermeneutic of suspicion will not allow me to consider this movement as either innocuous or noble nor as an appropriate answer to Steinem’s call. In fact, I would argue, as I have done elsewhere, that a theology of headship and submission is simply yet another way of promoting violence (in its varied forms) through the insidious myth that men as the stronger sex need to protect women, or to “defend the weak.”¹⁰ This is what Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen has called soft patriarchy;

⁹In an interview with Joy Magazine, when asked: “What do you hope the results of this conference to be?” Angus Buchan responded: “Men will take up their rightful positions in the home as prophets, priests and kings.” Interview taken from Joy Magazine <http://www.joymag.co.za/mag/3-2006/3-2006-angus.php>.

¹⁰See my comment piece in the *Mail and Guardian*, 4 August 2008, “When Did the Rock Become Weak?” <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2008-08-04-when-did-the-rock-become-weak>.

(Van Leeuwen, 1997), it seems innocent enough—that is, “men taking responsibility” is hardly an unpalatable idea, but if “taking responsibility” means asserting dominating and coercive measures, such as religion, to maintain power, then our justice antennas have to be tuned in so that we are not deceived by this palatable patriarchy masquerading as “restoring masculinity.”

Based on several studies showing that the principles of male headship and the submission of women to men in most religions and cultures are directly linked to gender violence and, more alarmingly, to women's decisions to stay in abusive partnerships,¹¹ I will examine in the following section whether Angus Buchan's MMC is a step toward positive masculinity or masculinism. I will do this through an analysis of Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett's three propositions concerning the ways in which masculine power is created and sustained, focusing particularly on the latter two forms of power.

Restoring Masculinity or Promoting Masculinism?

Whitehead and Barrett assert that masculine power is maintained in three ways: The first and most obvious is power as brute force, such as physical violence. The second is power as relational and positional—belief systems that promote hierarchical ideologies which

¹¹ I have noted elsewhere the detailed study conducted by Isabel Phiri in Phoenix on domestic violence in (Pentecostal) Christian homes. Eighty-four percent of the twenty-five women who were interviewed admitted to having experienced domestic violence. They were also all wives of leaders in the Church. Her study concluded that it was biblical beliefs, such as those on submission, which made these women stay in abusive relationships. Phiri, 2000:85-110. Mary McClintock Fulkerson makes a similar point about the role of the “discourse of submission,” when she asserts that “One of the most prominent oppressive outcomes of such discourse is the willingness of women to stay in battering situations. Women's willingness to be battered is often linked to the kind of ecclesiastically supported languages of submission that appear in Pentecostal [Christian] women's stories.” Fulkerson, 1994:296.

makes it obligatory for men (as opposed to women) to be the heads of homes, leaders of organizations, directors of companies, etc. Finally, they show how masculine power is maintained through “discourses of power.” Discourses of power refer to the everyday language that maintains binary oppositions such as that men are strong, women are weak, or that men are rational and women are emotional, etc. (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001:17). It also refers to language that appeals to a “higher authority” for legitimation, and as will be seen very clearly, Buchan’s higher authority cannot get any higher than God.

I think it is true to say that practical efforts to overcome violence against wo/men have often tended to focus on power as brute force and have ignored or paid little attention to the latter two ways in which power is created and sustained; that is that power is positional and that power is also maintained discursively, that is, by the language we use. The ways in which these latter kinds of power are maintained is nowhere more clear than in the discourses and practices of religion.¹² Christian men’s movements like the Promise Keepers in North America and its equivalent in South Africa, the Mighty Men’s Conference, though they will never claim allegiance to the first kind of power, are certainly quite overt about wanting to “reclaim” these two forms of masculine power for ordinary men. Their movements are characterized by these so-called “soft” statements about men’s power. Take for example Angus Buchan’s statements to Devi-Sankaree Govender on *Carte Blanche*, on what he believes about the relationship between husbands and wives. He says,

¹² It is easier for us to build shelters for abused wo/men, than to ask the difficult questions of why wo/men are abused in the first place. Perhaps Bishop Camara’s statement about the poor can be adapted with regard to gender too – When I build shelters for abused wo/men, they call me a saint, when I ask why wo/men are abused they call me a feminist.

Husbands love your wives, OK? Children, respect your parents. Wives, respect your husbands, submit to your husbands... It's very easy when your husbands love you, you see, when your husbands are doing the job properly. But what happens sometimes is that the husbands are not doing the job: they not [sic] protecting you, they are not putting bread on the table, they are not disciplining the children—it's very hard to respect a man like that.¹³

By setting up these positional and hierarchical relationships between parents and children and husbands and wives (note the command for women and children is the same, that is, respect, but it is different for men) and then admonishing men to be responsible, Buchan sets up a very palatable patriarchy that is difficult to argue with. When pushed by Govender during the interview as to whether the above principles were not creating a superiority complex for men, Angus Buchan was quick to defend his beliefs.

It's not a case of saying the man is superior to the woman—never! On the contrary. But there is an order that is established in the Bible. And the Lord Jesus, said, "Husbands, love your wives." Now if a husband loves his wife, his wife will gladly submit to him. (Ibid)

Notwithstanding that Jesus actually never said this—it was the Apostle Paul (or someone writing in his name—it is patent that Buchan establishes a relational power for men which, when maintained and taken to its extreme, actually can and does lead to violence against wo/men.

The belief that women must be submissive to their husbands begs the question, what are the consequences when women don't submit? And as I have said before, there is enough feminist research to show that the apparent lack of submission from women is what leads to violence but also that the belief that men are the heads of the

¹³<http://www.mnet.co.za/Mnet/Shows/carteblanche/story.asp?Id=3523>.

homes is what causes violence to go unchallenged and women to remain in abusive partnerships. This is a link that is often dismissed as a misunderstanding of headship, but surely we should be sitting up and taking notice of the empirical evidence (i.e., the numerous studies conducted on violence), which suggests otherwise.¹⁴

Angus Buchan's wife, Jill Buchan, in the same interview, reiterates similar views to her husband regarding headship.

The Church of God needs men. They need fathers, they need everything set back in order because it's not in order, because the Church is full of homes that are still struggling with headship and God says he's going to sort out the Church first. He has to reinstate the men, and when he does that, the women will be very happy.

In addition to the relational power that is evident in Buchan's statements regarding headship and submission, note also the discursive power evident in both his and his wife's claims that they speak on behalf of God. For example, Angus Buchan says in his interview on *Carte Blanche*,

I don't shy away from controversy... You can't sleep with your girlfriend before marriage and abortion is legalized murder. Homosexuality is against the word of God. I'm not doing this for money. I'm doing this because God told me to.¹⁵

In the first instance he establishes hetero-normative principles for marriage and then asserts that restoring these norms is God's initiative—not his. It is clear how power is established here through an appeal to religious language—after all, one can argue with Angus Buchan, but who can argue with God?

¹⁴See the excellent extensive bibliography partner violence on the following website: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/biblio.html>.

¹⁵<http://www.mnet.co.za/Mnet/Shows/carteblanche/story.asp?Id=3523>.

Note the similar discursive power that is evident in his most recent newsletter on his website:

Dear Brethren,

Greeting [sic] in Jesus name and a very blessed 2009 for [sic] each of you. Thank you for your friendship in 2008. I said to the Lord at the end of last year: "Lord I don't know what's going to happen in 2009, but I think it's going to be almost impossible to better 2008" (truly the greatest year of my life thus far)...On the 12th of December, while waiting on the Lord for a Word for us in 2009, the Scripture which the Lord Jesus gave to us was Deuteronomy 1: 6 "You have dwelt long enough at this mountain" and in verse eight "See I have set the land before you. Go in and possess the land which the Lord swore (promised) to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to them and their descendants."¹⁶

In all the DVDs of Buchan's MMC meetings and his interviews, it is very clear that Buchan declares himself as a spokesperson for God, thereby legitimating his views on masculinity. This is often expressed through the phrase "The Lord told me" or "Jesus said to me," etc.

What is also evident in Buchan's rhetoric is a language of conquest and might and strength. Nowhere is this more clear of course, than in the choice to name these meetings the Mighty Men's Conference, but it is also clear in the passage of Scripture that he claims God gave him for 2009: "Go in and possess the land which the Lord swore (promised) to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to them and their descendants."¹⁷ It is not insignificant that almost all of the 60000 men who attended the conference were white and most of them were farmers like Buchan. In the light of the current land crisis in our neighbouring Zimbabwe, and that of the bitter debates around land claims in South Africa, it does not take a leap of the imagination to figure out why Buchan's message is so attractive to the white farmers who throng to his meetings. There is another

¹⁶ <http://www.shalomtrust.co.za/pages/view?id=25>.

¹⁷ <http://www.shalomtrust.co.za/pages/view?id=25>.

kind of crisis in masculinity going on for white men, particularly Afrikaner men in post-apartheid South Africa. Given that almost 80 percent of the men who attended the MMC in 2008 were Afrikaners, one has to ask what their motivations are for attending.¹⁸ What are they longing for?

The crisis for Afrikaner men is that the nature of Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity is being challenged by the democratic order ushered in in 1994; by an increase in acceptance of diverse sexual orientations; and not least of all, by a steady rise in women's emancipation. Kobus Du Pisani has described the nature of Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity as "puritan" and describes in detail what this entails and how it is being challenged in post-apartheid South Africa,

Initially the puritan ideal of Afrikaner masculinity was expressed in the image of the simple, honest, steadfast, religious and hard-working *boer* (farmer)... Patriarchy, the rule of the father, was justified in all spheres of society in terms of biblical texts... Puritan Afrikaners viewed the male-headed family as the cornerstone of a healthy society. The image of the male head of the family was cast in the mould of the "good provider"... The Afrikaans Churches have held the view that the male head of the family should fulfil a priestly function, by not only providing his family with material things, but also looking after their spiritual well-being. (Du Pisani, 2001:158, 163-164)

¹⁸ Buchan claims that it doesn't bother him that most of the people who attend his meetings are White farmers. "I'm preaching to South African people. I don't care if I preach to 100,000 white people or 100,000 black people...I preach Jesus, not politics," Buchan said. "I speak for Jesus, not for or against the government. Change will come through the Lord. If people turn to Jesus, that will change our nation." http://www.kcionline.org/news/files/Charisma_percent20Angus_percent20Buchan_percent20December_percent202008.pdf

The similarities between this puritan ideal Du Pisani describes and Buchan's message is striking. The focus on the man as priest, provider and king in his home are reiterated over and over again in Buchan's sermons. The greatest threat to hegemonic puritan Afrikaner masculinity was, according to Du Pisani, "liberalism and homosexuality." (Ibid.:167). Although homosexuality is still widely frowned upon, liberalism was gradually accepted by Afrikaners, according to Du Pisani. He further hypothesises that the core of Afrikaner masculinity, defined by heterosexuality and conservatism with regard to race and gender, although remaining relatively intact during apartheid, began to be seriously challenged in post apartheid South Africa, where,

The number of Afrikaner men in positions of public power is declining and men are not as dominant in the domestic sphere as before...Afrikaner masculinity no longer prescribes ideals of masculinity to South African society at large, to white men in general, or even to Afrikaans-speaking white men. It is thus difficult both to conceive of, and detect a hegemonic masculinity (Ibid.:172)

It is not surprising then that Buchan's focus on a crisis in masculinity, and men not knowing what they are supposed to do or how to act, would certainly be appealing for a predominantly Afrikaner group of men. Du Pisani notes that despite the threat to hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity in post apartheid South Africa, "Afrikaner nationalism has not disappeared, and given its record of pragmatic adaptation to circumstances it is conceivable that a new hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity may in due course emerge." (Ibid).

I would argue that Buchan's MMC is this newly emerging version of Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity. The difference is that I suspect that in post-apartheid South Africa and the highly globalized increasingly Pentecostalized Christian contexts we find ourselves in, it won't take long before this kind of hegemony becomes normative for men who are not Afrikaner. The "universal" message of the Bible as word of God for all ages will be a common denominator for men

across the racial spectrum, and even if they do not buy into the ethnic implications of this new hegemonic masculinity (remember, Buchan doesn't speak Afrikaans), the gender implications of this new hegemony will be appealing to them. If left unchecked, through relational and discursive uses of masculine power the MMC will succeed in restoring not just masculinities, but hegemonic masculinity, in its varied forms.¹⁹

The dualistic and binary nature of Buchan's sermons further entrenches this insidious hegemony—his distinctions between believers and unbelievers.²⁰ He also draws distinctions between education and experience, as if these are mutually exclusive: "I've never been to Bible College, but I've been to the 'school of life,' OK? The school of hard-knocks," he says to Govender in the *Carte Blanche* interview. Inherent in his dualistic view of the world is a dangerous philosophy that validates and justifies the power to conquer, to rule, to take over possessions and people, whether they be the so-called heathen or women or land. This is clear in his interview with Joy magazine where he talks about the aims of MMC.

The Sovereignty of God in a man's life will be looked at. Men will be encouraged to walk by faith and not by sight and to take ownership of what God has given them e.g.: families, businesses and farms. God will restore men's dignity and break bondages in their lives, setting them free.²¹

Conclusion: Alternative Models for Positive Masculinities

In answer to my question in the title of this chapter, I think I have shown that yes—we have to be very afraid of Angus Buchan and his

¹⁹Robert Connell distinguishes between four types of masculinity, hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginal. Connell, 2001:34.

²⁰Buchan says that the greatest sin is unbelief in his opening address to the MMC 2008 meeting and that it doesn't matter how good a person is if he doesn't believe in Jesus Christ.

²¹Interview taken from <http://www.joymag.co.za/mag/16-2008/16-2008-angus.php>.

mighty men. Who should be afraid? Women, people of differing sexual orientations, children (because you can be sure that he subscribes to the “spare the rod, spoil the child” philosophy), and even the earth, because patriarchy and domination of the earth goes together. We should all be afraid.

Am I saying that men's movements cannot help us overcome violence? No. Of course we need positive men's movements to help us overcome violence against wo/men, and it is true that men who perpetrate violence against wo/men need help. However, leading them down a garden path to a false sense of what it means to be a man, appealing to outdated and destructive ways of being a man will do more to aggravate the problem of violence than overcome it. So what are the alternatives? I suggest three for consideration, but this is certainly not exhaustive.

Deconstruction of Masculinity

What we need to help us overcome violence against wo/men is a deconstruction of masculinity, not a reconstruction of masculinism. This is of necessity an intellectual task as much as it is a popular one. If serious academic reflection on masculinity is not “translated” for men who are searching for positive masculinities, then Angus Buchan's mighty men will continue to flourish, at the expense of wo/men. As Judith Newton has argued;

While progressive men actually *do* have something to learn from popular men's movements—how to be rigorous, for example, in *practicing* rather than merely *theorising* new modes of self-transformation, new ways of labouring on behalf of others, progressive academic men have an important role to play in popular movements as well. They might do much, for example, in situating popular identity work for men in the context of unequal structures of gender, race, sexuality, and class that popular men's movements often bracket and/or support. They might help push men's movements, in the words of Michael Schwalbe, to “turn men's feelings of grief, of outrage, of affection for each other, and of

longing for richer lives in meaning...toward riskier social action and farther reaching change.” (Newton, 2002:187)

Reconstructing Alternative Forms of Masculinity

Further, this deconstruction of masculinity also necessarily involves reconstructing and transforming—reconstructing values of partnership as opposed to ideologies of headship. In this regard, Carol Flinders (Flinders, 2003) work on rebalancing the values of belonging (traditionally associated with the feminine) and the values of enterprise (traditionally associated with the masculine) are helpful.²²

Flinders makes a convincing case for the fact that the world lost balance when it moved from a pre- to a post-agricultural society. She posits that people in a pre-agricultural society lived by what she calls the “values of belonging.” This was the hunter-gatherer community, and their society was characterized by the values she puts down in the table below. She describes how continued existence in this age depended on interconnectedness with the earth, animals and humans. This interconnectedness in turn encouraged mutuality, partnership and inclusiveness. And of course with the rise of an industrialized society, these values were lost. The mistake that we made over the centuries, she argues, is to think of the values of belonging and enterprise in essentially masculine and feminine terms. She argues for the need for a “rebalancing” of the two groups of values, combining the values of belonging and the values of enterprise.

²²I'm grateful to my dear friend Eliza Getman for alerting me to Flinders' work.

Table 1

| VALUES OF BELONGING | VALUES OF ENTERPRISE |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Connection with land | Control and Ownership of Land |
| Empathic relation to animals | Control and ownership of animals |
| Balance | Momentum and High Risk |
| Expressiveness | Secretiveness |
| Generosity | Acquisitiveness |
| Egalitarianism | Hierarchy |
| Mutuality | Competitiveness |
| Alternative Modes of Knowing | Rationality |
| Playfulness | Businesslike Sobriety |
| Nonviolent Conflict Resolution | Aggressiveness and Violence |
| Spirituality | Materialism [Religion] |

From our foregoing analysis, it is clear that the MMC espouses the values of enterprise, very often to the exclusion of the values of belonging. Flinders assessment encourages us to find a balance, but more importantly to recognize that these values are not functions of our gender. So, for example, with regard to the issue of leadership, we need to develop a sense of human value that recognizes and celebrates leadership and responsibility regardless of gender. Leadership is a function of ability and responsibility, not a birthright related to whether one has a penis or not, and as long as we keep promoting this latter belief, wo/men will have to continue to live in fear of “mighty men.”

Finding Positive Role Models

Finally, feminists have often been accused of having problems with the maleness of Jesus. To this we have said, “the problem is not that Jesus was a man, the problem is that more men are not like Jesus!” Inherent in this statement is another alternative, upholding male role models who actually value women (like Jesus), as opposed to those who don't, (like the Apostle Paul). Of course, this does not mean that one should retreat to a “Jesus to the rescue” kind of theology, but I think both the maleness (in terms of sex) and the masculinity

(in terms of gender) of Jesus may provide us with some sense of what a positive model of masculinity might look like. Perhaps there are possibilities to emulate his kenotic act of incarnation—some men certainly need to learn how to stop thinking of themselves as God²³—his practical acts of servanthood (washing his disciples' feet); his breaking of cultural and ethnic barriers (his relationships with Samaritans and Canaanites) and of course his transforming of gender norms (his interactions with the woman with the haemorrhage, Mary and Martha, the Samaritan woman, etc.). Jesus certainly did show the men of his time an alternative masculinity, one that not just tolerates but embraces difference, one that is based on mutuality rather than dominance, partnership rather than hierarchy, and most of all on love rather than fear. He was a mighty man indeed, but fortunately one that we don't need to be afraid of.

²³ Take for example the Indian proverb “Kanavane kann kannda deivum,” which means, “The husband is the wife’s god in sight – by worshipping her husband she actually worships God.”

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Genital Modification: Expressions of Troubling Masculinities

Lilian Dube

Introduction

Feminist theory embedded in the female flesh has placed the woman's body, "previously considered the locus of all our oppression," (Marcos, 2000:93), on a privileged pedestal of inspiration and re-conceptualization, according to Silvia Marcos who concedes that to continue elaborating disembodiment theories would be to continue the old masculine philosophical habit. (Ibid.:94). Thus this chapter derives from feminist theory's search for bodily perspectives of the female body, reflecting troubling masculinities in order to deconstruct the genderized perceptions of the woman's body. The deconstruction of life-threatening images of the circumcised female body in Africa requires an understanding of the relationship between gender and culture espoused by Marcos in relation to the indigenous communities in Mesoamerica,

Body perceptions are embedded both in gender and culture. Mesoamerican sources are particularly revealing of that relationship. Concepts like equilibrium and fluidity are fundamental to grasp perception-constructions of the bodies in ancient Mexico. A review of primary sources for the history of ancient Mexico manifests the conception of the corporality that could be denominated "embodied

thought.” Equilibrium, fluidity and gender define the way the body is conceptualized. (Ibid.:93)

This chapter finds the suggested equilibrium and fluidity essential in deconstructing images of African women’s genitalia modified in tune with cultural notions of femininities and masculinities. Both are culturally constructed gender terms rather than genetic inevitability as male or female, according to the social constructionist sexuality theorists who argue that masculinities are “intrinsically connected with the economic, political, social, psychological, and religious dimension of human life.” (Moore and Gillette, 1996: 2.). Essentialist theorists place more emphasis on the innate psychic and physical qualities as determinates of sexual differences. This is particularly important in understanding circumcision as gender correction surgeries that make men, female and women, male through genital modifications discussed in this chapter.

Cultural Hermeneutics Approach

Oduyoye’s cultural hermeneutical approach identifies the alienating and life-threatening patterns that govern African women’s lives as practices of both “fathers’ town” and “mothers’ town” that keep Fatima in her place even when it hurts. (Oduyoye, 1995:81). She calls for cultural exegesis that identifies both men and women as active creators and propellers of the bond cultures. Oduyoye’s imaging of Fatima as culture’s bondwoman, who internalizes suffering as an integral part of self identity associated with “father’s town” and “mother’s town,” has called for a paradigm shift in searches for liberation. Thus, when mothers and grandmothers physically hold and support—without protecting—their daughters’ sweating bodies from the pain of the knife that slices through the bleeding genitals, when they relive the horror of their own feminization ritual that they perpetuate, women cannot continue to be treated as victims of a patriarchal practice but collaborators and perpetrators of the insidious social, political and economic injustice. As such, they too define masculinities that are based on brutal

incisions. The chapter therefore identifies female genital modifications as shackles from fatherland and motherland that reflects both troubling femininities and masculinities. When masculinity is not only expressed in men's view, in relation to their initiative in when or how sex takes place, but also in how the woman's genitalia should be altered, this chapter argues that there is an acute crisis in these manly perceptions of the woman's body.

Writing as an African feminist theologian, I therefore strive to show the complexity of a fatherland/motherland practice that has subtly delegated the cutting of female genitals to women, while interested men are quietly celebrating and taking pride in having genitally-modified mothers, wives, sisters and daughters who will collectively support their brides' infibulations and other trimmings. The intergenerational and cross-gendered nature of this aspect of African sexuality reflects some troubling notions of femininity and masculinity that are defined by the genital modifications this chapter discusses.

Self Location

A hybrid of religio-cultural schools responsible for the social world that shaped my perceptions of sexuality consistently located any sex talk into the most private chamber of one's life. Yet life between good Catholic Mission schools for blacks alone in Rhodesia and the village in Chibi Tribal Trust Lands¹ left me curious about femininity. This was not made easier by the obvious tension on the subject between my parents, who had conflicting views about the rites of passage for girls coming of age. For my father, good parenting involved educating children about their bodies and societal expectations of the genital modifications. Though my parents agreed that *matinji*, prolonged labia minora, was a central feminine attribute

¹The discriminatory Land Apportionment and Tenure Acts of Rhodesia reserved only 25 percent of the semi arid land to the Black majority designated as "Tribal Trust Land" to be worked on a collective basis without individual titled ownership.

for marriageability, my mother insisted that in the absence of *vatete*, father's sister, or *mbuya*, grandmother, the subject was taboo. My father was ready to twist the ritual protocol for his girls in the absence of the appropriate sexuality-ritual teachers and challenged my mother to chaperone us. However, she shied away from the subject and boldly distanced herself from anything to do with her daughters' body modification, leaving my father helpless and my sisters and I very curious. Back at the boarding school, *matinji* was also a taboo subject among the nuns who partly shaped my understanding of myself as a Christian African girl and emphasized that my body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, to be respected and not manoeuvred!

Thus, claiming this literary public space to talk about sexuality is a bold step, for the subject is still a cultural taboo that I consciously transgress, partly because this anathema has always intrigued my curiosity. I have been alienated from the discourse about African sexuality in relation to femininity and masculinity. This chapter is therefore my limited effort to be "vulgar and rude," for that is how talking about sex in public is considered in my culture. I owe this freedom of expression to my age, my father and my immigrant experience, and to the energizing discourse with the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians who dare challenge the cultures that are life-threatening to African women and their communities, theologians searching for the liberation of culture-bound women. (Oduyoye, 1995:79-108). It is through this committed theological reflection that I realized female circumcision in other African communities was what *matinji* signified in my own community, namely, "'a prerequisite for marriage,' where marriage and children are vital aspects of women's role and economic survival." (Shell-Duncan and Hernlund, 2000:34). Thus women's bodies were clearly scripts that outlined African masculinities.

Circumcision in Africa

This chapter discusses African worldviews, beliefs, practices and understandings of the rites of passage that transforms girls into wholesome, marriageable women groomed for real African men. It

explores some culture-specific understandings of religion, gender and sexuality in Africa. Thus, the beliefs and practices of clitoridectomy, infibulation and other female genital “trimmings” in some African cultures are discussed against the backdrop of notions of masculinities within the same contexts. The chapter argues that the practices of manipulating women’s bodies is not only aimed at defining femininity but also masculinities. It identifies those physical aspects of women’s bodies with the power to define men’s socio-cultural and political sexual locations. The chapter therefore postulates that genital modifications that produce “culture’s bondswomen” in Africa derive from troubling understandings of masculinities across Africa. It discusses alternative and inclusive approaches towards the simultaneous liberation of culture’s bondsmen and bondswomen from troubling masculinities and femininities respectively. Thus, though the African feminist epic by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 1995, is insightful in shaping the terminology of “culture’s bondswomen,” (1995:78-108), this chapter proposes balancing off the sexuality equation with “culture’s bondsmen” in the campaign against female genital modification and the spread of HIV and AIDS. By discussing circumcision as one of the cultures that enslave both men and women, the chapter proposes a gendered cultural approach in the campaign against cumbersome modifications of women’s genitalia. The rationale of this argument is that African communities may rethink female genital alterations when notions of masculinities are distanced from female body marks involving genital cutting and when circumcision ceases to guarantee marriage. This chapter identifies the male as the key player for whom the female genitals are modified, considering the heterosexual marital theatre where this whole drama of genital assessment and de-infibulation violently unfolds.

Female genital modification discussed in relation to troubling African masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS will not exhaust the humongous database on the subject. Thus a brief synopsis of the

phenomenon that constitutes female circumcision is vital before the genderized interpretation that dominates this chapter. The work of Sami Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh (Abu- Sahlieh, 2006:47-72) is invaluable due to the succinct and precise distinction between female and male circumcision missing in some scholars' work.

Male Circumcision

Part of this chapter's fascination with male circumcision lies in the dialectical juxtaposition of emasculation of women through circumcision, "removing the male parts from women" and the empowerment of men through the same procedure. This chapter argues that both processes address a socio-political crisis of identity and power negatively. It proposes fluid compatibility in the gender identities as a vital step in addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Abu-Sahlieh warns against the danger of oversimplifying male circumcision, as suggested in many works basing their arguments on clinical surgeries of the foreskin or prepuce, which is also the most common type of male circumcision ritual in Africa. Though the other three forms have not been documented among African people, they are worth noting in a bid to discourage modification of the female genitalia. The *milah*, which involves cutting off the mucous membrane under the foreskin is mainly practiced among the Jews; the *salkh*, though now widely condemned by Muslim authorities with a fatwa issued by Ibn-Baz, the highest Saudi religious authority, still exists among some tribes in South Arabia. It involves complete peeling of the skin covering the penis, including scrotum and pubis in some cases; and Australian Aborigines slit the urinary tube from the scrotum to the glans to create an opening like the vagina. (Ibid.:61).

Female Circumcision

The three types of female circumcision that will be referred to in this chapter are excision of the prepuce, sometimes with part or all of the clitoris; clitoridectomy, which is the excision of the clitoris with part or all of the labia minora; and infibulations, which is the excision of

part or all of the external genitalia and stitching to narrow the vaginal opening. (Ibid.:60).

Interpretations of circumcision range from beautification for sexual pleasure to emasculation and religious purity according to Guindi. (Abusharaf, 2006:31). Traditionally, female circumcision was an elaborate and much celebrated rite of passage that marked a woman's readiness for sex and marriage. Variations of age and procedure applied to different communities. These rites of passage thrive on the age-old cultures that socialize women and girls into feminine physical appearances, marked with genital trimmings and extensions at the risk of women's health and lives, especially in terms of the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Female circumcision has been celebrated by more than three-quarters of Kenya's ethnocultural groups. One of the national grassroots organizations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of women in Kenya, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization, conducted a baseline survey in the far west district of Kisii, reflecting that 97 percent of women over fifteen were circumcised. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) established that 87 percent of adult Masaai women had been celebrated into womanhood through circumcision, according to Asha Mohamud, Samson Radeny and Karina Ringheim. (Ibid.:78). Thus circumcision is a rite of passage authored by men and women who place religious-cultural value upon the practice, making it an African religious identity mark. The ritual celebrates and affirms unity between the community and the individual who takes pride in being accepted into an important age set of gendered adults.

Guindi's study, grounded among the Kenuz Nubians of Egypt, argues that it is an important gendering rite of passage that shows how circumcision is done by women for men's pleasure and is therefore a male-oriented rationale for the practice. The women in her research confirmed this feminine construction around masculine tastes, "Circumcision makes a woman nice and tight. The man finds great pleasure in tight women, unlike Cairo women whose vaginas

are wide enough for four men to enter together.” (Abusharaf, 2006:32).

Guindi defines female body modification and circumcision as an aesthetic enhancement of what is culturally perceived as pivotal to female sexuality and argues that the sexual meaning of women’s bodies are in culture, as evidenced by facelifts, nose jobs, breast enlargement, genital trimmings, stitching and enlargement. The male agency in all these definitions is obvious in the confessions of Guindi’s interviewees who confirm that “men derive pleasure in tight vaginas” of demasculinized women. (Ibid.:31). The pressure to be sexually feminine is fuelled by the social stigma attached to untrimmed genitals that are not “neat and tidy.” Thus, circumcision for beauty enhancement and sexual appeal discussed by Fadwa Guindi, (Ibid.:27) throws some light into the engineers of this crafty cosmetic procedure for beautification and reveals sexual constructions of masculinities.

Mythological Basis

There are various mythologies that seek to rationalize circumcision in general and female circumcision in particular. Although this chapter is not preoccupied with the causal factors, insights from antiquity and folk sources are highly intriguing for an inquiry that seeks to redefine masculinities shaped by feminine sexualities.

Female genital cutting can be traced back to the times of the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Sudan, and scholars have argued that it was widely practiced by Egyptians, Phoenicians, Hittites and Ethiopians around 500B.C., (Ellen Gruenbaum, 2001:43), and in the second century B.C. by tribes on the western coast of the Red Sea, Egypt. This practice is linked to a history steeped in mythical beliefs in the bisexuality of the gods mirrored in all mortals. Thus, the feminine soul of the man is believed to be located in the prepuce of his penis and the male soul of the woman in her clitoris. In order for boys to become men and girls women and for both to realize healthy gender development, the excision of the female soul from the man and the male soul from the woman had to be initiated.

(Meinardus 1967:388-89). This reasoning leads Assaad to conclude that both the removal of the male foreskin and female clitoris and labia were an essential part of becoming fully man or woman. (1980:4). A fifteenth and sixteenth century report associates female genital cuttings with Sudanese sex slaves sold in Egypt and Arabia, who fetched higher prices if sewn up, (Mackie 1996 quoted in Boyles 2002:28), hence the close association between Islamic conversions and slave routes is a leading clue to female genital modification in Islamic regions, as slaves had to be sewn up for value. (Ibid). The Islamic basis of female circumcision is contestable since the practice predates Islam, does not occur in most Middle Eastern countries, is not explicitly required by the Koran, and no Muslim African groups practice it, according to Boyle. (2002:31).

If a boy is female by virtue of his foreskin, and a girl male by her clitoris, then the rationale for establishing unambiguous gender identity dominates most circumcising cultures where the removal of the clitoris or the “hard, male-like masculine organ” is emasculating the woman and feminizing her into her socio-cultural role. (Assaad, 1980:4). For the Gikuyu of Kenya, the physical alteration of the genitals removes any ambiguity of gender and crystallizes status and gender. (Davidson 1989:201).

Radical Continuities

The shifting paradigms in female genital modifications have been recorded by various scholars who highlight the persistence of a culture withstanding external threats by adopting newer and more subtle ways of existence. The Central Kenyan district of Meru reveals the complexities of female genital modification among the Meru girls, who defiantly resisted the ban on clitoridectomy in the 1950s. The Meru girls either “circumcised themselves” literally or defiantly refused to implicate their circumcisers and “partners-in-crime,” whom they protected from prosecution. Thus, the subtle and insidious persistence of the culture through the younger, non-specialist girls who cut their own genitals with razor blades, replacing the older women specialists and their special rectangular iron-wedge knives,

kirunya, (Thomas in Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000:130), opens new inroads to the discourse of “victim and culprit.” This chapter, therefore, discusses women’s choices, options and initiatives in the radical continuation of the practice of genital modification.

The young women of Meru who cut their genitals with razor blades formed the *Ngaitana*, a protest movement that reflected the spirit of Mau Mau revolution of the time. (Ibid.:131). Though the girls enjoyed the freedom from their controlling grandmothers and elders and from the blunt knives, *kirunya* and age-old elaborate rituals, they acted out their gender roles perfectly. Thus, *Ngaitana* was an expression of girl power, to cut themselves in order to assume their feminine social roles and affirm masculinities. Circumcision was redefined in this revolutionary age. Thus, to speak of circumcision as some cultural fixation on the remote past is to miss the resistance and recreation of African values by younger generations. *Ngaitana* demonstrates that circumcision is not only a traditional relic from an unchanging past. Slicing themselves without ritual after the older women buried their knives and went into hiding, the Meru girls wrote revolutionary messages on their bodies worth re-reading. The desperation to cut themselves without ritual as discussed by Ylva Hernlund (Ibid., 2000:244-245) highlights their desperation for the identity marks expected on every woman in their society and believed not only to enhance womanhood but to reflect notions of masculinity. By cutting themselves, the Meru girls were making themselves marriageable and were secretly emulated and appreciated for affirming the masculinities this chapter finds troubling.

HIV and AIDS

An allusion to male circumcision in the preceding section reveals that circumcision renders men as physically vulnerable as women in terms of pain and trauma, depending on the type of cutting. Greig actually concludes that masculinity is deeply implicated in the harm men experience in their lives and cause in the lives of others. This partially explains why a circumcised man prefers a circumcised

woman. However, this section seeks to affirm that heterosexual men in circumcising communities are at as high a risk of contracting HIV as women, hence the need for fluid gender relations in a world devastated by HIV and AIDS. When men are sexual partners and not conquerors who demand infibulated wives in order to enhance their manhood, when masculinity ceases to be linked to virility, men will be at lower risk of contracting HIV infections. Thus, the challenge to be a man in an Africa riddled with the HIV and AIDS epidemic is a challenge to rethink sexuality, manhood and femininity.

Though proponents of male and female circumcision celebrate the medical findings that suggest male circumcision reduces sexually transmitted infections and AIDS, and even stretch the theory to include female circumcision, opponents of female circumcision have ample evidence to contradict the claim. The use of unsterilized tools during the procedures, the fact that infibulation presupposes penile or instrumental de-infibulation, which increases the risk of injury during sex for both partners, and the dryness of the circumcised penis increases the risk of injury during intercourse. (Abu-Sahlieh in Abusharaf, 2006:69-70). Besides, age-sets formed in boys' camps during group initiation rites are not only strong supportive networks that encourage moral values and identity pride in the initiates, but are new blood-bonded relationships. In these relationships, a visiting age set is honoured to sleep with the host's wife.² This courteous gesture is indeed a high risk factor in the spread of HIV and AIDS. There are numerous other short- and long-term health complications arising from genital modifications that have been discussed in greater detail by various scholars in a collection of essays by Shell-Duncan and Hernlund (2000). These range from haemorrhage, shock from loss of blood, genito-urinary problems, pelvic infections, diminished sexual pleasure, obstructed labour, formation of vesico-vaginal and recto-vaginal fistulae, among other complications. (Ibid.:14).

²Gift Masengwe in this volume also makes reference to this practice.

Women's Agency

Many African feminist scholars agree that female genital modifications should not be discussed in isolation from the broader survival framework that circumscribes communal existence in Africa. This chapter discusses female genital modifications within the particular framework of the sexual liberation of individual women within the larger shared spaces and not outside these groups. Writing from the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians' perspective, I espouse the views of Women's Caucus of the African Studies Association, that isolated preoccupation with genital adjustments totally shifts emphasis on the total liberation of the targeted group of women. Hence my attempt to approach sexual liberation in a holistic manner that takes cognisance of the other dire needs of women's survival, like shelter, food and healthcare for them and their families. In family- and group-oriented communities that are profound in Africa, the individual sexual liberation doesn't supersede group existence since the individual survival is infused in the larger group. The role of African agency in the campaign becomes pivotal, and the outsider is questioned:

The changes in the practice of clitoridectomy and infibulations in Africa must be initiated and carried out by members of those African cultures in which the custom exists and that outsiders' contribution to this effort can be most effective in the area of research, discussion and dissemination of information about the progress of efforts elsewhere, and technical support. (James and Robertson, 2002:2)

This chapter pays close attention to the gendered African agency and concludes that the search for effective ways to eradicate FGM largely relies on the agency of African women themselves. As Guindi rightly argues, female circumcision belongs to the women's world, and ordinarily men know very little about it or how it is performed. While the lead role of the women to be cut can be explored to curb the practice, the role of men in abandoning this male-engineered culture should not be underestimated, especially when the girls take

razor blades and cut off their own genitals in the absence of the incisors. The fear of not getting married or being desirable brings shame to the girl and her family, forcing them to brave the biting blade and risk their health and lives. Unless notions of masculinity and femininity are revisited by the communities practicing female genital cutting, there is little hope for change.

Men's Agency

So, while genital trimming, cutting and extension have all been portrayed as women's acts of "knife and razor" valour and virtue, this chapter proposes to analyse this age-old culture of being and becoming a woman from the viewpoint of celebrated notions of African masculinities. This realization has challenged African feminist scholars to seriously broaden their sexuality discourse, to include African masculinities in search for pragmatic life-saving approaches to challenging sexualities. In other words, this chapter attempts to draw men from the shadows of this culture where various scholars have attributed to them peripheral roles or excluded them from female circumcision. A closer look at the phenomenon shows that female bodies are modified for political, economic, cultural, religious and aesthetical values that are intrinsically attached and to some extent determined by men. Though men have been condemned for sponsoring and promoting the culture that undermines women's dignity, strips women of their human rights and cows them into subordinate roles, few works have bothered to discuss how female circumcision defines African masculinity and vice versa. This chapter argues for a discussion of masculinities from female bodies. Men who insist that their wives be circumcised actually play an important role in the perpetuation of the practice. Their insistence does not stem from personal tastes but from set notions of African masculinities in those contexts. The chapter argues that female modifications define most notions of manhood among circumcising communities in Africa. The woman's genitalia is trimmed, cut or enlarged against respective cultural barometers of manhood. Acting

womanish, therefore, cannot be fully understood without culturally defined manly tastes and behaviours. Female genitals are modified by women for men. They are tailor-made to suit the respective notions of sexuality designed by the men. This chapter argues that the campaign against female genital modification should address distorted notions of masculinity and should be effected by men and women.

This idea is not entirely new, as is evidenced by the male and female circumcision festivals happening at the same time in separate camps. There is a clear realization in these communities that becoming a man is complemented by becoming a woman, and vice versa. I would argue that as long as men have their genitals cut, they will expect their partners to reciprocate the cultural gesture and vice versa. There is a correlation that goes beyond the individual men to cater for group expectation. For this reason, the campaign against genital cutting must be community-based and should involve both men and women. The disparities in the procedures are physically determined, while the motive and severity of the modifications are socially determined. The chapter will therefore align genital modifications with the socially determined motive, in order to reveal the intrinsic influences of masculinities in determining female genital modifications. It is hoped that the meaning of each woman's genital fabrication will demystify notions of both femininity and masculinity in a changing era. Redefining masculinity becomes an imperative in the campaign against female genital modification.

De-Infibulation

Infibulation presupposes de-infibulation and consequently two key players in the drama of girls' genital alteration, women and men respectively. Though feminine agency has been in the limelight more than their masculine equivalent, their codependency is unquestionable and the practice would fade out faster if both parties worked it out together.

When women pin down little girls and young women to sew up their labia majora and seal off the vaginal orifice in diverse variances, they never intend for those girls to experience eternal celibacy. When

they celebrate the vaginal closures and give presents to the girls who have symbolically come of age, they encourage continued celebration of this rite of passage as the feminine way of being in the community with the men. They celebrate the marriageability of all the girls who qualify through this transition from man-woman to woman-woman. It becomes increasingly difficult to convincingly argue that this is not done for the man-man, the real man, who will settle for nothing but the real woman, if not for himself then for his family honour. For every girl that is infibulated, there is a manly man honoured with the task of de-infibulation. It is apparent that sex and sexuality play a large part in discussion of men and sexuality. (Cleaver, 2002:9). Envisaged de-infibulations, penile or instrumental, conjure up violent images in the bride's mind and in anyone positioning themselves in those vulnerable locations. De-infibulation is another script defining troubling African masculinity.

This chapter would not succeed in portraying de-infibulating men as sadistic, violent and insensitive creatures without parroting the culturally insensitive approaches to circumcision that prevails in abundance. A phenomenological reflection of circumcision portrays celebrated masculinities where de-infibulating men are treated as heroes for carrying out the honourable act in which they proudly perpetuate the lineage with a virtuous, unadulterated, sealed virgin. Thus, the morning after their wedding night, the display of a blood-stained blanket or white sheet is often met with ululation and victory dances. The show of the blood of honour is for the bride, her family and the whole community, which participated in preserving dignity through forced enclosures, infibulations that guaranteed her virginity. While it is easier to understand sexual violence in terms of promiscuity and rape typical of disrupted social orders due to prolonged labour migration, war and genocides, there is cultural honour in de-infibulation, which often shields it from the negative labelling. Thus a clear distinction must be made between the suppressive sexual behaviours of men who use rape to dishonour and humiliate women and enemy groups (Turshen, 1999:125) and the honourable African men who care, love and highly respect the women they de-infibulate

and shower with gifts of appreciation. Yet no confusion should be allowed to overshadow the violence that both acts exhibit. This requires a careful evaluation of notions of masculinities that can arguably be considered troubling and justifies the cultural hermeneutical approach in the campaign against female genital modifications.

Theological Reflection

Arguing from a Christian theological perspective, this chapter critiques the presumed inadequacies and alleged imperfections of the created body, which prompt trimmings and modifications. Gruenbaum discusses the ambiguities surrounding notions of the “natural woman” in northern Sudan, where circumcised women are considered natural because they have been emasculated and feminized through circumcision. The northern Sudanese add aesthetical value to the emasculation of the woman and argue that the “masculine parts” are ugly on the girls and should be removed. Most circumcised men preferred circumcised women whom they considered natural and therefore desirable. (Gruenbaum, 2001:68). Such understandings of masculinity are troubling. Not only does it reflect a troubling perception of the natural woman, created beautiful in the *Imago Dei*, with the clitoris, labia, an open vulva and all the particular details of her genitalia, it also reflects on the violent socialization of the girl into subordination having been “emasculated.”

Questioning the theological foundation of the ritual, Nawal Saadawi, an Egyptian physician and writer who herself was excised, critiques the practice thus:

If religion comes from God, how can it order man to cut off an organ created by Him as long as that organ is not diseased or deformed? God does not create the organs of the body haphazardly without a plan. It is not possible that He should have created the clitoris in a woman’s body only in order that it be cut off at an early stage in life. (El Saadawi, 1980:42)

Writing about the Hellenistic understanding of the body and its legacy for Christian social ethics, Anthony Battaglia explores the dominant images of the human body in the Catholic Church in particular, as well as other Christian traditions. Two dominant images of the body emerge from the suffering of God in Jesus Christ, whose violated body is nailed to the cross, and from the explicated and implicit virginity of Jesus and Mary respectively. The broken body of Christ signalled the sanctity of the body in spite of brokenness, and virginity implied asexuality. (Marcos, 2000:138-9). These two images dominate Christian duality of the body and soul, which emphasized the value of denying sexuality to affirm the soul. This leads to a celebration of celibacy, abstinence, virginity over sexuality, restricting sex to procreation. (Ibid.:145). It can be argued that this dominant asexual Hellenistic view of the body has been impressed upon women more than on men, leading to lopsided gendered sexuality. This, I would argue, is the basis of troubling masculinities.

Although female genital modification has little or no theological basis, Christians are circumcised alongside Muslim women and practitioners of traditional religions. They find themselves having to deal with the crisis of identity, like Muthoni in Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *The River Between*. Her strict Christian upbringing by an uncompromising Christian father, Joshua, and a sensitive missionary teacher does not shelter her from being curious about her femininity. The Christian girl desires to celebrate her sexuality and be a "Christian woman in the tribe", (Wa Thiong'o, 1965:53), and is circumcised. However, Muthoni's death in the process is symbolic of the tension surrounding celebration of sexuality and its denial in Christianity, which has to be overcome to address troubling masculinities and femininities in the HIV and AIDS era.

Redefining Masculinities

A dualist understanding of masculinity as whatever femininity is not has been described by Sarah Hoagland as monism, (Penelope, 1992:xii), which makes masculinity the norm, the generic human, and femininity the deviant, accommodating other. This chapter argues

that circumcision rituals for boys and girls do not only create formidable male/female dualism but clearly reflect the flaws of monism and troubling masculinities.

Most initiation rituals for African boys and girls involving genital trimming, bleeding and enduring pain emphasize feminizing women in ways that are radically different from masculinizing boys. They mark a radical turning point for boys and girls that highlights their gender roles and the expectations of the community. As women are subdued into accepting male authority in preparation for their future marital roles among other feminine values, the boys are bonding with the community in masculine ways that are more assertive. Separate identities of girls and boys associated with the physical modifications of their genitals mark their respective social roles. It is within these separate developmental life journeys that troubled femininities and masculinities emerge. As men are socialized into warrior roles, to protect the family and community, they emerge as soldiers who shun mixing with women or sitting in their mothers' kitchens where the chances of hearing compassionate stories – rather than vicious conquest – are high. These themes run through Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo typifies revered masculinity as a tough and violent man who was feared and respected for being able to control womenfolk among other virtues, while Nwoye's preference for the feminine in his mother's kitchen where stories of mercy and vulnerability were shared is repudiated as disgraceful and unmanly. (Achebe, 1959:52-53). Masculine symbols of power and virility are maintained against the shunned feminine symbols of silence and meekness.

Writing about premodern societies, Moore and Gillette explain how boys were separated from their mothers and isolated in special structures, initiated into manhood by tribal leaders and driven into the wilderness to confront and survive physical danger and death. Girl's initiation involved instructions on womanhood by older women, sealed with a definite physical event that marked her rebirth, while the boy's rebirth was much more elaborate and required a drastic change from a boy who could sit in his mother's kitchen and play

with girls to a man who stood dialectically opposed to everything feminine. (1996:191-2). In her article on “The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society,” Joan Bamberger observes that male circumcision is a much more elaborate rite of passage that involves gruelling physical ordeals as well as lengthy educational lessons about lore, rituals and the details of manhood involving how to control and dominate women. (Bamberger, 1974:263-280).

It is therefore apparent that to be a man is to be less of a woman, and that femininity mirrors masculinities in the reverse. If to be a man is to be dialectically opposed to being a woman, rituals to keep these separate identities will perpetuate female circumcision, since to fully understand masculinity one needs to understand femininity within the same ritual context. Therefore, the ritual of genital modification which makes men into men and women into women is an important starting point in redefining African sexuality expressed through heterosexual marriage, where women modify their genitals for men who are socialized to appreciate and value such genitalia in the HIV and AIDS era. Evidently, women become the constant social barometers for measuring masculinities, and vice versa in this and other cumbersome ways that the scope of this chapter cannot exhaust. Thus, African female genital manipulation is reflective of masculinities that are troubling. This chapter discusses female genital modification not as an end but a means to understanding notions of the masculinities this chapter finds very troubling. Thus female genital modification in predominantly heterosexual African settings clearly mirror troubling notions of African sexuality and troubling masculinities.

Conclusion

This chapter questions understandings of sexuality that position masculinities dialectically opposite to femininities in a context where the HIV and AIDS epidemic is uncontrollable. It proposes alternative

constructions of manhood that do not stand dialectically opposed to womanhood, especially for communities committed to survive HIV and AIDS. The basis of this work has a huge foundation put in place by years of research reflected in the work of Moore and Gillett who note that,

depth of psychologists and others argue that each sex carries both the psychological and physical traits of the other. No man is purely masculine, just as there is no purely feminine woman. Jungian psychologist calls the feminine characteristics of the male psyche the *anima*; the female psyche's masculine characteristics they call the *animus*. (1996:188)

It is the complementarities of the *anima* and the *animus*, which this chapter borrows from in the construction of a holistic African sexuality, that is therapeutic to troubling notions of dialectical masculinities and femininities. Acknowledging that the female's male elements enhance his manhood, and the woman's female; their womanhood is a healthy starting point for the polarization and correction of troubling masculinities. This chapter appeals to the feminine in men and masculine in women for a harmonious synthesis of gender relations needed to survive HIV and AIDS. It debunks the myths that men are naturally "inherently violent, inordinately aggressive, insensitive, and uninterested in intimate relationships, [and] that women have the monopoly on gentle nurturing, emotional, and intuitive behaviours." (Ibid.:189). This effort to understand the deep masculine and the challenge of stewarding masculine power is positive for the eradication of an epidemic fuelled by gender imbalances in the predominantly heterosexual communities of Africa where the power to negotiate safer sex is limited, (Dube, 2003:88), and male authority over sexuality unquestionable. Most importantly, the preoccupation with cutting the clitoris and any protrusions of the female genitals in order to rid them of all traces of the male by "smoothing" the female genitalia and "neatening" it into the most conceivably feminine look will be addressed by an understanding of the man in every woman. The argument checks the drive to emasculate

women through circumcision and challenges notions of aesthetics by revisiting the “natural woman” and her “beautiful genitals,” created in the image of God. Thus the anima and animus challenge perceptions of the male characteristics in women and the female in men as unnatural.

Sylvia Marcos offers complementary insight into this discourse in her discussion of body perceptions, gender and culture. She delves into the feminine-masculine dual unity underlying the Mesoamerican cosmic thinking reflected in the gods and goddesses; life and death as an aspect of the same dual reality which is an essential ordering force of the cosmos also reflected in the organization of time. (Marcos, 2000:95–96). The absence of hierarchical ordering and stratification is fascinating in the reconstruction of what might have been lost in African communities caught up in dialectically opposed gender locations that fuel the spread of HIV and AIDS. This fluid reality of the cosmos reflected in gender relations is described thus:

In the universe, feminine and masculine attributes weave together in the generation of fluid, non-fixed identities... From the cosmos to the individual body, dual gender is revealed as the fundamental metaphor of Mesoamerican thought. It is reflected in the plasticity and dynamism that characterize its poles and that keep them “pulsating”, as it were. (Ibid.:97)

This resonates with Oduyoye’s interpretation of “Ogboinba’s Destiny” and “The saga of Ozidi,” which show that there is no contradiction between power and femininity. (Oduyoye, 1995:29).

This chapter proposes the same plasticity and dynamism of conceptions of masculine and feminine reorientation to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS. Thus to be a man cannot be reduced to penile or knife de-infibulation of a screaming bride on her wedding night, to fathering a child whose entry into the world brings the torturous ripping of the infibulated mother, or to raising daughters whose lives are plagued by the three feminine sorrows as described

in Dahabo Musa's lamentation of the age-old tradition that crowns womanhood with pain and suffering,

My grandmother called it the three feminine sorrows.
The day of circumcision, the wedding night, and the birth of a baby
Are the three feminine sorrows! (Abusharaf, 2006:187)

To be man enough to confront HIV and AIDS in Africa requires rethinking sexuality defined by female genital modifications in "father's town" and "mother's town." Thus, the chapter proposes that liberating troubled masculinities from passionate preoccupation with control and conquest of the feminine body will eliminate the culture of female genital modification. The discussion of female genital modification in this chapter is therefore also not an end in itself, but a means to address troubling sexualities and redeem both women and men from the life-threatening HIV and AIDS pandemic and gross socio-political injustice. It proposes that healthy femininity and masculinities are complementary and not dialectically opposed, and therefore it takes both men and women to fully address female genital modifications and put out the flame of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

PART FIVE

Versions and Subversions: Reconstructing Masculinities

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Legacies Now and Then: HIV, Black and African Men, and the Challenges of the Twenty-First-Century¹

Mark Malisa

Introduction

The public image and existential conditions of the black and the African male is at arguably the lowest ebb in the history of the continent and at a global level. In some states in the United States there are more black males in prison than in institutions of higher education. In the motherland, news is rife with corruption, child soldiers and death. Medical practitioners observe that blacks (in the United States) are the ethnic group with the highest level of HIV and AIDS infection, and that sub-Saharan Africa is one of the world's most HIV and AIDS ravaged regions. In the words of Zimbabwean musician Oliver M'tukudzi, the times call for asking

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“what shall we do?”² In this chapter I attempt to reflect upon the HIV and AIDS crisis from the perspective of one in the diaspora, and contend that recapturing the best ideals of manhood from traditional cultures might be one of the better ways to survive the HIV onslaught. I deliberately place the HIV crisis on a global level, not only because we are living in a global age, but because the problem is a global one, in the true sense of the word. However, it is also true that when the rest of the world talks about “global issues,” blacks and Africa(ns) are no more than an afterthought. It is for this reason, I argue, that the key to overcoming the HIV and AIDS situation will be largely a local or indigenous appraisal and adoption of the best ideals of manhood or masculinity, informed by religious ideals and noble legacies. Throughout, I use Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela as examples whose masculinity was grounded in and informed by both religious and African or black worldviews.³

²This statement comes from the song by Oliver M’tukudzi, from his title track in Shona, “Todii?” translated as “What shall we do?” Oliver is a popular Zimbabwean musician, and in this song he grapples with the challenges that the nation faces in the context of HIV where lives are being lost on a daily basis and the whole nation seems to have run out of solutions/ideas, the song is a plea for a concerted effort to address the huge challenge in our midst.

³See also Meeks, D., 1997. See also the movie *Malcolm X* directed by Spike Lee where Mandela appears as himself and identifies with Malcolm X.

Malcolm, Mandela, Masculinities⁴ and the Challenges of Our Times

In many respects, the men I chose as emblems of masculinity dedicated their lives to creating a better society by choosing to work with and among the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. They were men who gave up power and privilege to make the world of others qualitatively better. At a time when the price of the human soul was negotiable and politics was a means to economic well-being, they each chose to forgo the good life. West (1993) observes that after Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X there have not been many credible black leaders in the United States. Gandhi's non-violent resistance movement and its role in overcoming British occupation and exploitation in India revealed the extent to which democracy is possible without military might or political violence. In a similar fashion, Mandela's ability to forgive a people who took away twenty-seven years of his life, as well as willingly giving up power, showed that to a certain extent not all developing-world leaders are enamoured by power. Each of them had a vision that transcended the mundane and the immediate gratification of personal pleasure. Of course, to say they were great men does not in any way imply that they had no personal or collective shortcomings. Initially, mainstream Western society and media portrayed them as renegades. Malcolm X was frequently portrayed as a hater, while Nelson

⁴There are countless examples of great Black males from any continent and any discipline. I could easily have included Patrice Lumumba, Muhammad Ali, Steve Biko, Martin Luther King Jr.; one could even go as far back as Augustine of Hippo. Cornel West (1993) notes that often times it is the Western controlled media that sometimes projects certain people as spokesmen of the race, and that on occasions when radicals are embraced by dominant Western culture, their message and life are stripped of their revolutionary impetus. hooks (2004) observes that is especially true in the case of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., who were posthumously embraced by White society. See also Mbeki, 2004:185.

Mandela was described as a terrorist for fighting for the freedom of *all* South Africans.

It is almost inevitable to link Mandela to the struggle to turn the tidal wave of HIV and AIDS in South Africa and the world in general. A few years after overseeing the legal abolishment of apartheid, Mandela established a charitable foundation dedicated to combating HIV and AIDS. Yet, what stands out in Mandela is the celebration of the common person and the cause of the poor. Malcolm X, on the other hand, dedicated his life to confronting the evils that faced his generation, namely racism and imperialism. Both saw their work as men as extending beyond their immediate families, tribes, and nations. Neither advocated for nor supported patriarchy. However, they both affirmed and acknowledged the patrilineal nature of African and African-American families. Both were dedicated to telling the truth about the human condition as they saw it.

Linking Malcolm X to Nelson Mandela might unsettle some people who have little knowledge of the post-Mecca Malcolm X, or the pre-and-post Robben Island Mandela. It might further disturb those who believe Malcolm X subscribed to violence while they believe Mandela did not. Yet, in many respects their lives, works and ideas have many parallels. Towards the end of his life, Malcolm X had embraced Pan-Africanism, in almost the same way as Mandela espoused the value of that practice and doctrine. Mandela, (1994, 1993), on the other hand, never shied away from identifying himself with Malcolm X. In the movie *Malcolm X*, Mandela appears as himself and presents himself as taking on the mantra and work of Malcolm X. In addition, on countless occasions, Mandela was quick to point out the inspiration he drew from Malcolm X and other African

Americans who fought for social justice. Both were more often than not inclined to identify with the poor and oppressed.⁵

The masculinity of Malcolm X has been immortalized in the eulogy given by Ossie Davis at his funeral. I quote at length:

Protocol and common sense require that Negroes stand back and let the white man speak up for us, defend us, and lead us from behind the scenes in our fight... Malcolm knew that every white man in America...profits from racism even though he does not practice it or believe in it...that every Negro who did not challenge on the spot every instance of racism was...without balls or any other commonly accepted aspects of manhood...And you always left his presence with the sneaky suspicion that maybe, after all, you were a man! (Malcolm X, 1999:464-465)

While most remember Malcolm X for his fight against racism on a global level, what stands out for me in his life and work is the way he viewed the well-being of women as central to the wholeness of society. Malcolm X acknowledged that in his pre-Moslem days he participated in a debased masochistic masculinity that devalued the value and humanity of women. The masochism and sexual debauchery manifested itself in pimping⁶ out women and in various

⁵After the release of the movie *Tsotsi*, Mandela likened part of his younger days to those of Tsotsi with regard to the challenges that face young men in South Africa. Malcolm X, on the other hand, was always quick to identify himself with “the field Negro.” See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4816266.stm> for Mandela and his background, as well as statements of *Tsotsi*.

⁶A pimp finds and manages clients for prostitutes and engages them in prostitution (in brothels in most cases and in some cases street prostitution) in order to profit from their earnings. Typically, a pimp will not force prostitutes to stay with him, although some have been known to be abusive in order to keep their prostitutes submissive or to maximize profits. A pimp may also offer to protect his prostitutes from rival pimps and prostitutes or from abusive clients. He can also enable a prostitute to work in a particular area under his control. Pimping is illegal in many countries.

sexual trysts between blacks and whites, some of which were not based on meaningful human relations. Although Malcolm X might not have articulated a well-defined feminist agenda, one of the reasons he split from Elijah Mohammed was over the latter's sexual abuse of women.

Even Mandela himself was aware of the mythic proportions his life had taken on because of his struggle against apartheid and his role in transforming South Africa into a multiethnic democracy. In general, black African leadership has been criticized for brutality and corruption.⁷ However, Mandela seems to have avoided the trappings that postcolonialism sets for African presidents. While in general, power seems to have been an end in itself, Mandela used power as a means to achieve an end, and when that had been accomplished he freely relinquished the power.

HIV and AIDS in Africa and in the United States: State of the Black Condition

Rarely have times been so bleak in postcolonial Africa and post-Civil Rights United States for black people in general and for black males in particular.⁸ It would be naïve to isolate or separate the HIV and AIDS problem decimating sub-Saharan Africa from the one ravaging blacks in the United States. It would be equally naive to

⁷See narratives or historical depictions of Idi Amin of Uganda, Mobutu Seseko of Zaire, or the Burundi and Rwanda genocides. Mobutu Seseko owed the longevity of his regime to the support of the United States. The United States' policy of "constructive engagement" was a lifeline for apartheid when most of the non-Western/Western world had taken measures to isolate apartheid South Africa. Amin boasted that the British made him what he became. See *The Last King of Scotland*.

⁸See Cornel West, 1993; bell hooks, 2004; and Naim Akbar, 1991. They all argue that in general the situation regarding Black America borders on genocide: social, physical, psychological. It is true that black women everywhere have borne the brunt of all kinds of oppression, but since this chapter is on masculinities and the HIV and AIDS crisis, I will not write much about femininities.

pretend that media and culturally informed depictions of what constitutes manhood do not mutually inform and misinform each other regarding blacks. However, without true solidarity between all peoples, mutual critique and survival will be well nigh impossible. Throughout, I will contrast black Africa with the experiences of African-Americans or blacks in the United States. Our fates are linked with regard to the problems of HIV and AIDS, poverty, underemployment and racism. I am not arguing for separatism, but more local and culturally appropriate responses and constructions of manhood. At the same time, without critiquing and analysing the global and economic or material conditions that make HIV possible, and seeking to change such conditions, there is little point in lamenting the crisis and highlighting the statistics.

Collins (2005:280) observes that the “problems of HIV and AIDS among African Americans resemble those in South Africa and throughout the African diaspora.” She further notes that in general, HIV disproportionately affects blacks. While calling for a need to rethink black sexual practices, she does not shy away from pointing out that blacks lack access to good schools and meaningful education, and to good healthcare. In addition, material poverty seems to be the norm, regardless of whether it is in the United States or South Africa. As such, there is a need for a collective response to the AIDS pandemic. Part of the struggle involves reconstructing black masculinity. (Wallace, 2002).

Globalization and Poverty

Arguably, one of the dominant paradigms for rendering the state of the world in the twenty-first century is “globalization.” Used from the perspective of the West, it generally means that there is a desire for oneness, for harmony and for the economic integration of all cultures and communities. (Smith, 2007). Hidden under these terms is a desire for continued economic, cultural and political domination of the world. Smith also observes that proponents of globalization generally work for Western or capitalist-oriented institutions such

as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. For those living and working in Africa, the economic devastation wrought by structural adjustment programs mandated by the two organizations is an ongoing nightmare that I have no need to rehash. The untold miseries of lost jobs and currency devaluations are a by-product of the *successful* implementation of World Bank policy directives, under which most men (and women) lose gainful employment, which in turn makes it impossible to live ethical lives. For those living and working in the West, the relocation of manufacturing jobs to countries outside the United States has brought about untold poverty in places such as urban Michigan, the district of Columbia and parts of Maryland. In brief, the pursuit of profit under globalization and globalizing tendencies has left many black males grossly underemployed or unemployed and undereducated/miseducated.

Smith, Barlow and Robertson (2007 and 1994) observe that one of the characteristics of globalization is the primacy of the economic value of human life over and against the cultural and political. As such, every facet of human existence can be commercialized or used to maximize profit. Consequently, even black masculinity is subject to commercialization if it means optimum profit. The athletic success of a few black males is used to market more goods to poorer neighbourhoods, and oftentimes the goods themselves are manufactured under deplorable conditions.⁹ Profit over human life at all costs seems to be the *modus operandi*.

Primarily because of the profit motive, Bauman (2004) contends that globalization necessarily creates a culture that views human beings as disposable. However, it is not all human beings that are disposable, but minorities and the poor. In general, in the United States, blacks fall within “minority groups” and in terms of material

⁹See criticisms of conditions under which Nike/Adidas products are manufactured and the use of successful athletes to endorse such products. In general, most athletes shy away from politics or discussions of political conditions and see sport as a ticket out of the ghetto. See also *Hoop Dreams*.

conditions, Africa remains arguably the poorest (materially) continent.¹⁰

Other scholars contend that globalization does not stand for anything more than Americanization, with Americanization referring to modelling or patterning after the United States. Orelus and Smith (2007) associate it with a new form of imperialism in which the traditions and cultures of others are trampled under a market economy. What is disheartening, according to Smith, is that the current milieu is constructed on falsehoods that are sustained by a powerful media and military. The fulfilment of Orwell's *1984* manifests itself in the maliciously deceptive nature of globalization, where what is proclaimed as life-affirming is in fact dehumanizing and life-denying.

I placed the discussion of masculinity under globalization primarily because of the impression in the dominant media that globalization is real and works but also to highlight that what is touted as a vehicle for economic and cultural integration is nothing more than a consolidation of Western hegemonic tendencies in the rest of the world. Orelus notes that globalization necessitates the need for new strategies from the poor and marginalized, as well as globally concerned citizens: (2007:xv),

Resisting this shift will require us to seek a new political and ideological terrain that enables us to shape what is happening both locally and globally, as the local informs the global and vice versa. Given that the local and the global are intertwined, one can no longer analyse what happens on a local level without linking it to what happens globally.

¹⁰See *The Constant Gardner*, *Blood Diamond* and other movies that depict the constant material exploitation of Africa and the relationship between the material success of the West and the poverty and wars in Africa.

At the same time, the quest for profit often means working conditions are such that human relations are impossible and meaningless. Alienated labour begets alienated human beings. The many successes of capitalism and globalization include the elimination of workers' rights, the marginalization of workers' unions, the privatization of health care, and the so-called deregulation of industries. It is largely under these conditions that one has to understand the relationship between black masculinity and the spread of HIV.¹¹ However, a discussion of HIV and masculinity should also discuss the global/local material conditions under which they occur.

Race and Racism

When rapper Kanye West told a national television audience in the United States that the current United States government does not care about black people, not many argued with him.¹² His message

¹¹In general, Blacks are the most likely to be unemployed or underemployed. In the United States some attribute this to structural/institutional racism. In parts of Africa this is due to loss of jobs and industries relocating or closing down. Yes, it could also be attributed to governmental corruption and mismanagement. However, governmental corruption and mismanagement are not unique to Africa.

¹²See also James Baldwin, 1986. Baldwin contends that most United States presidents in general have been indifferent to the plight of Black people. "As concerns all...presidents...Blacks have never had any human reality at all" (1986:41). Baldwin despaired of Blacks ever getting human recognition in the United States to the extent that he wrote "Blacks have never been, and are not now, really considered to be citizens here" (p. 31). However, in Baldwin's works, the treatment of Blacks in the United States was representative of the treatment of non-Whites across the globe. Malcolm X and a host of others concerned with the human condition of non-Whites also observe the indifference with which the federal government responds to the plight of Black people in general. See also McLaren and Jaramilo, 2007. hooks (2004:xii) describes the current age as "the truth is that this is a culture that does not love black males" and consequently most black males do not love themselves, hence the need to urgently address the situation.

resonated with the experiences of most black people. Kanye West's point was that racism is still a factor in how human beings and attributes of what it means to be human play a role in the United States. At a deeper level though, his message was that black people in the United States will have to count less and less on the federal government in catastrophic events that disproportionately affect blacks. Instead, blacks would have to shoulder most of the responsibilities for self-preservation. Although many scholars would like to pretend we now live in a colour-blind society, the reality is when it comes down to the basics, HIV and AIDS and poverty affect mostly blacks.

If Kanye West's message rang true for and to most black Americans, the experiences of apartheid, colonialism and neo-colonialism are a permanent and living reminder of the power of racism in Africa. While colonialism and apartheid gravely underdeveloped Africa, the psychological wounds are still festering. That the Rwandan genocide was possible and occurred is evidence of the strength of racism's hold on the black psyche.¹³ I am not making an apology for genocide or post-independence conflict in Africa. However, it is true that whenever civil strife and violence occur in postcolonial Africa, European and American nationals are swiftly and conveniently evacuated. It is also true that in general most of the weapons (guns, landmines and bombs) used for committing genocide and other atrocities are rarely manufactured in Africa.

To be blind to the nature, presence and working of racism in current global economic and political relations is to be complicit in systems that do not value black life. That HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect blacks and non-whites in general should

¹³See Frantz Fanon (1964:56). According to Fanon, the colonized people often embrace the negative characteristics of their oppressors, seeing in them signs of progress. Some argue that postcolonial genocide in Africa is a product of the encounter with Europe. The same goes with repressive political regimes and dictatorships. There is thus a need to *decolonise the mind*.

provoke discussions on some of the underlying reasons for such an occurrence. However, the struggle to combat HIV and AIDS should and need not be seen as just a black struggle or problem.

Religious Roots of Cultural Critique and Renewal

Both Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela acknowledged the role that religion played in their understanding of what it means to be a human being and a man. For Malcolm X this was mainly within Islam, although he had a comprehensive understanding of the nature and workings of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indigenous Religions. Nelson Mandela, on the other hand, drew some inspiration from Christianity, but had an equally sophisticated understanding of other religions and cultures. Reflecting on his youth, Mandela observed that “the two principles that governed my life at Mqhekezweni were the chieftaincy and the Church; the Church was concerned with this world and the next.” (1994:19). Implicit here is the Church’s involvement in the mundane and the physical well-being of ordinary people.

In a similar fashion, Malcolm X saw religion (Islam) as informing the best practices on what constituted masculinity. Islam, according to Malcolm X, not only defines relations between men and women in general, but global human relations. It is one of the few religions in which women were honoured and respected; and it is one of the few religions that affirm the oneness of humankind. In the letter from Mecca, Malcolm X noted that Islam offered one of the proven cures to the problems of racism and economic exploitation, and in its practices approximated a classless society. He argued that Islam could make it possible for people “to accept in reality the Oneness of Men.” (1999:347). He further contended that from Islam he learned that “it takes all of the religious, political, economic, psychological, and racial ingredients or characteristics, to make the human family and the human society complete.” (Ibid.:382).

For both Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela, religion informed ethical conduct and human relations. Religion did not deny but affirmed the best of cultural conduct and practice. However, because

he was Muslim, Malcolm X did not reject or deny that African and black culture had a lot to offer for cultural renewal. In a similar manner, being a Christian did not lead to Nelson Mandela denying or negating the African values that shaped his life and beliefs. Although they both had their beliefs and practices anchored in religious or theological worldviews, they also believed that it was the duty of the oppressed to liberate themselves. (Mandela, 1993).

To a great extent, one could argue that a religious conversion to Islam helped change Malcolm X's conception of masculinity as well as the role of sexuality in human relations. It could also be further argued that he then assumed a more disciplined and responsible sexuality, and challenged those in his faith community to subscribe to an ethical code of human conduct and sexuality. In his pre-Islam days, as Homeboy, Mascot and Detroit Red, Malcolm X readily admits to meaningless sexual encounters with countless women. Upon taking up the religion of Islam, his views on women and on sexuality and the meaning of manhood/fatherhood took on a new dimension.

Sources of Masculinity: Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Traditional cultures constitute an invaluable source of knowledge about what constitutes manhood. Mandela (1994:13) noted that "the traditional religion of the Xhosas is characterized by a cosmic wholeness, so that there is little distinction between the natural and the supernatural." While such traditional culture saw all things as holy, the sacredness of human life was also held in high esteem. In the Xhosa culture, for example, "young men are the flowers of the nation." (Ibid.:30). To combat the HIV epidemic, humanity has to see the value of young men.

However, traditional cultures did not nurture or foster a spirit of poverty or dependence. Mandela further notes that "without land and independence the promise of manhood is empty and illusory." (Ibid). The material or economic conditions were integral to understanding the nature of masculinity. For most peoples in Africa, land is the source of wealth and sustenance. The struggle of

responding to the effects of the AIDS pandemic has to be understood in the context of poverty, malnutrition and underemployment. In post-colonial Africa, the issue of land and economic redistribution holds the key to not only eradicating poverty and malnutrition, but to the peace and security of that region.¹⁴

According to Smith, one of the tragedies in this “global era” is that “the very question of what constitutes knowledge, its nature and character, has been posed and answered for today’s world almost exclusively by Western powers.” (2007:xxiii). Consequently many black men grow up with little cultural knowledge of what it means to be a man, or not having the ability to construct alternative masculinities. Kerckhove, (1997), as cited in Smith, contends that about 80 percent of what constitutes knowledge of Africa is recorded by European or American information systems. Granted, the issues discussed under the section on the culture of suspicion mean that the quest for self-knowledge for black males is riddled with puzzles and possible falsifications.

Among the strengths of indigenous or African worldviews, according to Nyerere, was in addressing issues of poverty and human relations. While highlighting the role of *ujamaa* or familyhood, he notes that in “traditional African society we were individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us.” (1995:68). One could reasonably argue that in most of sub-Saharan Africa the concept of community survives predominantly in the rural areas, while those in the cities either move into gated communities or barricade the rest of the world outside their lonely havens. In addition, in urban areas, economic class rather than social justice determines to which pseudo-community one belongs.

¹⁴Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have to address the issue of land redistribution, as well as the redistribution of wealth in general. Most of the fertile land remains in the hands of a minority whose ethic has no room for community or concern for others without profit being the motive.

Critiques of indigenous knowledge systems, particularly of *ubuntu*, argue that it does not and did not sufficiently address material conditions but focused mostly on social/human relations. Nyerere, however, categorically states that work and productivity were part of the human condition: “in traditional African society, everybody was a worker. There was no other way for earning a living for the community.” (Ibid.:67). So deep, in fact, was the work ethic in traditional societies that the Swahili had a proverb, *Mgeni siku mbili; siku ya tatu mpe jembe* (Ibid.:68).¹⁵ However, work was not an end in itself, and there was no intention of exploiting workers for the sake of profit. These are just a few of the insights into what manhood could be like, or was like. What the reader discerns from the work of Nyerere, among others, is the extent to which there is nothing natural about capitalism, poverty and the exploitation of people for the sake of profit. The philosophy and practice of *ujamaa* is a disavowal of the belief that Africans are poor because they do not work or they lack a work ethic or are prone to fighting and violence.

Pan Africanism and Struggle for Wholeness

Other than the problems associated with HIV, there is more that black America has in common with black Africa. Mandela (1994:583) noted that “an unbreakable umbilical cord connected black South Africans and black Americans.” During a tour of the United States immediately after his release, Mandela acknowledged the inspiration he drew from Martin Luther King Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus

¹⁵The literal translation or the equivalent in English is that a person should be treated as a guest for two days. By the third day they should join others in manual/productive work. “Treat your guest as a guest for two days; on the third day give him a hoe.”

Garvey,¹⁶ among the many black Americans who struggled to make conditions better by combating racism. Even Malcolm X observed that for black Americans to overcome the psychological impact of racism in the United States, a cultural and psychological migration to Africa was essential. Many historians of the civil rights movement and independence movements in Africa note that the two struggles were often mutually informative. On countless occasions, Malcolm X drew inspiration from the Mau Mau's strategies for overcoming colonial rule.¹⁷ While the glory days between black Americans and Africa might appear to be over, a number of black organizations continue to stress the role of Afrocentric dispositions on a global level. Molefi Asante observes that one "cannot isolate the African problem in the United States from the African situation in Cuba, Brazil, or in South Africa." (1993:45).

For a discussion that deals with the dilemmas affecting primarily black men, and for a situation that requires responses from that

¹⁶Martin Luther King Jr. is regarded as one of the architects of the Civil Rights Movement (1960s) in the United States. The policy of nonviolence as an alternative to the violence in United States government policy contrasted with the initial militancy of Malcolm X. Marcus Garvey is credited with raising the need for Pan-Africanism as a way to overcome the problems of racism in the Western world, particularly the United States. His "back-to-Africa" movement inspired Malcolm X, and a generation that embraced a positive view of Africa. All three saw Blacks as endowed with a messianic destiny for the salvation of the human race. See Wilson Moses, 1993, *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms*.

¹⁷See *Roots*. There have been countless other attempts by many African Americans to embrace aspects of African traditions. Some in the United States celebrate Kwanzaa, and still others try to forge meaningful engagements with African countries. See also White/Cones, 1999, on the role of ujamaa (cooperative economics) as alternatives to individualistic capitalism and on the role of umoja or the importance of unity in general. White and Cones also argue that Afrocentrism is one of the few outlets from the nihilism prevalent in the ghettos of the United States.

perspective, I find the Afrocentric method most appropriate.¹⁸ Asante (1993:3) states that one of the characteristics of this school is the study of issues dealing with black people from an African perspective. Asante takes it for granted that there is a connection on many levels between blacks in the United States and Africa. In terms of subject matter, Afrocentricity deals with the social and behavioural issues affecting black people. Although it seeks to ground discussions on life in the black experience and knowledge, Asante contends that Afrocentrism “is not about cultural separatism or racial chauvinism”. (Ibid.:3). In addition, there is no limit to what the sources of data related to the study of African reality come from. Social institutions, music, literary texts and stories are some of the many sources that can be used to understand and study black reality or the Black World. Its general orientation is that “African peoples are subjects and agents of historical processes.” (Ibid.:2). In seeking to understand how we as Africans and black people in general can respond to the problems that affect us, looking for some of the solutions within traditional cultures might reveal the strengths and resources we have to combat HIV and AIDS.

Out of Africa, Something Good

While many cultures and most scholars have portrayed Africa and traditional cultures in a negative way, for Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela there were many positive elements in African cultures that were instrumental in the positive regeneration of humankind. For black Africans, the memory of African cultures in general was acknowledged as having contributed to surviving the dehumanizing encounter with capitalism and racism. For Malcolm X, Africa and the black experience provided the data and lived experience for a

¹⁸Afrocentrism or Afrocentricity is primarily associated with African American scholars who stressed the importance of reconnecting with Africa. See Asante, 1993. In theory and in practice, it is the closest to *ubuntu*, particularly with respect to centring human knowledge and experience on the Black condition. See also the works of Fanon.

theology that could offer redemption for all peoples. This was true whether from the perspective of Islam or Christianity.¹⁹ Even before Malcolm X, “the back to Africa” movement was informed by an ethos that recognized there were positive and life-affirming attributes in traditional African culture.²⁰ For both Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela, Africa offered more than the negativities depicted in Western-controlled media. Granted the moral and practical failures of Western ways,²¹ I would argue that even in the struggle against the AIDS pandemic, African traditional cultures have more to offer on what constitutes ideal manhood. Without calling for separation from the non-Western world, both saw the ideologies and visions that made life meaningful as grounded in Afrocentrism.²²

However, the absence of self-knowledge or knowledge about one’s culture frequently leaves a vacuum that is filled with distortions and can be easily manipulated. Oftentimes, the media (generally controlled by the West) projects what constitutes the ideal world. Mandela (1994) notes that South African *tsotsis* model their lifestyle and values on versions of American gangsters. Most of the *tsotsis* live in the poorer urban centres of South Africa and the shanty towns. In other words, there is a direct relationship between a culture and climate of material poverty and a value system that negates human life. In the following section I select minute slices of the lives of

¹⁹See Malcolm X, *Autobiography*, as well as the movie *Malcolm X*. Malcolm was one of the first in his generation to argue that the historical Jesus was not White. See also James Cone, *Black Theology*.

²⁰Many scholars deliberately fail to distinguish among pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial traditional African cultures. The colonial experience had negative effects on African cultures, and these effects are still reflected in postcolonial traditional cultures. Fanon’s works generally deal with the tragic effects of colonialism and postcolonialism in Africa.

²¹See *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Adorno/Horkheimer, as well as critical theory/pedagogy.

²²See also Thabo Mbeki, 2004, *Africa: Define yourself*. Mbeki sees the struggle against HIV, and for a better future, as tied to an African Renaissance.

historical figures whose struggles to construct a different world offers a radically different view of masculinity. One of the negative effects of the mass media is that it has reduced the goals of the struggle to an empty, materialistic lifestyle that celebrates the immediate gratification of the flesh as the be-all and end-all of life.²³

The Tasks Ahead

One of the major challenges for us men will be the ability to read the world.²⁴ Subsequent to that will be the ability and willingness to accept that we can shape and create our own history. One of the areas from which to begin would be redefining what constitutes manhood and where we get our ideas of masculinity. Because of the power exerted by Western media, Western notions of what it means to be human and masculine hold sway in most of the world. As they currently exist, most institutions of learning legitimate the stranglehold that Euro-centric values hold. To submit to such ideological and mental captivity would defeat any humanitarian prospects in any struggle a people are involved in. Baldwin noted that “the White Republic...has absolutely no image, or standard, of masculinity to which any man, black or white, can honourably

²³See criticisms on the Black middle class and its concern for upward social mobility as defined by moving into wealthier neighbourhoods and rejecting Black culture in general. See also Malcolm X, 1999, and Cabral, 1995.

²⁴From critical pedagogy, this refers to critical consciousness as well as political astuteness. For example, we have to be able to ask the question of how things came to be the way they are, and to work toward providing solutions to the problems we face. Book knowledge that does not lead to transforming material conditions is no more than literacy for stupidification, see Macedo, 1999; See also Armah, 1978.

aspire.” (1986: 21). This has several implications for understanding as well as attempting to reconstruct meaningful masculinities.²⁵

Needless to say, one of the first tasks is creating masculinities that differ from those projected or supported by capitalist ideologies, or what Baldwin (1986) describes as the White Republic. Granted that the Western worldview has traditionally and systematically rejected the humanity of blacks, alternative sources of meaningful manhood will have to be rediscovered or revived. On the other hand, granted that the cultural and political consciousness of ordinary peoples was instrumental in overcoming colonialism/racism/apartheid, it would be prudent to explore the ways the same consciousness could be used in combating AIDS or HIV in relation to nation-building.

Cornel West (1993) contends that one of the major obstacles to progress in black America is the dearth of quality leadership in the post-civil rights era. One could easily argue that the same is true for most of Africa in the periods after political independence (with the possible exception of Mandela, Nkrumah, and Nyerere). What factors continue to negate the emergence of a new revolutionary leadership whose vision can rally people to defeat the challenges posed by HIV

²⁵See also bell hooks (2004:xii), who writes that “at the centre of the way black male selfhood is constructed in white supremacist capitalist patriarchy is the image of the brute, untamed, uncivilized, unthinking, unfeeling.” The point here is that depictions of black manhood in white controlled media are rarely positive. At the same time there is little that is worth emulating in *white* masculinity. Radical scholars of European heritage realize the importance of choosing against whiteness; see McLaren, 2002 and McIntosh, 1997. The *White Privilege Conference* has become a tradition in most United States colleges as a way for highlighting the ways that White peoples are destroyed by racism in spite of the short term material benefits that are associated with whiteness. Whiteness Studies/ Conferences are part of a *newer* trend in the quest for a better understanding of the workings of racism. A similar view is expressed in the work of Bourdieu, 2001, which explores the nature of male domination.

as well as the material and psychological conditions that make HIV possible? To what extent do we, as men, contribute to the absence of viable alternatives to patriarchal constructions of manhood?

In the lives and works of both Nelson Mandela and Malcolm X, the reader sees the importance of getting a good education and staying in school. For most African-American males, the major challenge is staying in school and finding caring teachers and educators. It is the same challenge that Malcolm faced, and he ended up dropping out of school. However, he used his prison time to get an education, which in turn helped him articulate the struggles his generation faced. While Mandela did not drop out of school, he used every opportunity, including his time in prison, to study and acquire knowledge about the world. More than anything, they serve as inspirations for getting an education.

While the immediate challenge is that of combating HIV, it is incumbent upon us to commit ourselves to alternative ways that offer alternatives to the dehumanization present in capitalism. Poverty, war, crime and disease are made possible by the profit motive that drives the engine of capitalism. Our commitment to “truth” will inevitably lead to a better understanding of how to live meaningful lives. Malcolm X, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela committed their lives to a struggle against what they perceived to be obstacles to a wholesome life for all. At various times each was tempted with material rewards in exchange for a conscience. Each held on to a truth in which they were rooted. Like all generations, we will have to find what constitutes the truth to our condition. It would be misleading on my part to pretend that this can be accomplished without the help of other peoples. We live and work in a global and interdependent world.

Conclusion

The challenges of HIV and AIDS pose a number of problems for blacks in the United States and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, and for humankind in general. To a great extent, black males will have to shoulder a lot of responsibility for stemming the tide of the

epidemic. A greater part of the struggle to combat HIV will involve a reconstruction of what constitutes masculinity. For black males in particular, and for men in general, there needs to be a soul searching regarding what it means to be a man. In this chapter I have argued for an alternative view of manhood not based on Eurocentric models. If five centuries of Eurocentric masculine domination have brought us to this precipice and we cannot construct alternatives, maybe it is not farfetched to say most of humanity will be doomed.²⁶

I also made a connection between the global economic system, capitalism and HIV and AIDS. This is important because without addressing the material conditions that make HIV possible, it is difficult to devise workable strategies. Economic or material poverty, political violence, sexual abuse and drug use are all in one way or another related to the profit motive that drives the engine of capitalism and exercises a rigid hegemony on what it means to be a man.

Central to Pan-Africanism is peace within and among Africans. Although HIV or AIDS is generally discussed in the context of poverty and underemployment, one factor that is often neglected is the role of war and violence and the conditions it creates for the majority of the poor. Keller observes that since 1993 there have been “over 5.2 million refugees and 13 million displaced persons in Africa.” (1998:63). While the relationship between poverty and HIV and AIDS is hardly questioned at all, not many studies have been devoted to studying the relationship between war and violence and the spread of HIV and AIDS, particularly in Africa. In general, most of those involved in armed conflict in Africa are males. Those who suffer from armed conflict and war are, more often than not, women

²⁶The failures of advanced capitalism or globalization in so far as social justice is concerned are the subject of critical theory, liberation theology, critical pedagogy, and post colonial studies among other disciplines. See *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The rape and pillaging of the Third World/Developing World is the subject of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

and children. In some instances, they are sexually abused by people already infected with HIV.

One of the many things we need to do as black men is to acknowledge the existence of the problem and devise challenges for combating it. The examples of the men I chose, Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela, were committed to eradicating the problems that their generations and their people faced. Racism and colonialism had and still have a devastating effect on blacks. Men of vision dedicated their lives to affirming the humanity of all, particularly the oppressed. Without negating the role of women, as black men we have to rally around leaders with a vision on how to combat the spread of HIV.²⁷ It is possible there will be genuine allies from other racial and ethnic groups who are moved by the plight of black America and black Africa. Like Malcolm, Nelson and Mahatma, we will have to take the initiative but also accept the help of allies who realize that the problem of HIV and AIDS affects all of humanity even though it disproportionately affects and infects blacks.

In spite of the appearance of progress black people have made in the past fifty or so years in the United States, there are not many institutions dedicated to the study or substance of black thought or philosophy.²⁸ Most philosophy textbooks in the West in general and the United States in particular hardly mention African or African-

²⁷Many scholars, especially from the field of critical theory, despair of the possibilities of revolutions ever happening again, or of the power of revolutions to change anything. However, without an ideological, material and cultural revolution and a change in patterns of human interaction, it will be difficult to combat HIV. To correct material relations between Africa and the rest of the world, a new and different revolution will have to occur.

²⁸See West, 1993, and hooks, 2004. Both argue that the large number of Blacks who made it into middle class United States society has not really translated into meaningful Black leadership or a connection with the lived and living conditions of the poor. West further contends that after Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X there have not been great leaders in Black America.

American philosophies and philosophers. In some Western universities it is possible to obtain the highest degree without ever studying the contributions of blacks and other “minorities.” Consequently, some blacks graduate without learning anything that affirms the validity and importance of their own history and experiences. Akbar (1991:64) observes that there is a scarcity of information regarding Black history and heritage. Hooks (2004) notes that in general most black males in positions of power state that they do not have enough time to research or write about issues related to masculinity. However, given the urgency of the situation, I argue that the creation of schools and departments dedicated to Africana and Indigenous Studies/Cultures is of prime importance.²⁹ They offer viable alternatives to the vampirism of capitalism. To a great extent they are part of the few forms of thought that resist globalization, and have not yet been wholly colonized by the new life-world. I quote at length from Akbar the significance of having institutions that focus on African worldviews and philosophies.

You must have journals that will publish things from an Afro-centric perspective...Until you have institutions where you can get post-doctoral and doctoral degrees saying that the African perspective on human personality, the African perspective on economic development...is correct, until you have institutions that stand behind that-nobody is going to respect us. (1991:37)

²⁹Black and Africana Studies in general are often marginalized in the United States, and scholarship in this field rarely gets the credibility it deserves. Sometimes the “experts” in these disciplines have no organic, linguistic, or cultural connection to the Black world, other times Black Studies is used as a hustle to get into mainstream or dominant academia. However, there are some sincere “experts” who care about the plight of Blacks in general. By the same token, blackness on its own is not an indicator of commitment to the struggle. See Malcolm X on the use of the house and field Negro allegory. It is important to state that some universities in (South) Africa have realized the importance of studying *ubuntu*.

This is one of the challenges that face our generation. Part of my intention in focusing on Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela was to show the importance of creating viable legacies that younger generations can rely on. Mandela credited his family and the time he spent at the royal court for insights into the nature of democracy present in African worldviews. In a similar fashion, Malcolm X credited his father's involvement in Pan-Africanism and the Garvey movement with shaping his outlook on the nature and practice of racism as well as appropriating from African philosophy and experiences.

Although the main thrust of this chapter has focussed on the cultural and religious dimension in relation to combating AIDS and HIV, I would argue that there is an urgent need to devote resources to medical research on HIV. Granted that HIV and AIDS disproportionately affects and infects blacks in general, it might be prudent to invest in HIV and AIDS research within the continent. On a similar note, it is important to train and produce doctors and practitioners committed to the people. Needless to say, institutions and governments will have to commit to training cadres (medical) committed to finding the cure. While acknowledging the importance of coalition building across religious and racial and ethnic lines, I would further argue that it is important that some of the doctors and researchers be African/black. HIV or AIDS has been predominantly a black/African problem. I am not implying that such cadres should be exclusively black or African. The struggle against racism and imperialism required a coalition of all peoples, but blacks and Africans did not shrink from taking leadership roles in the struggles. The challenge will be for us as Africans to dedicate resources to finding medicinal responses to HIV and AIDS.

Armah (1980) views the absence of a connected consciousness among black people as one of the loopholes that make it difficult to overcome the challenges of capitalism/colonialism/racism/sexism. In spite of the existence of the Organization of African Union, the continent remains divided on many issues, with little progress made toward ending genocide, underdevelopment, disease and corruption.

Nelson Mandela and Malcolm X both saw the importance of solidarity in opposing and rejecting all forms of oppression and, in the case of Nelson Mandela, forming an international coalition dedicated to combating AIDS and HIV. For those in the Diaspora, there is a need to connect with struggles going on in the motherland and other parts of the world. Mandela and Malcolm X's political lives indicate that to a great extent it is possible to have new political imaginaries and governments that are not based on military might or state-maintained terrorism. Both saw the emptiness and duplicity of any constructions of humanity based on Western or Eurocentric systems (capitalism/profit) and practices. Like many who argue for an end to exploitative relationships, I am not against white people. However whiteness as it currently exists cannot nurture or create viable and life-affirming masculinities for humankind.³⁰

³⁰There are models of cooperation between whites and blacks in both the United States and Africa. The success of the Underground Railroad was partly due to the help some whites offered to the runaway slaves. In South Africa, many white women (primarily Jewish) fought to end apartheid. See also *Mississippi Burning* or *Biko*. A few whites worked to help blacks obtain civil rights in the United States. It is also true that a few whites (mostly of Jewish descent) joined the ANC, were imprisoned alongside Mandela, and joined uMkonto WeSizwe. See also *Long Walk to Freedom*.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Challenging African Men to Be “Man Enough to Care” in the HIV Era: Special Focus on the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland,¹ Zimbabwe

Charles Chindomu and Eunica E. Matizanhuka

Background

This reflection is a result of the authors’² experiences ministering to God’s people in the HIV and AIDS era. We are moved by the impact of HIV and AIDS on people’s lives and by the need for men to be more involved in preventing the spread of HIV. As more people living with HIV progress to AIDS, there is need for the more pronounced and effective involvement of men in this work.

¹Manicaland regions fall under the Shona ethnic group, the Shona into several tribal groups. This chapter focuses on the Manyika tribal group.

²The authors are writing from their work experiences. Charles Chindomu is a priest in the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland. He is serving a parish where HIV and AIDS are wreaking havoc. Eunica E. Matizanhuka is a third year student nurse at an Anglican Hospital (Bonda Mission). The many patients that she sees dying of AIDS related ailments on a daily basis move her.

Throughout Africa, the responsibility of caring for the sick in the home traditionally falls on women. Given the scope of this epidemic, the traditional response is proving inadequate and places too great a burden on women. This chapter explores the challenges of involving men and the impact of their involvement in HIV and AIDS work. In addition, the authors explore the impact of gender roles in these communities, particularly as they relate to male involvement in HIV and AIDS work. We identify several channels through which men may have contributed to the spread of HIV and at the same time challenge men to rise up and champion the prevention of the spread of HIV. The chapter reiterates that more men should be encouraged to take the initiative to curb HIV and AIDS, as the epidemic has become everyone's responsibility. Throughout this chapter, the authors maintain that more men should join with women to care for the sick, arguing that such an approach will transform men into more supportive and more caring partners.

Introduction

This chapter has been inspired by a newspaper article (Sachiti, 2007:11) reporting on the “soldiers of hope” touching many lives in Zimbabwe. The “soldiers of hope” is a proactive group of responsible men from Chihwai village in Mutoko³ (operating in Chimombe, Mwendo and Mushimbo areas) who have dedicated their time to care for people living with HIV. This proactive group emerged as a response to the initiative by the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in the year 2000, when sixty men organized themselves to be trained as caregivers. They started off by attending workshops at Pumpkin Hotel, where they were trained as caregivers. After

³Writing within the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lubunga Ewusha in this volume explores the positive and transformative role of a male group, Papa Plus. What stands out about the “soldiers of hope” is that this group is rural-based and offers services to the surrounding rural communities whereas the aforementioned are urban-based male groups.

training they formed support groups that specialized in caring for people affected by HIV or AIDS. These men have also stretched out their caring hands and touched the lives of children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic, making them aware of their rights. They became caregivers because they wanted to learn more about the rights and needs of people living with HIV or AIDS. They have shown a lot of dedication, spending most of their time visiting sick people and orphans. This has influenced this group to become very responsible partners, as they are well informed about the effects of HIV and AIDS. At first people laughed at and mocked these men—people believed that theirs is a duty meant for women—but now they are appreciated and praised by many. Local leadership in the areas where these “soldiers of hope” operate is pleased with their work. These men have shown a lot of dedication in their bid to lessen the women’s burden of looking after the sick and orphans.

More men should be encouraged to come up with similar initiatives, as HIV and AIDS have become everybody’s concern. (Sachiti, 2007). This initiative by the “soldiers of hope” will be essential for some districts in the diocese of Manicaland, (Nyanga, Mutasa, Makoni and Chipinge) where escalating rates of HIV infections and other AIDS related deaths are recorded. These districts have an estimated HIV seroprevalence of over 25 percent. (Cregson and Chandiwana, 2001). The group raises special interest because, unlike other men who deem caring for the sick women’s work and spend most of their time drinking beer, these “soldiers of hope” regard looking after the sick as their social responsibility. Since time immemorial it has been considered the biological duty of a woman to nurse sick children and relatives and to spend the night in a room with the corpse when a child or relative dies.⁴ However, now, the

⁴According to Shona culture, caring for and nurturing the sick is regarded as a woman’s responsibility. Even upon the death of the patient, it is women who will bathe the corpse and maintain a night vigil in the room where the corpse lies whilst men play a very peripheral role throughout the sickening and dying process.

tables have been turned as men are competing with women to take care of the sick. (Sachiti 2007).

This chapter therefore seeks to explore how the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland can draw some insights from this initiative to involve men in HIV and AIDS related care-giving. Thus it will critically assess the role of men in HIV and AIDS intervention programmes, with special focus on the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. It is important to note that in terms of earlier HIV and AIDS intervention programmes, a special focus has been on women and children, leaving men out of the picture. In such an undertaking, the implications for the involvement of men will be explored. The pertinent question this chapter grapples with is, what are the implications of challenging men to be “man enough” to care in the current HIV era? This question will be explored from the perspective of the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland, drawing insights from both the Christian tradition and from African cultural resources.

The Anglican Diocese of Manicaland Scenario

Manicaland Province has become the epicentre of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe. As statistics indicate, the province ranks among those hardest hit by the epidemic. Although prevalence rates are declining each year, the figures remain particularly high. The statistics are as follows: 26.5 percent in 2001, 23.2 percent in 2003, 21.3 percent in 2005 and 18.6 percent in 2007. (Cregson and Chandiwana, 2001). In response to this harsh reality, the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland has identified the pandemic as one of the major challenges that is profoundly affecting its membership. The gravity of the pandemic propelled the diocese to declare HIV and AIDS an emergency. This declaration calls for a paradigm shift from perceiving care giving as a woman’s responsibility to embracing it as a communal responsibility. That this is necessary emerges from the observation that some men do not realize that caring for the sick is their responsibility also. At a time when healthcare services face unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic, men and women are

equally challenged to be involved in HIV and AIDS intervention work. The diocese is calling on men to complement the role played by women, who deal with persons living with HIV. Women bear an inordinately large psychological and physical burden brought by overwork and despair at seeing relatives and friends die.

The huge numbers of people suffering from HIV- and AIDS - related ailments or death, and the increasing numbers of AIDS orphans has led the diocese leadership to emphasize the need for men to complement women and to play an active role in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. In the districts where the authors operate, the burden of caring for the sick in the home falls largely on women. Against this background, men are challenged to respond actively to the epidemic, guided by Christian principles of care and compassion. The focus on men can be viewed from two perspectives. Firstly, in the diocese there are visible inequalities concerning the division of labour based on gender and these impact negatively on women. It is therefore hoped that men can join women in caring for the sick. Secondly, bearing in mind that in Manicaland most of the infections are heterosexually transmitted, men play a central role in spreading HIV, making their involvement in intervention strategies equally central.

The Role of Men in Transmitting or Curbing HIV and AIDS: A Challenge to the Church and Society

Due to gender stereotyping, especially among the Shona, women sex workers are largely blamed for the spread of HIV. Paradoxically, their male clients are not held accountable for their actions, which bear the same consequences. This sort of stereotyping also influenced earlier intervention strategies, which focused on enlightening women about HIV-prevention initiatives, leaving out their male sexual partners. It must be acknowledged that sex workers play a role in the spread of HIV, but what are the misconceptions about sex workers? Another pertinent issue to be investigated is why men engage female sex workers. Male clients regard female sex workers as channels of sexual release, and young men seem to view them as

sexual trainers. Visiting a sex worker is regarded as a way of gaining sexual experience before marriage or before engaging in a stable and committed relationship. The challenge is that men should discourage each other from having sex with commercial sex workers. They should educate each other and do away with all misconceptions about sex that result in inadequate HIV prevention measures. Misconceptions such as that sex with condoms is less pleasurable and reduces one's manhood should be completely discarded.

Operating in such a context, the diocese is faced with the challenge of addressing sex and sexuality in an honest and realistic way. It has to engage young men and women in influential processes that can bring change, with the emphasis on human sexuality, heterosexual relationships and sex education. Proper sex education in the Church is an urgent, critical and challenging task in these days of HIV and AIDS. Using Paulo Freire's model of Christian education, it becomes apparent that the Church needs to invest more in sex education for critical consciousness. This will be a significant move in eliminating life-threatening and dehumanizing cultural and religious practices. This programme of sex education and critical scrutiny will help the diocese to identify systems, structures, institutions and ideologies that marginalize, oppress, exploit and devalue people, eradicating the ugly past. (Freire, 1973). The educational programme could begin by exploring the misconceptions about sex and commercial sex workers.

Sex education could also be built into the school curriculum, and the traditional initiation schools revived and encouraged by the

Church.⁵ Children must be taught about responsible sexual behaviour and they must also be openly educated about the methods of transmitting HIV and AIDS. They should be equipped with proper strategies and information and with correct sex education. People must be sensitized to risky sexual behaviour. Sex education creates awareness and equips people with skills and knowledge that will assist them to make informed choices regarding safer sexual practices, for their own good and for others in the community. Sex education can transform human beings, empowering them to take charge of their lives and responsibility for their actions.

Another matter of urgency is the general reluctance to use condoms among the Manyika men. It is a sad reality that some men who know about the increased risk of contracting HIV through having multiple sexual partners still refuse to give up the culture of multiple partners and worse still, they resist condom use, for in so doing they would betray their skewed image of manhood, which encourages them to take risks. (Chitando, 2008:52-53). Men should be lobbying for policies that increase access to high-quality voluntary counselling and testing for HIV. They should also be encouraged to raise awareness among their counterparts in situations with a higher risk of HIV infection, that is, military personnel, long-distance truck and bus drivers, prisoners and migrant workers who spend long periods of time away from home and their regular sexual partners. (KANCO, 2000). They usually engage in sexual activities with sex workers at their points of rest, thus increasing their chances of contracting HIV

⁵During the pre-colonial era in Zimbabwe, there were popular Shona initiation schools called Chinamwari whereby at the point of transition from childhood to adulthood, boys and girls were taken to a secluded location where they were instructed on their community roles and responsibilities; some of the instructions included sexual education. The coming in of western education and Christianity brought about a halt to such a tradition. This chapter suggests that the Church could revive such a tradition and model it in such a way that it instructs youth on morality as well as methods of preventing and responding to the HIV epidemic.

as well as increasing the spread of the virus. Due to patriarchal influence, men have the power to engage in sex with as many partners as they choose; the same pertains to the decision whether to use condoms. Informed and conscious decisions by these men will minimize the spread of HIV, and it also prevents contraction of the virus by the uninfected. Polygamy should be discouraged, men should have sex with only one faithful partner and should use condoms. Men should make an effort to transform attitudes that link their male identity to practices that undermine HIV and AIDS prevention measures.

General education about HIV and AIDS creates awareness and reduces the spread of the virus. Men should be involved and should bring HIV and AIDS education campaigns to all social and cultural events where the audience is mainly men, for example, sports events, club gatherings and recreation halls. They should promote programmes that raise awareness on the consequences of risky sexual behaviour. (Garbus & Khumalo-Sakutuwa, 2003). This is significant because previously, men have been left out of these awareness campaigns. Focusing on them now and encouraging them to share this knowledge is fundamental.

In traditional Shona culture as practiced in rural Manicaland, men are perceived as the rightful heads of families. As household heads, men need to assess their role in the spread of HIV and the potential impact of their sexual behaviour on their partners and children. Transmitting or spreading HIV into the family, and the eventual effect of leaving their children behind as orphans, should be the focus of their thoughts whenever they consider engaging in extra-marital sex. Men also need to play a more effective role in caring for family members suffering from HIV-related ailments. Initiatives to combat HIV should involve having men take responsibility for what is often thought of as a women's problem. Men should utilize their influence as household heads to implement positive responses and should focus on eliminating the spread of HIV. Since most of the infections in Zimbabwe are heterosexually transmitted and also bearing in mind that most married women are

infected by their husbands, men therefore play a central role in spreading HIV. Consequently, involving men in any initiative to curb the epidemic should be of central importance to any balanced national or local response. (Cregson & Chandiwana, 2001).

Scientific research has established that HIV is more easily sexually transmitted from men to women than vice versa. Although there are also infections resulting from homosexual practices, in Africa ninety percent of the infections are heterosexually transmitted. Men are more likely to abuse alcohol and other illicit substances, which leads them to engage in risky sexual behaviour, hence the risk of HIV infection. (Foster, 1988). Unprotected sex between men endangers both men and women, mainly because some men who have sex with other men also have sex with women (their wives or occasional girlfriends). This is usually a ploy to conceal their sexual orientation. Men on the average have more sexual partners than women, and therefore an infected man is more likely to pass the virus to a greater number of people than is an infected woman. (Chant and Gutmann, 2002).

Traditional Cultural Practices

According to the Shona patriarchal structure, the man is considered the household head and makes decisions about sex and reproduction, family responsibilities and the upbringing of children. The man can have more than one wife and it is acceptable that he have extra-marital affairs. Traditional practices do not allow for the social mobility of women. The traditional extended family inhibits the empowerment of women, as women are encouraged to persevere in cases of domestic violence, economic and sexual exploitation. (Chirongoma, 2006:56-57). Sex and reproduction are sensitive topics in African societies, and women are forced to remain passive. Cultural traditions value girls much less than boys, since the boy child is regarded as especially important for perpetuating the family line, which is passed on from father to son. These traditional practices are prevalent among the Manyika people of Nyanga district, which

has the highest rate of HIV infection in Manicaland. There is a stereotyped gender gap between men and women.

Some cultural practices such as polygamy and spouse inheritance promote the transmission of HIV and AIDS. In a polygamous marriage the man has more than one wife, thus he has multiple sexual partners, increasing the risk of contraction. (UNICEF, 1997). The spread of HIV is higher in societies like Hwesa in Nyanga and Maungwe in Makoni, where spouse inheritance is practiced. These districts have higher rates of HIV infection and as such need more people to care for the sick, infected and affected. This is so because sometimes people inherit infected partners, thus increasing the chances of infecting themselves and their spouses. There are prevailing attitudes about appropriate male behaviour that often discourage men from participating meaningfully in HIV and AIDS work, especially caring and nurturing behaviour. (Woelk et al, 1996).

In many African communities, the patriarchal society limits the involvement of women in decision-making and tends to undervalue the health and welfare of girls and women. Men are perceived as the rightful household heads and are expected to take responsibility for the economic stability of the family. There is a need to break down the traditional barriers preventing men from caring for ailing family members, and reposition men in the local social context, encouraging them to take responsibility for their role in the spread of HIV as well as for the care of those affected. (Johnson et al, 1999). This means that the definition of masculinity is to include caring and supportive behaviour as a desirable male trait. (Ibid). To effectively increase male involvement in development and social change, the damage inflicted on men by traditional notions of masculinity must be reversed, to encourage men to play a more active role in HIV and AIDS prevention and care. Prevailing attitudes about appropriate male behaviour often discourage caring and nurturing behaviour on the part of men. There is need to break down the traditional barriers that prevent men from caring for the ailing family members, for the woundedness of society should be everyone's responsibility. (Chirongoma and Manda, 2008).

Gender Stereotyping and Its Impact on the Spread of HIV

What is stereotyping? It is a standardized image or concept shared by all members of a social group. The HIV epidemic is inherently a gender-based epidemic and needs to be seen in this light. Women and men are consumers and creators of the gender spectrum, including concepts of masculinity. (Greig et al, 2000). This approach recognizes that both men and women are socialized into specific gender roles from childhood, and thus both play a role in the promotion of ideas about femininity and masculinity. (Ibid). Gender analysis is crucial to understanding HIV or AIDS transmission and initiating appropriate programmes of action. Gender plays a crucial role in the HIV epidemic; it refers to the beliefs in society about the roles and responsibilities appropriate for women and men. Typical feminine and masculine characteristics and abilities, and expectations about how women and men should behave in various situations characterize gender. These ideas are learned from families, societies, opinion leaders, religious and cultural institutions, schools, friends, workplace and the media. They influence and reflect the different roles, social status, economic and political power of men and women in society. While sex may be biologically determined, gender is socially defined. The HIV epidemic has been commonly conceived as a women’s problem.

Gender identity refers to an individual’s perception of being male or female. Gender roles are sets of rules laid down by society that tell us what appropriate behaviour for males is as well as for females. The rules are established by culture and are usually assigned to individuals from birth. Gender inequity is the imbalance of power between men and women, economically, socially and physically. (William, 2002). This leads to women being disadvantaged in society. Gender inequality affects many areas of women’s lives, particularly their health, education, social and economic circumstances. Due to this inequality women’s choices and opportunities are restricted. Socially defined gender roles, which determine differences between women’s and men’s access to reproductive resources and decision-making mostly favour men. Gender inequality is so widespread and

so ingrained in Shona culture that progress towards equality has been slow and is still unsatisfactory. The following gender statistics fuel the spread of HIV.

More women than men live in poverty and this disparity has increased over the past decades putting women at more risk of contracting HIV than men. Gender inequalities deprive women of the ability to resist risky sexual practices leading to coerced sex and sexual violence, keep women uninformed about prevention, put them last in line for care and life-saving treatment and impose an overwhelming burden on them to care for the sick and dying. (KANCO, 2000). Unless there is a much greater degree of equality, women will always constitute the greater number of infections. The strong norms of virginity and fidelity applied to women – but not to men– and the restrictions surrounding any discussion about sexual matters makes it very difficult for women to seek protection, treatment or even information about HIV, AIDS and STIs. (Chambers et al, 2000). Women’s economic dependency on men increases their vulnerability to HIV as they feel unable to negotiate the terms of their relationship or even to walk out of the relationship if it puts them at risk. Malaria, tuberculosis and the STIs that predispose HIV infection are more common among the poor. Poverty is the root cause of many injustices and much violence.

However, while men benefit most from prevailing gender norms, they may also be disadvantaged by these same norms. There are many ways that men can be involved in HIV and AIDS work and projects, including peer education, community mobilization, and training and research, thereby reducing gender imbalance. In the process, the positive aspects of men’s traditional roles as family breadwinners, committed to the health and care of their families, and as community leaders can be utilized in the HIV and AIDS work.

Involving Men in Home-Based Care Services for People Living with HIV and AIDS

Whilst the need for HIV- or AIDS-related care and support grows in Zimbabwe, the capacity of public and private health systems to

respond declines. In-patient services are overburdened, with people living with HIV occupying 70 percent of available beds. (Jackson, 2002). The decline of health services has shifted the burden of care to the household and family. This is coupled with the movement of the sick individuals back to rural areas, which places additional strain on the extended family structures that form the traditional rural safety net. (Ibid). The burden of care for people living with HIV falls overwhelmingly on women, who are traditionally responsible for the health and physical well-being of the household.

Furthermore, as men become sick and unable to contribute to household, women become the sole adult breadwinners, with no parallel reduction in their household duties. (Ibid). As a result, women are now doing “triple duty,” responsible for home and family, providing the majority of agricultural labour and also caring for family members living with HIV or AIDS. Often, this extra burden falls on women who are themselves HIV positive, hastening their progression to AIDS and death and increasing the number of orphans and the disintegration of the community as a whole. While the burden on women grows with the scale of the epidemic, men’s behaviour is not changing fast enough to respond in ways that positively affect the health of the family.⁶ This chapter describes the many ways that men can be involved in HIV and AIDS work.

The expansion of women’s responsibilities represents a significant social change with important consequences for the entire family. Female-headed households typically have a lower income, further disadvantaging the entire family. Some of these vulnerable women are frequently forced to trade sex for food and other goods and services. (Kureya and Ray, 2003). This increased demand on women’s time often results in the withdrawal of children, particularly girls, from school and leisure activities, as child labour is needed to supplement family income and productivity. (Ibid). Finally, women managing households with little male support have less time to

⁶International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2003.

contribute to community activities, reversing decades of effort to increase their involvement in local development.

It is in the light of these challenges facing Zimbabwe and other African nations, and the magnitude of the epidemic, that home-based care (HBC) has emerged as the most viable means of meeting the needs of people living with HIV, hence the urgent call for men to be effectively involved. With zeal and desire, proper training, empowerment, equipment and monitoring, home-care volunteers, men included, can treat many of the common ailments of people living with HIV with simple remedies and medicines, reducing physical and mental suffering and helping these people to be more active economically and socially. (Blake and Babolola, 2002). Effective HBC can reduce the burden of the primary caregiver, protecting the health of the entire family. Many men are being challenged to take responsibility, get engaged in transforming social practices and gender norms and be seriously involved in HIV and AIDS work. This is because men are generally concerned about and committed to the health of their families and communities and, as such, can play a positive role in community health. In response to this evolving thinking, Churches, donors, governments and non-governmental organizations should begin to develop new programmes and approaches that seek to address the real but often hidden interests and agency of men. Men can make a remarkable difference. (Chitando, 2007b:40-54).

As indicated in the report on “soldiers of hope,” many more men should be encouraged to be more actively involved in helping the communities to address the HIV pandemic, and home care is a critical unmet need. (Sachiti, 2007). Increased assistance to primary caregivers, overwhelmingly women, is an explicit strategy under this objective. This will also help to reduce stigma and increase information and communication about HIV and AIDS in the communities. Thus the traditionally female-identified responsibilities like feeding, cleaning or exercising a sick person and educating other men about HIV are transformed into acceptable, even desirable male responsibilities. Men could and would, if appropriately trained and

supported, rise to the challenge of providing home-based care in their communities. (Johnson, 1999). Men, it is assumed, would be most comfortable caring for other men. Then men would also take the lead in behaviour change, communication and peer education. Men can be effective home-based care volunteers, capable of providing nursing care, psychosocial support and assistance with household chores for affected individuals and households. (Chitando, 2008:50-61).

What Is the Basis of Challenging African Men to Be “Man Enough” to Care?

Standing on the Pedestal of African Ethical Values of Unhu and Ukama⁷

Both African traditional religion and Christianity contain ethical values that can be used as a vantage point from which to challenge African men to be “man enough” to care. The Shona traditional concepts of *unhu* (humanness) and *ukama* (interrelatedness) are key values that can be used as guiding principles in challenging men to be proactive in care-giving. To be human in Shona culture, just as in any African culture, is to be interrelated to the other, summed up in Mbiti’s popular maxim, “I am because we are”. (Mbiti,1970). In other words, to be fully human and to enjoy the wholeness of life, every member of the community, men included, should be concerned about the well being of the other. The fullness and abundance of life for all can only be attained if both male and female work towards ensuring that they all play an active role in care-giving. (Chirongoma and Manda, 2008) Chitando succinctly puts it this way,

It is through giving up masculinities that confine care giving to women that men in the region [southern Africa] can demonstrate their commitment to those affected by and infected with HIV. The

⁷The equivalent term for this concept which is widely known is *ubuntu*. See Kusenene, 1994:138-214; Murove, 2003, 2008; Shutte, 2001.

fundamental principle of African ethics is that solidarity and fellowship with others is the basis for becoming fully human...By seriously reflecting on the need to play an active role in the provision of care and providing relief to overburdened women, men can mitigate the effects of HIV and AIDS in southern Africa. (2008: 59)

We quote Chitando verbatim and at length because he aptly captures the heart of the issues under discussion. The “ideal” African man is one who provides, protects and guards against any danger threatening the security of his community.⁸ In this case, the threat that they must respond to and gallantly protect their community from is HIV and its attendant effects. The authors concur with Chitando, who challenges men to revisit African cultural values and “weed out oppressive masculinities that stifle the full inclusion” of men from carrying the burden of household chores and care-giving. He puts it aptly:

Solidarity in looking after those affected by and infected with HIV will lead men to interrogate their privileges under patriarchy. Too much injustice has persisted in the name of defending African culture. Why should ailing grandmothers be left to fetch water and firewood, while boys enjoy social soccer? Why should men engage in endless political bar talk, while women struggle to feed orphans and PLWHA? Gender roles are not cast in stone, nor are they divinely ordained...they are socially constructed and are often consciously deployed. Consequently, they can be realigned. (Chitando, 2008:59)

⁸Writing from the context of Kenya and the DRC respectively, Julius Gathogo and Lubunga Ewusha in this volume explore these characteristics of “ideal” manhood.

The statement quoted above clearly illustrates the urgent need for “rethinking male responsibility”⁹ within the African cultural context in light of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Below, we turn to the discussion on challenging men to be proactive, based on the Christian ethic of love, compassion and care-giving. (Chitando, 2007a:1-10).

Drawing from the Well of the Christian Ethic of Love, Compassion and Care-giving

This section outlines some of the factors that provide the Church with a firm basis for challenging African men to be “man enough” to care using the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland as a case study. First, it must be acknowledged that the Church in Africa has a legacy of being a caring and compassionate Church.¹⁰

Mission schools and hospitals have been open to the poorest of the poor... Individuals who suffered from leprosy were traditionally barred from interacting with other members of society... missionaries accepted them at mission stations... Following the example of Jesus who expressed solidarity with individuals and communities that were ostracized, the Church in Africa has been associated with compassion... Health workers in Church institutions are known to go beyond the call of duty. They are known to be caring and compassionate. (Chitando, 2007a:9-12)

Anchored on the foundation of compassionate care, the era of HIV and AIDS presents new challenges for the Church in Africa to reinforce its identity as a compassionate institution, especially in view of male involvement in care-giving. Thus far, most of the

⁹This evokes the title of the book *Rape: Rethinking Male Responsibility*, edited by Ernst Conradie and Lindsay Clowes (EFSA, 2002).

¹⁰See Chitando, 2007a. He chronicles how, since its inception on the continent, the Church in Africa has been a sanctuary for the outcast, the poor, sick and needy of society.

voluntary care work has been on women's shoulders. Church women's organizations are especially significant in the provision of home-based care. In Zimbabwe, this is reflected through women's Church groups, *Ruwadzano*, popularly known as *Manyano* in southern Africa. (Haddad, 2001).

As the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland faces the massive impact of HIV and AIDS, there is need for a theological framework that will provoke and inspire men to come together, join hands with women and find a means of responding to HIV and AIDS. Initiatives such as the "soldiers of hope" should be inspirational. The diocese must come with a theological framework and education to motivate, equip and enable men to develop and employ their gifts, and give their lives in meaningful service of the sick, in their homes. Theology, as a reflection on the divine being within a particular context, people, time and framework of belief will help men as they are challenged to take care of the sick in their communities. A theology of praxis will be utilized, as it is a search for the divine will and revelation within the lives of a people in difficult circumstances. Since men were sidelined in the focus on HIV and AIDS work, the formulation of a theology of praxis will help them (men) to "come out of their shells" and play a role in care-giving. Taking the example of Christ who cared for the sick is paramount. Such a theology will also help men to assert their role and what they believe is God's will for them in the HIV era.

In this framework, social structures and institutions excluding men from caring roles must be counteracted by those of us who advocate for the role of men as God's stewards in caring for the earth. This theology should equip men to become proactive servants of God's will for His world and people. That is, there is need for a theological framework that seeks to empower all subjects to know God's will; to seek it, to speak and act it. This implies a theology that will transform men from icons of power, prestige, patriarchy, hierarchy and elitism into dynamic and prophetic voices that constantly bring our societies and Churches into the light of God's justice. (Chitando, 2008:59). The Anglican Church in Manicaland

should endeavour to become what Chitando calls an “AIDS-competent” Church. (2007a and 2007b). According to Chitando,

AIDS-competent Churches work towards the transformation of death-dealing practices while strengthening life-enhancing ones... [They] speak out and challenge systems of oppression... [They] transform theological training in Africa so that Churches can be at the cutting edge of HIV issues... [They] conduct a patient and critical evaluation of African cultures, particularly issues relating to gender and sexuality... [They] interrogate the extent to which African cultures have inadvertently provided a fertile breeding ground for the epidemic...devise and implement correction strategies... Their voice should be clear, impassioned and urgent if they are to challenge and transform choking cultural and political systems into rivers of life. (2007b:1)

There is need to revisit and challenge African cultural traditions which have influenced the Christian Church to uphold death-dealing practices. There is also an urgent need to train Church ministers and lay-leaders (who happen to be mostly men), to equip them with skills to tackle the complexities of the HIV epidemic. There is also need to produce concrete theologies and perpetuate them. Such theologies will give men tools for social analysis and allow them to become exemplary, leading others to seek to be partners with God in caring for all people in the HIV era. They will provide men with a vision for mission that underlines that all life is sacred.

To encourage men to be involved in caring, there must be a well-grounded theology of respect for life and a sense of responsibility on the parts of both men and women. Men should recapture the compassion of Jesus, who asked people to see his face in the face of all who suffer. (Matt. 25:31-36; Dube, 2002). Men should be equipped to expend their energy to transform the deadly conditions in society into life-affirming and enhancing ones. The inequality between men and women in societies, families and Churches should be eradicated by a theology that affirms that both genders have equal responsibility in HIV and AIDS work. Everyone has an equal mandate

to shoulder the responsibility of caring for the sick. The gravity of the HIV pandemic demands the involvement of both genders. In the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland and its districts with high rates of infection, as in many rural areas all over Africa, the involvement of men in the HIV and AIDS work is of the utmost necessity. At a time when the epidemic shows no signs of slowing down, the need for volunteer carers has never been greater. As the Bible puts it, “the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” (Luke 10:2). Church volunteers can help stem the tide of the epidemic in Manicaland. (Chitando, 2008: 11). Below we outline the initiatives that the diocese of Manicaland has embarked upon on their journey towards becoming an “AIDS-competent Church.”

The Diocesan Male Empowerment Project: Towards an AIDS-Competent Church¹¹

Moved by its declaration of HIV and AIDS as an emergency, guided by the above theological framework and encouraged by the report on the “soldiers of hope,” the diocese launched the Male Empowerment Project in 2007. This was spearheaded by the HIV and AIDS commission put in place soon after the declaration.¹² The project is meant to involve men in HIV and AIDS prevention programmes in the diocese, as well as spearheading the provision of home-based care for people living with the disease. During the initial diocesan consultation, men expressed a desire to be more actively involved in helping address the HIV and AIDS challenge and they agreed that home-based care was a critical unmet need. In this, the diocese has two objectives. Firstly, it aims to involve men more meaningfully in HIV and AIDS work. The second objective is to increase care and support to families and individuals affected by

¹¹The authors are indebted to Ezra Chitando for the use of this phrase and its implications, see his two volumes Chitando, 2007a and 2007b.

¹²The authors are members of the Diocesan HIV and AIDS Commission mandated to spearhead HIV and AIDS programmes and projects.

HIV or AIDS. Increased assistance to primary caregivers, overwhelmingly women, is an explicit strategy under this objective.

The name “Male Empowerment” was chosen to instil a sense of pride and responsibility into project participants. In this case, empowerment means the development of skills that are not typically associated with men and not highly valued as male attributes. (Green, Murphy and White, 2003). Thus the empowerment sought by the project was a set of behaviour changes that address diocesan and community needs and challenge existing social and gender norms. Empowerment suggests that men will gain power in some way through the project; the power is the increased ability of men to effectively care for the sick and to protect their families from contracting HIV. Thus, traditionally female responsibilities like feeding or cleaning a sick person are transformed into acceptable, even desirable male responsibilities.

According to SAFAIDS, efforts to “mainstream” gender into economic and social development programmes in general—and HIV and AIDS prevention in particular—has been underway for sometime. However, attempts to engage men in transforming the social practices and gender norms that promote HIV transmission have been limited.¹³ To break down the traditional barriers that prevent men from providing care for ailing family members, the project seeks to build upon the positive aspects of men’s traditional roles as family breadwinners and community leaders. There is also a growing body of research indicating that men are, in fact, concerned about the health of their families and communities and can play a positive role in community health. (Blake and Babalola, 2002). The Male Empowerment Project works to reposition men in the local social context, encouraging them to take responsibility both for their role in the spread of HIV as well as for the care of those affected. The definition of masculinity is expanded to include caring and supportive behaviour as a desirable male trait.

¹³SAFAIDS: SAT Programme, 2001.

Consultative meetings were held with the heads of diocesan education and health institutions and representatives from the ecclesiastical divisions (Churches, parishes, Church districts and chapelries). After the consultative meetings, the HIV and AIDS Commission members met with the archdeacons¹⁴ and clergy. The need for male involvement in HIV and AIDS work was elaborated. Forty men volunteered from four archdeaconries under which the Mutasa, Nyanga, Chipinge and Makoni districts fall. They were trained using a home-care training manual adapted for the project from several preexisting manuals. The training covered a broad range of topics, including the introduction of the home-based care concept, wound and skin care, conducting patient examination and taking patient history, tuberculosis control, counselling on HIV life-planning, bereavement, positive living and home remedies, hygiene and nutrition and end of life care. The men organized themselves into four male empowerment groups, one per district. These groups meet weekly to share information, plan activities and troubleshoot. Five of these volunteers disclosed that they are living with HIV. The male empowerment effort is the diocese's initial project in the call to involve men in HIV and AIDS work.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the various roles and implications of masculinity and the greater need for the involvement of men in HIV and AIDS work in Manicaland. Although there are a few groups of men scattered around the African continent, like the "soldiers of hope" in Mutoko, involved in HIV and AIDS work and home-based care, many more, if not all men should be encouraged to come up with this kind of initiative to lessen women's burden of looking after the infected and affected. As there are many people living with HIV in Manicaland, there is a growing need to expand home-based care

¹⁴An archdeacon is a priest assigned by the diocesan bishop to be in charge of a group of ecclesiastical divisions and clergy of the area on behalf of the bishop.

services. The traditional responsibility for caring for the sick in the home falls on women. Given the scope of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, this traditional response is proving inadequate and places too great a burden on women, hence the call for male involvement by the diocese. The need for the greater involvement of men in preventive initiatives was raised. The major concern was with involving men more meaningfully in home-based care services for people living with AIDS. Thus the greater involvement of men in HIV and AIDS work is designed to address the heavy burden that women and children shoulder, by expanding men’s roles into care for people living with HIV or AIDS. We can challenge African men to be “man enough” to care by means of a theological framework that will provoke men and equip them to participate in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, as well as invoking the African spirit of *unhu* and *ukama* in care-giving. Indeed more men can become beacons and “soldiers of hope” to touch and improve many lives.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

“Chasing a Leopard Out of the Homestead”: *Mundurume*'s¹ task in the Era of HIV and AIDS²

Julius Mutugi Gathogo

Abstract

This chapter sets out to demonstrate that like the proverbial Kikuyu leopard, which would come in the dark of night to kill livestock and attack human beings and was therefore fought collectively by everyone in the community, HIV and AIDS in Africa has reached a level where a *Mundurume* (Kikuyu man) cannot just watch as the pandemic wipes out whole communities. In view of this, this chapter endeavours to revisit the traditional Kikuyu³ man (read African Man, hereafter, *Mundurume*) and suggest how

¹The term *Mundurume* refers to a traditional Kikuyu man who was perceived as a warrior who set out to shield and protect his community in the event of danger from any outside attack.

²This chapter was published in the *Journal of Constructive Theology* 13, 1, 2007. It is published here with permission.

³At this stage, it is critical to take cognisance of the fact that the Kikuyu people are a Kenyan community and, as will be demonstrated later in this paper, the largest community in the country.

he can be useful in curbing the epidemic. In its methodology, it will start by addressing the Kikuyu community; who are they? What was the division of labour? What role(s) did *Mundurume* play in the psychosocial reconstruction of the society, especially with regard to calamities, war and attack from the enemy tribe? In this chapter, HIV and AIDS is referred to as the Third World War, of which the battlefield, unlike the First and Second World Wars, (1914-1918 and 1939-45), has shifted from Europe to Africa. This study argues that a *Mundurume*, who, interestingly, is always a soldier in the ancient society, must wake up and go to the “battlefield” and stop the enemy from further attacking. Indeed, he has a role to play in protecting the community, in twenty-first century Africa just as in the ancient times.

Introduction

The Kikuyu language is rich in proverbs that portray their beliefs and traditions. One such proverb says, *Ngari ingatagwo ni Mundurume na Muthoniwe*, literally, “A leopard is chased collectively by a man and his father-in-law.” Similarly, another proverb says, *Kwa athoni gutirangarangagwo*, literally, “The in-laws’ compound is never visited whenever a man feels like it.” The above proverbs explain the characteristic Kikuyu way of relating with one’s in-laws. That is, they are supposed to be treated with utmost respect, and one of the signs of respect involves avoiding closely working or interacting with them—so as to avoid disagreements. In view of this, the traditional Kikuyu culture does not expect a *Mundurume* to easily mingle with his in-laws as this is unconventional and seen as disrespectful.

With the ancient societies being uncultivated and bushy, a leopard would ordinarily come at night to prey on the livestock for its food. In the process, it would inevitably attack the guarding shepherds. In such circumstances, the young men keeping the night vigil would shout and scream for help. Consequently, all the men in that village would be expected to come from the comfort of their warm houses and gallantly participate in fighting the enemy—the

leopard—regardless of any marital relationship. Due to the sensitivity of the matter, a *Mundurume* and his father-in-law could be seen conversing and scheming together on how to bring the leopard down. The same case applied to other times of crisis; for example, when the society was under threat of invasion, everyone had a role to play to uphold the community’s security. With the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, the same approach, this study argues, will need to be employed in curbing the pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

The methodology of this chapter falls under the framework of the theology of reconstruction. It uses the work of two theologians of reconstruction, Jesse Mugambi and Kä Mana who, paradoxically, hold differing views regarding the social reconstruction of Africa. The Francophone theologian Kä Mana, from Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Anglophone theologian Jesse Mugambi, from Kenya, who, interestingly, are both adept philosophers, passionate Africanists, able Reconstructionist theologians and committed Christians, have differed sharply with regard to the methodology of a theology of reconstruction in twenty-first-century Africa. In particular, Kä Mana introduces his analysis of the ethical dimensions of the human crisis in Africa in an alarming way. He paints an alienating and despairing picture of African societies and goes on to propose that only a radical reconstruction of the African approach to religious and socio-political realities would heal them from their major shortcomings. (Kä Mana, 1991:78-79).

Conversely, Mugambi sees the ancestral resources as that which can be creatively explored to bring about sound economical and political systems capable of assuaging some of the smouldering issues of the moment. (1995: 88). On the other hand, Kä Mana presents the past African cultural values and traditions as a “decaying” or a “disintegrating reality”—and cautions that any attempt to avoid Africa’s present problems by going back to its ancient times is a new type of estrangement—one that, to him, is equivalent to

surrendering ourselves to “the dictatorship of the past.” (Kä Mana, 1991:79).

In view of Kä Mana’s caution and considering Mugambi’s passion on hope for Africa, one wonders, is there a panacea for African crises such as HIV and AIDS? Is addressing the African disparities a smooth-sailing exercise? Should we go the Mugambi way or pursue Kä Mana’s path in an attempt to address the HIV and AIDS crisis in Africa?

While discarding neither of the two viewpoints, this paper intends to approach the subject by acknowledging that appealing to some ancestral resources can also bring about a psychosocial reconstruction of Africa. This resonates with Wole Soyinka’s proposal on how to proceed with the reconciliation process in Africa; he proposes religious myth as a useful resource. Soyinka specifically turns to his ancestral Yoruba pantheon and to their rituals and mythology. In this, the gods come down to the mortals to oversee the atonement festival, reminding them of the necessity for atonement and forgiveness. (Soyinka, 2000). He says,

Most African traditional societies have established modalities that guarantee the restoration of harmony after serious infractions—see, for instance, the banishment of Okonkwo after involuntary homicide in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. And, if we may be somewhat whimsical, Emperor Bokassa’s bizarre return to Central African Republic, in full knowledge of what fate awaited him, argues strongly for some kind of supernatural intervention—the vengeful souls of the violated children dragging him back from the security of his French asylum? Certainly, a singularly atrocious act appeared to be denied closure until the perpetrator returned to expiate on the scene of the crime. Maybe, in the sphere of abominations, (African) nature does abhor a vacuum. Are we then perhaps moving too far ahead of our violators in adopting a structure of response that tasks us with a collective generosity of spirit, especially in the face of *ongoing* violations of body and spirit? (Soyinka, 1999:13-14)

Thus, in building the case for the use of ancestral resources to combat HIV and AIDS, this chapter will attempt to investigate the role of a *Mundurume*⁴ in fighting disasters such as war or disease.

Background and Statistics of HIV and AIDS in Kenya

Even though Kenya stands out as one of the countries that appears to be turning the tide in sub-Saharan Africa, by virtue of the fact that, by June 2006, the proportion of the population infected with HIV and AIDS had fallen from 14 percent in 1997 to around 4 percent of the total population of 30 million people, the struggle is far from over as the 1.2 million (4 percent) still poses a big challenge to the socio-economic well-being of the nation. Further, the fact that there are 1.1 million new orphans as a result of AIDS is an issue that begs for attention. In some of the poorest parts of the Kikuyu-dominated areas such as the capital city of Nairobi, “every fifth house you come to is run entirely by children—all the adults have died.”⁵ This shows the urgency of calling every person (and *Mundurume* in particular) to take responsibility for the entire society. Indeed, this is a hard-hearted epidemic that has hit the sub-Saharan most.

As the Third World War (hereafter WW3), whose battlefield is concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, it goes beyond the First and Second World Wars (WW1 and WW2), as both were mainly fought in Europe. In illustration of this, according to Herbert Peacock, by the time WW1 had ended, it had wrought the greatest destruction the world had ever experienced. (Peacock, 1987:291-292). It is estimated that 13 million people perished. For every minute of fighting, four soldiers were killed and nine were wounded. In total, the war left about 10 million widows and orphans and one million dependents without any means of survival. (Ibid). The cost of the

⁴It is critical to underline that while *Mundurume* refers, literally, to a brave man, the word *Mundumuka*, for a Kikuyu woman, literally means “one who comes”—which implies that the role of a *Mundurume* includes providing security to every one in the community among others.

⁵See **Karen Allen**, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/5033558.stm>

war in monetary terms was calculated as sufficient to provide every family in America, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany and Russia with a \$US500 house, \$US200 worth of furniture and \$US100 worth of land, and even then the “remainder” was equivalent to the entire capital value of France and Belgium! Added to this was the vast number of starving people and refugees. (Ibid).

Similarly, the WW2, which is largely attributed to Adolf Hitler, the erstwhile leader of Germany, brought heavy losses. It was mainly fought between two major groups, Hitler’s group that became known as Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis, and the Commonwealth Alliance, which was led by Winston Churchill, the then-British prime minister. (Peacock, 1987:335). The Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis refers to Germany, Italy and Japan while the Commonwealth Alliance mainly refers to the nations that were previously colonized by the British with a few exceptions such as France.

As the war progressed, the allies decided to drop the newly tested atomic bomb on a Japanese city. On 6 August 1945 an atomic bomb was dropped by an American superfortress on the city of Hiroshima, killing 78,000 people at one blast.⁶ A horrifying new dimension had been added to the war. On 8 August, the Russians declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria; on 9 August the Americans dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki; on 14 August the Japanese surrendered unconditionally. The war was over. (Peacock, 1987:358).

Having seen the impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic as comparable to the two World Wars, this study will proceed to show the role of Gikuyu (read, African) culture in stemming the tidal wave of the epidemic, as it attempts to offer some reconstructive

⁶August 6 is therefore a sad and joyful commemorating day. For on one hand, it is the sad day when an atomic bomb was dropped on the city Hiroshima killing 78,000 people on the spot, and at the same time, it is the joyful day when Christians commemorate the transfiguration of our Lord (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2).

methodologies that can be employed in Africa of the twenty-first century.

The Kikuyu People: A Historical Background

Why choose Kikuyu cultural life to demonstrate “the role of an African man in combating HIV and AIDS”? Firstly, the author is a member of this community, which is the largest ethnic group in Kenya. Secondly, due to limitations of time and space, it is impossible to survey the more than 1000 African communities. Because African communities share many cultural similarities, the cultural patterns taken from the Kikuyu community will suffice to give us a relevant picture of the whole of Africa. Thirdly, the complexity of HIV pales in comparison to the complexity of the social forces involved in the production of stigma in relation to HIV and AIDS. Indeed, stigma rarely acts alone. Patriarchal attitudes and practices are, in reality, part of the complex contributory chain that fuels the continuing spread of HIV and AIDS among the members of the Kikuyu community. Choosing the Kikuyu as a sample will assist in uncovering the above concerns.

Kikuyu is the anglicized form of the proper name and pronunciation, *Gikuyu*. By 2006, they totalled about ten million, equal to about 30 percent of Kenya's total population. They reside around the slopes of Mount Kenya in the Central Province of Kenya. They cultivate the fertile central highlands and are also the most economically active ethnic group in Kenya. (Wanjohi, 1997).⁷ As one of the Bantu linguistic groups, they are closely related to the Kamba, Embu, Mbeere and Ameru people, who also live around the slopes of Mount Kenya.

The earliest, prehistoric version of their social lives establishes that they were initially monogamous before embracing polygamy at a later stage. A well-documented creation myth of the Kikuyu describes that *Mugai* (literally, “the divider of the universe”) created

⁷See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kikuyu>.

a man called Gikuyu and his wife, called Muumbi.⁸ Muumbi is described as having been a beautiful wife who lived happily with Gikuyu, and together they had nine daughters and yet no sons. (Kenyatta, 1938:4). As a result, Gikuyu “was very disturbed at not having a male heir.” When his daughters reached marriageable age, in despair, Gikuyu called upon God, *Mugai* (“Lord of nature”) “to advise him on the situation,” praying that *Mugai* would soon provide men to marry them (Kenyatta, 1938:4).⁹ As a result of his supplications,

God (*Mugai*) responded quickly and told Gikuyu not to be perturbed, but to have patience and everything would be done according to his wish. He (sic) then commanded him, saying, “Go and take one lamb and one kid from your flock, kill them under the fig tree (*Mukuyu*) near your homestead. Pour the blood and the fat of the two animals on the trunk of the tree. Then you and your family make a big fire under the tree and burn the meat as a sacrifice to me, your benefactor. When you have done this, take home your wife and daughters. After that go back to the sacred tree (*Mukuyu*), and there you will find nine handsome young men who are willing to marry your daughters under any condition that will please you and your family.” (Kenyatta, 1938:4)

⁸There is no satisfactory explanation given as to why the first ancestors were called Gikuyu and *Muumbi*. The only plausible information offered is that a man met a woman who was making pots (*kumba*), and that this woman discovered that the man was sheltering under a wild fig tree, *Mukuyu*. On marrying, they called each other by nicknames, a usual Kikuyu custom, associated with the circumstances of their initial meeting. Thus the man called the woman *Muumbi* (which means potter), while the woman called him Gikuyu (‘of the fig tree’). See Kenyatta, 1938.

⁹This confirms the Gikuyu community’s deep sense of religiosity, whereby prayer is the means of finding answers to delicate and fundamental issues.

As fate would have it, Gikuyu was not disappointed after obeying *Mugai* or *Ngai*. When he returned to the sacred tree, he found the promised nine young men who greeted him affectionately. After recovering from his excitement, with much jubilation he took the nine young men to his homestead and introduced them to his family. Following much African hospitality, “the question of marriage was discussed.” (Kenyatta, 1938:5). During the marriage negotiations, Gikuyu gave tough conditions to the young men who were willing to marry his daughters, stating that “If they wished to marry his daughters, he could give his consent only if they agreed to live in his homestead under a matriarchal system.” (Ibid). Due to the overwhelming beauty of Gikuyu’s daughters, the young men readily accepted.

This *Kikuyu* myth provides some understanding of the establishment of matriarchy among the community. It also hints at the first major paradigm shift that took place from within them, from Gikuyu’s patriarchy in which he dominated his wife Muumbi (even in the marriage negotiations, her voice is conspicuously missing), to matriarchy, where women enjoy greater input. This shift towards matriarchy was short-lived, as men fought very hard to usher in patriarchy, which has lasted to the present day. Why? Under matriarchal paradigmatic governance, the women allegedly became authoritarian and tough fighters. Coupled with this, they also practised polyandry, allowing them to keep more than one spouse. This was obviously a digression from what the first parents set as an ideal for the whole community to follow. Could this have been mere propaganda aimed at discrediting the *Kikuyu* women (*Atumia*) by men who favoured a shift towards patriarchy?

How did the society shift from back to patriarchy? To overthrow their rulers, who were women, *Arume* (men) decided to carry out a coup d’ état. To do this, they mischievously agreed to impregnate all the women of the tribe, including the leadership. This was done by first planning a date when they would resist women’s leadership, while the women were pregnant and thereby physically weak. (Ibid.:4). As soon as men came to power, the constitution was

changed, enabling the shift from a matriarchal to patriarchal system. In effect, men took over the leadership of the family and the community at large. As a result, they became the owners of property and the protectors of their families. Because of their actions, the men, who were seen as fathers for the unmarried women and as husbands after marriage, now owned women. (Ibid).

Challenges/Propositions to the Kikuyu *Mundurume*

After the paradigm shift from matriarchy to patriarchy, the Kikuyu men introduced polygamy as a way of taking full control of the community. This has some implications. Firstly, polygamy was a digression from the original path of a monogamous family. Secondly, it also shows that among the Kikuyu community, every person is expected to obtain a spouse and live in a monogamous relationship. The question of how it would be achieved in an unequal society where men hold the ascendancy is seemingly unimportant. Thirdly, in the era of HIV and AIDS, the Kikuyu have to reconstruct themselves by revisiting their history especially with regard to upholding a monogamous family. In other words, to be responsible enough, a *Mundurume* has no choice in twenty-first-century Africa but to put into practice what the founders of the community left behind – monogamy. Fourthly, upholding monogamy translates to being faithful to one's spouse. It means avoiding premarital sex, fornication, adultery or serial marriages or polygamy—a new concept in Africa. Fifthly, the society must ensure that they do not annoy the spirits of the two great ancestors—father Gikuyu and mother Muumbi. Their prayer was for the community to have responsible men who not only provide for the family but more importantly, who uphold the dignity of the community by respecting family values. Addressing contextual issues such as HIV and AIDS is one of the concerns that a *Mundurume* cannot downplay, considering that it has left thousands of people either motherless, fatherless, orphaned or widowed.

In view of this, it is critical to underline that in the Kikuyu tradition, a *Mundurume* wishing to have a good family must strive to control his sexual desires. For if a father is sexually loose, how can he bring up a good family? Equally, a *Mundumuka* (Gikuyu woman) cannot allow anybody to pollute her “kitchen” (body). A woman’s body can be referred to as her “kitchen” because it is through her womb that the couple gets children, who in turn help to complete the joys of the family. It has to be kept clean because it is the source of the family’s joy, as children come to cement the marriage relationship. Hence women must protect their sexuality in the way they protect their kitchen.

The challenge for the *Arume* (Kikuyu men) that we get from the above is this: You asked for the leadership of the community and you took over through a coup d’état. Do you want to act irresponsibly, allowing the community to be swept away by the HIV and AIDS floods? Remember, as the Gikuyu saying goes, “A leopard is fought by a man and his in-laws.” Isn’t this leopard called HIV and AIDS going to wipe out the whole society if we fail to invite everyone, including the unreachable and unapproachable—the in-laws—to fight it now? How can we be silent when we should be acting against it? Or should we shift back to matriarchy, where we experienced irresponsibility? The Kikuyu men, like other responsible persons in the rest of the continent, must now wake up, lead from the front and swim into action to stop the boat from capsizing. Indeed, the hour is now!

The Ideal *Mundurume*

In both the ancient and the modern Kikuyu society, a male child becomes a *Mundurume* after circumcision, where the foreskin is removed, around the age of fifteen. Outside that rite, a male person is regarded as a *Kihii*, that is, one who has not graduated to full

adulthood through the act of physical circumcision.¹⁰ Even though the initiation of both sexes has, from time immemorial, been seen as the most important custom among the Gikuyu—it was a deciding factor in giving a boy or girl the status of manhood or womanhood in the Gikuyu community—it is critical to acknowledge that the boy-child circumcision was seen as more strategic (than the girl's), as the boy became a *Mundurume*. This *Mundurume* was first and foremost a leader, a warrior, a responsible person, or “a security officer” of the community, who, as we shall see in the next section, had, as a matter of stipulation, to have a higher calling, to protect the community at all costs.

In his *Facing Mount Kenya*, Jomo Kenyatta defended circumcision for both sexes as, like Jewish circumcision, a mere bodily mutilation, which, however, “is regarded as the *conditio sine qua non* of the whole teaching of tribal law, religion, and morality.” (Kenyatta, 1938:4). Nevertheless, the Kikuyu society has gradually been abandoning the practice of circumcising females, otherwise called female genital mutilation (FGM). Only in limited areas do we find it being practised today, and it appears to be on its way out.

Writing in 1938, when circumcision for both males and females was at its zenith, Jomo Kenyatta explained that “no proper” *Mundurume* would have sex with or marry a woman who was not circumcised. Similarly, Kenyatta notes that no woman would have sex with or marry a man who was not circumcised (*Kihii*)—as it was a taboo to the community. He goes on to explain that the practice of circumcision was “an essential step into responsible adulthood” for many African girls and boys; and that there was “a strong community of educated Gikuyu opinion in defence of this custom.”

¹⁰While the ancient way of circumcision among the Kikuyu, where the initiates were taken to the river early in the morning for the operation, has died out, it is critical to acknowledge that modern day circumcision for boys is done in the hospitals where modern medical practitioners have replaced traditional doctors.

(Kenyatta, 1938:132-133). Explaining that it was a taboo for a *Mundurume* or a *Mundumuka* to have sexual relations with someone who had not undergone this operation, he says,

If it happens, a man or woman must go through a ceremonial purification, *korutwo thahu* or *gotahikio megiro* – namely, ritual vomiting of the evil deeds. A few detribalised Gikuyu, while they are away from home for some years, have thought fit to denounce the custom and to marry uncircumcised girls, especially from coastal tribes, thinking that they could bring them back to their fathers’ homes without offending the parents. But to their surprise they found that their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, following the tribal custom, are not prepared to welcome, as a relative-in-law, anyone who has not fulfilled the ritual qualifications for matrimony. Therefore a problem has faced these semi-detribalised Gikuyu when they wanted to return to their homeland. Their parents have demanded that if their sons wished to settle down and have the blessings of the family and the clan, they must divorce the wife married outside the rigid tribal custom and then marry a girl with the approved tribal qualifications. Failing this, they have been turned out and disinherited. (Kenyatta’s, 1938)¹¹

With the declining value and practice of FGM among the Kikuyu community, a *Mundurume* can no longer say that he cannot “have sex or marry a woman who is not circumcised.” Rather, this paper suggests that this condition be replaced with the policy that “there should be no sex or marriage before a Voluntary Counselling and Test (VCT) session for both partners.” This, indeed, has to be the new law for the Kikuyu in this era of HIV and AIDS. And since both the VCT and the circumcision, or FGM for that matter, can be said to be emotionally, physically and psychologically painful, the culture of circumcision among *Arume* would be enhanced by this new way of managing life in twenty-first-century Africa. This is the real

¹¹See chapter six.

challenge for the *Mundurume*, as this will show authentic responsibility.

The Division of Labour¹²

This study intends to show how the Kikuyu industries were discharged by division of labour. That is, how some duties were performed by a particular gender and how some responsibilities were undertaken by both males and females as a part of a mutual celebration of life. It also intends to show how modern, professional and technical society is experiencing tension caused by the contradictory teachings of the traditional teacher and the modern teacher. This subtopic is crucial particularly when we bear in mind that the Christian culture in modern Africa is intertwined with African culture.

To show the importance of hard work, the Kikuyu have a saying that goes, *mwana uri kiyo ndagaga muthambia*, literally, “An industrious child will never lack adoptive parents.” Due to the patriarchal leanings in the Kikuyu community, this “industrious child” was ideally a boy-child who, after circumcision at the age of about 15–18 years, became a *Mundurume*. To be an industrious child could also mean a responsible or hard-working person. In the light of pandemics, misfortunes, natural calamities or war with neighbouring communities or even among the rival clans, a boy child who became a *Mundurume* after initiation was expected to show some measure of industriousness—hence responsibility, however little it was.

The urge to be an industrious child was sounded right from childhood and climaxed during the time of initiation. During the *Irua* (initiation), boys and girls in traditional Kikuyu society were trained to perform particular duties. They were taught that even if the parents died, the affected child would be reborn “with a goat” to another family, for society has a great interest in a productive person. They were informed that there was no task as big as an elephant,

¹²This section is a revision of a section that appears in my book, Gathogo, 2001: 14-20.

and the only difficult one is the unperformed one. They were made conscious of the fact that initiation ushered them to adult freedom, which was within the framework of the division of labour.

Thus, as the boy initiates grew into adulthood, they had definite duties to all members of the village. These duties included fortification, protection and the defence of the village. Further, if called upon, a *Mundurume* could assist his neighbour in erecting a house, clearing the bush and cultivating. A *Mundurume* could count on sufficient assistance to build a house in a day or clear a large area for cultivation in a few days without having to pay for the labour, except that he must prepare a feast for the working team. This has however changed in the contemporary capitalist society in which one has to hire professionals in every field to do the work

For a *Mundurume*, in the traditional society, to be assisted in building a house for his family, noted above, he had first and foremost to initiate the work himself as proof that he was not looking for help because he was lazy or a parasite who depends entirely on others. This was partly meant to curb dependency syndrome in the community. Secondly, he had to be someone who assisted others when in need. He who does not assist others is left alone, as expressed in the proverb, *Muria wiki akuaga wiki*, literally, “He who eats alone, dies alone.” This was a measure to discourage laziness; for a lazy person among the ancient Kikuyu (and Africa at large) was condemned and abhorred. It was also meant to uphold the African sense of community. That is, instead of the Cartesian, “I think, therefore I exist” (*cogito ergo sum*), the African asserts “I am because we are,” or “I am related, therefore, I am” (*cognatus ergo sum* or an existential *cognatus sum, ergo sumus*, meaning *I am related, therefore we are*). (Gathogo, 2001:21). This correlates with Mbiti’s summary of the philosophy underlying the African way of life: “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.” (Mbiti, 1969:108). The Akan of Ghana would say, “I belong by blood relationship; therefore I am.” (Healey and Sybertz, 1996:62). Indeed, this parallels the concretization of the Being (*Sein*) as Being-within

the- 'Dasein' - Analytic in Martin Heidegger's *Philosophy of Being*. (Heidegger, 1993:117-125).

This communalistic African approach to life is equally felt by both genders. For example, when an expectant mother delivers, the neighbouring women set a date on which they bring firewood, porridge, cooked food, sorghum, millet, corn, sugarcane, sweet potatoes and yams to the new mother. In turn, men ensure that the above edibles are indeed taken by their wives and if they were not readily available, it was their duty to supply them—as a gesture of solidarity with their wives that was within the spirit of communalism. In this era of HIV and AIDS, a communalistic approach can be utilized for the common good of the society.

What is most interesting in the question of the division of labour is that an individual was part of and responsible to the whole country. Duties to one's country included defence, the building of bridges and fire fighting. This was, in most cases, done communally; and men took a leading role. This idea of an individual being responsible to the whole country draws parallels in Christian Africa, in the Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20, where Jesus commanded his followers to go all over the world and be responsible for the lives and souls of everyone by proclaiming the gospel, in season and out of season.

Religion was another major responsibility that every citizen had. In times of drought, plague and other calamities, the leading elders, who were mainly men (plus a few post-menopausal women) summoned all the people to gather together for worship. They then congregated under the sacred *Mugumo* tree (tree of God) and gave sacrifice to the Great Provider. When killing the sacrificial animal, a boy or a girl and a post-menopausal woman touched the animal's head while the (*Arume*) elders slaughtered it and prepared and roasted the meat. As the roasting went on, the smoke that came from it was believed to intercede with God.

All this was a symbolic act of inclusiveness and the community's total participation in religious acts. As a result of this collective sacrificing to God, it was believed that faithful worship resulted in

God’s blessings for all. The blessing included gifts of rain, unity, harvest, health and general prosperity.

Concerning defence, every Kikuyu male was a soldier, for during the weaning rite the boy was made aware that he was growing to be a warrior. Military recruitment started after the initiation. This is where the young men started by being members of the junior regiment. At this stage, they were under the authority of the senior warrior regiment. After a reasonable duration of time, they were promoted to the senior warrior regiment. This element of every *Mundurume* being a soldier of the community is crucial to any reasonable response in curbing the current HIV and AIDS epidemic. As noted earlier, HIV and AIDS is not just comparable to a Third World War—a costly war mainly fought on African soil—but it is more importantly a genocide that threatens to wipe out the people of Africa, a people who are made in God’s image (*Imago Dei*). Indeed, if an army fails to fight for the nation, it is better that it wasn’t there in the first place! Thus, as in the ancient times, the *Arume* must lead in the battlefield as good soldiers and combat HIV and AIDS. This, indeed, provides an opportunity for them to prove their worth, that is, their being responsible soldiers who will never shy away but as soldiers who will confront the enemy until the nation experiences genuine peace. The challenge for a modern *Mundurume*, as in the ancient times, is to face the societal concerns such as HIV and AIDS responsibly.

Some Reconstructive Methodological Considerations in Fighting this War

Abstinence as the Ideal Way

In view of the ongoing study, *Mundurume* must lead in upholding abstinence as one practical and ideal methodology that will make a huge difference in stemming the tide of the epidemic. Indeed, the ancient Kikuyu encouraged strict control of sexual desires, and where rules were broken, heavy penalties were imposed on the culprit. For example, even though there were common dances such as *Nguchu*,

Nduumo, *Mugoiyo* and *Ndachi ya irua* (circumcisional dance), sexual discipline was upheld. In particular,

The grandmothers had a critical role of checking if any man unwound the inner garment of the young ladies. This garment was called *Muthuru*. The grandmothers or *Cucus* tied it safely to protect any promiscuity in young women. Any women who engaged in sex before marriage and got pregnant could only be married as a second wife and they were commonly referred to as *Gichokio*.¹³ Therefore the Gikuyu customs protected the interests of young people against [sexual] abuse. It also ensured [that] some form of entertainment was prepared and young people carried forward the practices from generation to generation.¹⁴

In view of the above, abstinence is one practical methodology that the society in general can employ as one of the ideal lines of defence that will be instrumental in combating the epidemic. If our ancestors used it to control promiscuity and as a birth control method, why not the modern *Mundurume* or *Mundumuka*? Some of the ancestral resources can be creatively utilized to facilitate a healthy and decent way of life addressing the challenges of our modern societies. Ancient resources can also help in bringing about sound approaches capable of addressing some of the blazing issues of the moment, of which HIV and AIDS is one example.

The Need for a Mugambi: A Trumpet Blowing Mundurume

Among the traditional Embu, the Kamba, the Gikuyu, the Meru and many other Bantu (linguistic) communities, there was a *Mundurume* (called *Mugambi*) whose responsibility was to stand high on a pedestal, like a giraffe, and always be ready to alert the community on social changes or caution them about dangers that were about to befall the community. For instance, among the Kamba community,

¹³*Gichokio* was a derogatory word used to refer to a woman who had children out of wedlock and who was highly disrespected.

¹⁴<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kikuyu>.

Mugambi is written as Muamb, which refers to *Muvuvi wa nguli*—that is, “the person who alerts the community in case of need or danger.” According to some interviews conducted with Bosco M. Maingi on 11 October 2005, *Muvuvi wa nguli* was the special person who alerted the people to be on guard whenever the neighbouring Maasai tribe appeared on the scene to take their cattle—as the Maasai believe that all cattle belong to them. Among the Kikuyu, *Mugambi* the *Mundurume* is also referred to as the trumpet blower (*muhuhi wa Coro*) or whistle blower (*muhuhi wa biringi*). His role was to alert the society on important issues that needed special attention. Similarly, *Mugambi*, as a noun, is a special *Mundurume* among the Embu and the Kikuyu communities who will always alert the people on the contemporary issues that the society needs to focus on.

Among the Meru, the noun *Mugambi* carries connotations of social responsibilities, like a statesman, a counsellor, an advisor, an arbitrator and a mediator; while in the neighbouring Gikuyu community it would also refer to a person assigned the responsibility of beating (or ringing) the drum of caution during an emergency. In our contemporary society, this chapter proposes that our *Mugambi* be a researcher on the changing patterns of HIV and AIDS, an educator on HIV and AIDS, a leader or a prophet who, with regard to HIV and AIDS, leads the society to the Promised Land, a preacher or a public speaker who cautions on the dangers of HIV and AIDS. In view of this, it is critical to appreciate that a society that had no *Mugambi* of its own in ancient African society was doomed to annihilation. This challenges everyone to take the role of a modern day *Mugambi* and speak with love and a sense of responsibility about the way out of HIV and AIDS so that the society can move on to higher ground where the enemy will not reach. Indeed, as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”¹⁵ We need to speak out on matters relating to HIV and AIDS.

¹⁵This is a common quotation that Martin Luther King (1929-1968) made during his civil rights crusades in USA (1955-1968).

Storytelling as a Methodology

As a phenomenon rooted in African indigenous religion, storytelling is one of the major forms of informal education in Africa, and is indispensable as a means of illustrating an important message in the context of Africa. (Gathogo, 2001:84). As a traditional art, storytelling creates above all a deep sense of friendship and community. This finds a parallel in the Bible, which is a collection of stories told about a people, namely the Israelites and the disciples of Jesus. (Gathogo, 2001:85). As a Reconstructionist, Jesus illustrated his sermons with relevant stories such as the parables of the sower and the Good Samaritan. (Luke 8: 1ff and Luke 10:25f).

When confirmed HIV and AIDS sufferers tell their individual stories, as opposed to village gossips who are in some cases inaccurate, it helps in destroying the stigma that is associated with HIV and AIDS. As a result, society is able to come to terms with the reality that the “problem is, after all, part of us—as a family, as a clan and/or as a community.” It has to be handled in love as it affects our brothers, our sisters, our parents, our children or relatives. Indeed, we cannot deal with our fellow members of the human family/race in whispers and innuendo; for the light of Jesus, in twenty-first century Africa is beckoning us in his promise: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12).

As a matter of fact, stigma thrives in lies. That is, it refuses to acknowledge that every man, woman or a child is created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*) whether affected or infected. It refuses to recognize the reality of the sanctity of human life. Additionally, it speaks the language of hate, intolerance, misapprehension and even intimidation. In effect, it brands “the other” as undesirable, as having, in the words of Erving Goffman, a “spoiled identity”. (Goffman, 1990).

Stigma thrives on silence and denial, guilt and fear. When the truth about suffering and disease cannot be narrated through storytelling, possibly because of fear of stigmatization, reality is covered in denial and silence. Denial not only sacrifices the truth, it

robs us of our ability to deal effectively with the virus. Thus many have died alone. Or is it a case of, “He who eats alone dies alone” (*Muria wiki akuaga wiki*)—noted above in the Kikuyu proverbs? Further, guilt and fear feed on silence and soon rob those affected of their ability to wrestle with the virus in ways that takes care of life, instead of yielding to desolation and depression. Telling the story of the contacts with HIV and AIDS is one practical methodology of combating it—as it helps to destigmatize the pandemic. Robin A. Mello confirms this when he says,

Through transmission of narrative the storyteller allows the powerless to perceive himself or herself as powerful. The storytellers of South Africa during apartheid, for example, told what seemed (to the dominant white political structure) to be “simple folk stories.” Listeners perceived these same tales, however, as liberating acts of social protest. (Mello, 2005:199)

He goes on to explain,

This is not a new phenomenon. Familiar and seemingly innocuous stories, such as the Household Tales of the brothers Grimm, have been entertainments but feature subplots that challenge authority, oppressive attitudes, and the status quo. (Ibid)

In so doing, Mello appears to agree with Joseph Bruner, who said,

Storytelling should be viewed as a set of procedures for “life making.” And just as it is worthwhile examining in minute detail how physics or history go about their world, might we not be well advised to explore in detail what we do when we construct ourselves through stories? (Mello, 2005:195)

In view of this, a *Mundurume* will no doubt employ storytelling as one of the practical methodologies that will need to be engaged to successfully turn the tide of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the Africa. Another very effective strategy would be to encourage infected

members of the society to tell their own stories, without fear of discrimination.

Working towards a Vaccine

The need for a vaccine to tackle HIV and AIDS will continue to be important in twenty-first-century Africa just as it was in the last century. Why? While anti-retrovirals have played their part in controlling the disease, a more comprehensive methodology will be needed. This calls for everyone to give maximum support to this initiative in our respective ways—as we remember the Kikuyu saying, “A leopard is fought by a *Mundurume* and his in-laws.” Although earlier initiatives have not borne much fruit so far, Africa has to trust in God, who used to guide our ancestors during the times of crisis; and that the same God will provide a way forward. In any case, it is God who so much loved the world and still does so. (John 3:16). As we work towards a medical solution, we must thus affirm our faith that tomorrow will not be like yesterday; soon, very soon, we shall overcome.

Use of Condoms as a Lesser Evil

The question on whether to use or not to use condoms to combat HIV and AIDS is one of the most debated issues in our modern times among various religious practitioners. In this, Roman Catholics and Muslims are totally opposed to it; while pockets of Protestant-leaning Christians have had a soft spot for condom use as a lesser evil. Indeed, while the use of condoms, especially in a sexual relationship, is perceived by others as tantamount to fornication, adultery or general promiscuity, it is critical to consider which one would be greater evil—dying of HIV and AIDS as a result of failing to use a protective device or using a condom to prevent the same?

The father of the philosophy on “lesser or greater evil,” Professor Joseph Fletcher, an Episcopalian priest, developed the original theory in 1966. As a professor at the Episcopal Theological School, he published his *Situational Ethics: The New Morality*. (Fletcher, 1967). In it he advocates a so-called “Christian ethic” based on existential

situations rather than prescriptive principles. He contends that decision-making should be based upon the circumstances of a particular situation and not upon the law. The only absolute is love. Love should be the motive behind every decision. As long as love is your intention, the end justifies the means. For in this theory, justice is not in the letter of the law but in the distribution of love. More specifically, Fletcher says, “whether any form of sex is good or evil depends on whether love is fully served.” (Ibid.:139). For Fletcher, “any form of sex” includes hetero, homo, auto and bi; a person has to push their principles aside and do the right thing. (Ibid.:13). When should we push our principles aside? Fletcher answers, “The ruling norm of Christian decision is love, nothing else.” (Ibid.:69). He held that love is the only thing that matters, saying, “Only one thing is intrinsically good; namely, love: nothing else at all.” (Ibid.:56). Concerning the Ten Commandments, Fletcher said, “situation ethics has good reason to hold it as a duty in some situations to break them, any or all of them.” (Ibid.:74). Fletchers’ school of thought agrees with the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin. It also agrees with recent and confessed situational ethicists such as Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebhur, John A.T. Robinson and Longenecker.

In view of Fletcher’s argument and in considering that even in African traditional society, where law was followed to the letter, there were various cases of “law-breakers,” especially with regard to sexual matters. That is why, as noted above, the Kikuyu had *Gichokio* (referring to a woman who was unable to control her sexuality and thereby got a child out of wedlock). This clearly shows the difficulty of handling sexual emotions, especially for some young members of society; hence the need to be sympathetic to the use of condoms—as a lesser evil—in the struggle to combat HIV and AIDS. Thus, while abstinence is the ideal methodology in combating the pandemic, the use of condoms should in some cases be accepted as a lesser evil.

Conclusion

Thus, in this era of HIV and AIDS, we must first apply our ethics by attempting to reconstruct both our individual and social consciousness, like in the case of Jews after the Babylonian exile, and “start rebuilding”! (Nehemiah 2:18). Using a variety of methodologies will achieve this rebuilding. As noted earlier, one possibility is the use of ancestral resources—that is, appealing to some African indigenous ways of handling crises.

Secondly, we have to uphold our conviction that despite the African woes, she is “not yet dead,” as one with hope “will not die.” As in the words of Jesse Mugambi, in his post-Cold War works, Africa must reject the conventional wisdom as articulated in the North Atlantic that seems to suggest that “Africa is doomed to annihilation.” And as he correctly sees, there is no good reason to suggest that the failures of the past will prevail in the future. (Mugambi, 1995).

In view of the discussion in this chapter, *Mundurume* (read, the African) can now rise to the occasion and play a leading role, just as in ancient times; be a good soldier of the community; and protect the entire society of men, women and children against HIV and AIDS. This is the authentic maturity that climaxes with the initiation rite—which we should all crave. Indeed, “come, let us start rebuilding.”

Thus, the challenge for us all is as St. James advised,

Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. (James 1:22-25)

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Religions and the Responsibility of Men in Relation to Gender-Based Violence and HIV: An Ethical Plea

Domoka Lucinda Manda

Introduction

The United Nations Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV and AIDS in southern Africa, (2005) had this to say,

Many people know what the gender-based challenges facing women and girls are. However, the complexity of gender relations means that many find it difficult to focus on what exactly to do... Although girls and women represent the bulk of new infections, budgets and programmes, policies and human resource commitments do not reflect this. Many interventions continue to be aimed at an imaginary boy or man or a fictional gender-neutral public... Even organizations that are explicitly trying to address the problems of women and girls find it difficult to deal with the root causes of gender inequality. Because changes in gender relations occur slowly, not enough funding or attention is given to programmes that try to address the deeper connections between gender and HIV/AIDS. (United Nations, 2005)

There has already been extensive work and massive documentation undertaken on gender-based factors that fuel the spread of HIV. Similarly, a lot of work has been done on gender-based violence in relation to HIV and AIDS. However, an interesting complementary component to the body of research on gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS, which is gaining strong momentum, is the emphasis on the role of ethics in general, and religious ethics in particular, in shaping and nurturing responsible men, in the context of gender-based violence and HIV. Chitando (2007a and 2007b, 2008a and 2008b) and others have identified this gap in research, and are vigorously addressing this concern. This chapter seeks to add one more voice to this growing body of work and the pertinent question raised in this chapter is, what religious ethical principles can we draw on to assist men to behave responsibly towards women?

Before discussing the role of religion and ethics in redeeming or transforming men in Africa, especially southern Africa, it is important to state why I choose to draw on ethical principles that are embedded in religion. To begin with, religion and religious beliefs, values and principles are the building blocks upon which to construct what it means to be a good human being. This is especially evident in Africa, where many black African people belong to one of the three major religions discussed in this chapter. Taking cognisance of the academic debate and divide that exists between scholars of religion and scholars of philosophy on the issue of whether, and how, religion and ethics relate; that is, on one hand, representatives of religious studies maintain that ethics and religion are inseparable and on the other, representatives of philosophy argue that religion and ethics are separable.¹ This chapter acknowledges that while the two

¹For a more in-depth explanation on the debate over the interface between religion and ethics in Africa, and the hidden tensions it exposes within African scholarship, refer to Ezra Chitando, "Religious Ethics, HIV and AIDS and Masculinities in Southern Africa" in Ron Nicolson (ed), *Persons in Community: African Ethics in a Global Culture*, (Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008):46-50.

opposing sides do have valid points to make, this author would like to state that the dominance of religion in Africa is such that one cannot totally separate religion and ethics. As such, in the struggle to transform masculinities in Africa, particularly in southern Africa, the challenge resides in religion, or so this writer suggests, and identifying religious ethical precepts that could be used in the struggle against gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS.

The first section of the chapter discusses the factors that place women more at risk than men to HIV infection and the implications that these factors have on women's health. The second discusses gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS. The third section discusses how religions in Africa namely, Christianity,² Islam and Africa's Traditional Religions³ can contribute to the protection of women's health by providing the ethical precepts that ought to empower men to act responsibly towards women. The fourth section concludes by making a plea to men, explicating the reasons why they ought to protect women and women's health.

²I acknowledge that there are many forms and expressions of Christianity. For example, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostal, Episcopalians, Evangelicals, African Initiated Churches, Baptists etc., and the names differ according to their historical origins. While differences do exist in the way they worship, all these groups of people are, as Neville Richardson, 2006, writes, "joined by a common allegiance to Jesus Christ." That allegiance to Jesus Christ means that they share common interpretations of what it means to be a "good" Christian. I, therefore, draw on commonly shared values, principles and ethics when I refer to the role Christianity can play in creating men who are responsible for respecting and protecting women's health in the context of HIV and AIDS.

³Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religions have been selected as the primary religions under discussion, simply because these three religions are the dominant religions in Africa.

Physiological, Structural and Cultural Factors that Compromise Women's Health

While the majority of observations regarding the gendered aspects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic may be widely known, it is nevertheless useful to summarize and repeat them here in order to contextualize the issues under discussion. Physiologically, women face a greater risk of contracting HIV than men. The reason is their greater mucosal surface, which can be exposed to pathogens during sexual intercourse. (Jacobs, 2003, and Ackermann and de Klerk, 2002:166). However, this only partly explains the problem of why women are more susceptible and vulnerable to HIV infection. Two other important factors are in play; patriarchy and poverty.

A lot has already been said about patriarchy, and the implications of patriarchy for women's health. However, a reminder of its effects is useful. Patriarchy is a cultural practice that supports gender inequality between men and women, whereby power and authority in both the private and public sphere is firmly vested in men. The dominance of men penetrates not only the formal arena, but also the informal. The power inequalities that exist between men and women at a societal level penetrate into the bedroom and into sexual relations between men and women. Women often find it hard to assert themselves in sexual relationships.

As a result, it is often very difficult for women to negotiate safer sexual practices with their partners. This lack of power and autonomy leaves black women vulnerable to HIV infection. Claudia Cruz echoes this observation in her study of attitudes underlying condom use in South Africa. She notes that "Women, especially black women, often find themselves in relationships where they have little power and are unable to negotiate safer sexual practices with their partners." (Cruz, 2004:145). This is compounded by poor black women's economic dependence on men.

This dependence by women on their male partners creates conditions that give rise to the male perception that their wives or partners are merely objects of their sexual desires. An unwilling female partner may be forced to comply with the sexual demands of

her male partner because of either physical abuse or the threat of violence. Their inability to decide if, when and how intercourse will take place means that their rights and sexual autonomy in the relationship are not recognized. This makes them extremely vulnerable to HIV infection, as they are “unable to control the nature and safety of their sexual encounters with their partners.” (Ibid).

Another key factor that impacts on women’s health, specifically from a gendered perspective, is poverty. Poverty contributes to the type of illnesses people suffer from. This is because poverty is associated with malnutrition, poor sanitation and poor living conditions. Poor living conditions provide a fertile breeding ground for the development of diseases, thus making people more susceptible to infections. (Cf. Klugman and Weiner, 1992:3, Wells, 1974:9).

In Africa, the dire poverty that exists in black African communities is a direct legacy of colonialism. Colonialism created an environment of political and economic discrimination and marginalization, which was based not only on race, but also on gender. This was reinforced and exacerbated by the introduction of a capitalist economy that severed the symbiotic relationship that previously existed between black men and women. Capitalism separated man and woman from the common economy and created a dual economy that comprised a large-scale, capital-intensive sector, aimed at producing commodities for national and international markets, and a small-scale, labour-intensive sector producing mainly food crops for household consumption and local markets. The rural economy, primarily concerned with the food crops, was the preserve of the woman and the urban economy, primarily concerned with producing for the international market, was the preserve of the man. It was with this introduction of a dual economy that colonialists began to create and enforce the division between the private and public spheres of the economy. The integration of African economies into the world capitalist system meant that social structures and relations that previously existed were altered because, under this economic model, men were coercively drawn into towns and mine compounds to provide paid labour, while women were left on the periphery to

perform unpaid domestic labour. As a result, a rural-urban dichotomy was created. In most instances, women were left to perform subsistence farming in the informal areas of the rural economy and men were assimilated into the formal market economy. Moses Seenarine neatly captures this,

Women's relation to the land and work in Sub-Saharan Africa changed with the introduction of international forces of Islam and the European capitalist orientation to production and reproduction. The impact of colonialism was devastating to the economic role of women, as well as to their status and power. Colonial administrators failed to recognize women as legal entities.... Under European rule, women in Sub-Saharan Africa became perpetual minors. This loss of power and status adversely affected the lives of peasant women, especially the wives and widows of long term migrant men. (Seenarine,1993)

The loss of power and status altered social relations between men and women, because the "domestic and public spheres was reconstructed, with women now expected to be subservient and obedient to men." (Ibid.:3). This resulted in the depreciation in the value of women as producers, since Western notions of appropriate gender relations encouraged the perception that "men are breadwinners and women enable and stimulate male workforce productivity through home labour." (Staudt, 1989:72).

This colonial mentality has contributed enormously to increasing the levels of poverty and lack of employment for women. As such, poverty and unemployment have, to a large extent, compelled women into exploring alternative methods of generating income. As Carolyn Baylies observes,

Women's economic position, often involving a greater or lesser dependence on men, is a consequence of the way the kind of work men and women do articulates with valuation of labour. To the extent that much of their labour characteristically does not command market value, because confined to the domestic sphere, women

become dependent on those members of their household or kin group who operate in the cash economy. (Baylies, 2000:7)

Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Janet Frohlich explain why women place themselves in such vulnerable positions. “Women’s exclusion from the formal market has forced them into exploring other ways of earning money; more are taking up sex work.” (Karim and Frohlich, 2000:76-77). Baylies adds, “such dependence is often expressed both within and outside marriage—through sexual relations... In practice, this may take many different forms, not easily captured by such concepts as prostitution.” (Baylies, 2000:7). In these circumstances, sex as a means of survival may become the only available option to women, who opt to use sex as a method of making money. Confronted, therefore, with their desperate financial situation, women engage in sexual relations to pay for basic necessities. It is what is known as “survival sex” or “transactional sex.” The motivation seems to be that, because these women are poor and unemployed and dependent on men for their economic survival, they tend to choose boyfriends (sometimes referred to as “sugar daddies”) as a way of making ends meet. (Walker et al, 2002:42). This is a desperate solution to alleviate their financial woes, which in reality can lead to illness leaving them exposed and vulnerable to HIV infection. Here again, as Abdool Karim and Frohlich observe, “black women are found on the lowest rung of formal work and sex work is at the upper end of risk.” (Karim and Frohlich, 2000:77). The need for poor women to put food on their tables compels them to engage in unprotected sex with strangers thereby risking the possibility of HIV infection.

In short, because of patriarchy and poverty, and not forgetting physiologically, women are extremely vulnerable to HIV. The unequal relationship with men means that they are not able to assert themselves and negotiate the terms under which sexual relations can occur. It is within this context that gender-based violence is prolific.

Gender-Based Violence and HIV and AIDS

It is clear from the information presented above that there is a direct link between patriarchy and poverty with gender-violence and HIV and AIDS. Examples of how gender-based violence manifests itself in this context are numerous. Drawing from Suzanne Maman et al, (2000:459-478), I highlight four important areas where gender violence and HIV intersect. The first area is through forced sex, also known as rape, which can increase women's risk of contracting HIV because of the physical trauma that occurs to the woman's genitals. It is well known that the act of rape or forced sex "results in a higher risk of abrasion and bleeding, providing a ready avenue for transmission of the virus." (UNIFEM, 2007). The second area concerns violence and/or the threat of violence in a relationship, which could hinder the a woman's ability to negotiate safer sexual behaviour with her partner. This type of violence falls into the category of domestic abuse, because it is often carried out by a family member, a spouse or an intimate partner. Studies report that "women's experience of violence is linked to increased risk taking including having multiple partners, non-primary partners (or partnerships outside marriage) or engaging in transactional sex."⁴ For example, one study in South Africa reported that women who experience domestic abuse and violence by an intimate partner...were two to three times more likely to engage in transactional sex than women who did not experience violence. Moreover, women who reported transactional sex and had non-primary partners had 1.5-fold higher odds of being HIV infected than those who did not report transactional sex. (Dunkle, 2004:1415-1421).

Likewise, studies done in the United States of America show that sexual abuse during childhood reveals similar trends as those above, because it has been shown that early childhood sexual abuse may result in increased sexual risk taking as an adolescent or adult.⁵ An example that can be drawn from our context, which is particularly

⁴World Health Organization, Bulletin Series 1:1-9.

⁵Ibid.

worrisome behaviour, is the rape of babies and young girls by adult men to “cure” the men of HIV and AIDS. This idea that having sexual intercourse with a virgin will cure a sexually transmitted infection is not new and unique to Africa. As Mike Earl-Taylor notes,

The myth of the Virgin Cure has a rich and culturally diverse history stretching back to sixteenth-century [sic] Europe, and more prominently to be found in nineteenth-century Victorian England, where, in spite of the emphasis on morality, rectitude and family values, there existed a widespread belief, that sexual intercourse with a virgin was a cure for syphilis, gonorrhoea, [and other STDs]. Syphilis, like HIV/Aids [sic], was fatal in its terminal stages. In the Eastern Cape of South Africa, when a significant outbreak of STDs was spread by troops returning home from overseas after WWII, the Virgin Cure was widely sought among the population. (Earl-Taylor, 2002)

He further adds, “Encompassed in the current belief system of both prevention/cure of HIV and AIDS is the notion that an intact hymen, and the smaller amount of secretions in young girls, prevents transmission of the disease through sexual intercourse.” (Ibid). Another explanation attached to this behaviour is that since babies and young girl-children are virgins, and therefore “pure,” their purity will cleanse and cure a man who is HIV positive. As Beverley Haddad writes, “it appears that not only is girl-child rape used as a preventative measure, but a myth has emerged within communities that sex with a young girl-child will cure the disease.” (Haddad, 2003:149-167). This is the third area of concern in regard to gender-based violence and HIV.

The fourth area concerns the risk faced by women who test for HIV and share their test results with their partners. When a woman discloses her HIV-positive status she runs the risk of being beaten to death or near-death. Disclosing one’s HIV-positive status is often a flashpoint where violence can erupt, because women tend to be blamed as carriers. As Beverley Haddad notes, “There is evidence to suggest that women experience abuse after disclosure.” (Ibid:154).

One particularly pertinent example is how disclosure of one's HIV-positive status can result in death is of Gugu Dhlamini, a young woman who, as Radikobo Ntsimane describes, "sadly miscalculated the time and space" to disclose her HIV-positive status on radio and television on World AIDS Day and was, soon thereafter, identified by a mob that stoned and stabbed her to death. (Ntsimane, 2006:7-20).

The Role of Religions and the Responsibility of Men in Africa in Response to HIV and AIDS

A large body of work exists on the topic of masculinity in Africa and how it affects women in the context of gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS. In this literature, men are continually portrayed in a negative light. Negative sentiments are disempowering. It is the task, therefore, of the theologian/ethicist/social scientist to construct approaches to masculinity that are liberating and redemptive. In this section, I examine the possible role of religion in shaping men who are responsible towards women. I discuss the role the major religions in Africa can play to combat the further spread of HIV. I intend to identify some of the ethical guidelines and principles contained or embedded within Christianity, Islam and ATR to the problem of traditional conceptions of masculinity as it relates to gender-based violence. In this way, I hope to show how religions can respond responsibly to gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS. To paraphrase Chitando, religions must remind men that true discipleship entails questioning both (Christian, Islamic and ATR) attitudes towards masculinity. (Chitando, 2007b:47).

Work is being done in regard to men taking responsibility for protecting and promoting women's health, in response to an acknowledgement that gender-based violence plays a central role in contributing to women's ill-health. Programmes that target gender attitudes and norms play a crucial role in educating men about the harmful effects of traditional definitions of manhood and womanhood.

⁶World Health Organization, Bulletin Series 1:1-9.

For instance, in many societies, stereotypical definitions of “manhood or notions of an ideal man are defined in terms of providing for the family, honour, respect, and being sexually controlling whereas, notions of an ideal woman are defined in terms of being submissive, disciplined, respectful and sexually passive.”⁶

Examples of such programmes include the Men as Partners in South Africa, Padare/Enkundleni (Men’s Forum on Gender) in Zimbabwe and the Movement of Men against AIDS in Kenya. (Ibid.:5). All these organizations have a similar mandate to enhance men’s response to gender issues. (Chitando, 2007b:51). Additionally, there is the Stepping Stones programme, which has been implemented in a number of African countries. (Ibid). Stepping Stones is a training package that aims to “promote gender equity, inter-generational respect and solidarity with HIV positive people, in a human rights framework.”⁷ Although these programmes and strategies are useful and good, complementary intervention initiatives and projects that are based on clear ethical guidelines and principles are necessary, and need to be tailored into the existing programmes.

Christianity

Traditionally, Christianity has been understood as a religion that condones the oppression of women by prioritizing the voice and position of men in the Church. As Chitando notes, “Christianity, like all other religions, is patriarchal.” (Chitando, 2007b:51). Since women occupy a weak position in the Church, which as an organization is a reflection of society, it seems appropriate to suggest that the role of religions in general, and the Christian religions in particular, should use their liturgy or scripture during homilies or sermons to denounce gender-based violence by educating and informing men that “women have absolutely the same dignity and rights as men.” (Zimmerman, 2004:255-269).

A good starting point for Christian religions is the core teachings and shared values that are an essential part of Christian life. These

⁷Stepping Stones in <http://www.steppingstonesfeedback.org/>.

shared values are based on the life and times of Jesus, in the New Testament. The bible needs to be used to “teach men to consider and treat their wives, and women in general, as equals, and refrain from any exploitative, oppressive and violent behaviour towards them.” (Ibid., 259). Such pronouncements from the pulpit would firmly demand that Christian men recognize that their responsibility towards women is to shield them from activities that are harmful to their growth, development and well-being. One example of how the teachings of Jesus Christ can be used in sermons to transform masculinities is found in John 8:1–11, whereby Jesus refuses to condemn a woman to death by stoning for having committed adultery.

What Jesus’ act of graciousness and mercy should say to Christian men is, down with violence. It should reveal to Christian men that Jesus Christ certainly stood up for women’s rights. (Chitando and Togarasei, 2008). Additionally, his response in this situation should point to the moral force of the obligation of Christian men in relation to putting an end to gender-based violence. By using biblical texts in this manner, Christian religions will show that they are actively engaging in changing men, and their behaviour towards women. Furthermore, if passages such as John 8 are used to challenge gender-based violence, Jesus’ response can be creatively applied to how men can take responsibility in curbing the further spread of HIV infection. As Chitando asserts, “The pulpit should also be appropriated in the struggle to transform masculinities. Sermons that challenge men to embrace gender justice must be preached with clarity and compassion.” (Chitando, 2007b:47). Leaders of the various Christian denominations need to emphasize and encourage an ethic of responsibility by pointing to what Jesus Christ stood for.

Another equally important role of the Christianity is to remind men of the value of life, especially as it relates to the promotion of life. This is an indisputable responsibility of the Christian faith and other world religions, especially in the context of gender inequality, under which oppressive systems promote the spread of HIV. If the duty of religions is to be life-giving then the onus is on them to promote values that engender life-giving practices. Such values

include dignity, respect, reciprocity, mutuality and love. From an ethical perspective, these values, when exercised, inculcate an ethic of care in recognition of our interconnectedness as human beings. To this extent, one person's well-being and happiness is intimately related to another person's. Religions would do well to remind men that behaviour like beating or cheating on their spouses or partners can have a negative impact on their health and the health of their wives or partners.

Islam

Similarly, Islam can also be interpreted and understood as a religion that is oppressive towards women. A number of academic reflections exist on the particular Qur'anic texts used to justify gender-based violence and the oppression of Muslim women. For instance, one particular Qur'anic verse that Farid Esack identifies as liable to presenting difficulties to a Muslim in regard to gender-based violence, especially in the context of HIV and AIDS is Q. 4:34,

Men are *qawwamun* (the protectors and maintainers) of/over ('*ala*) women, Because God has *faddala* (preferred) some of them over others, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the *salihat* (righteous) women are *qanitat* (devoutly obedient), and they guard in their husbands' absence what God would have them guard.

As to those women on whose part of you fear *mushuz* (ill-conduct/disobedience) Admonish them, refuse to share their beds and beat them. But if they return again to obedience seek not means against them for God is the most high, Great above you. (Esack, 2000:187-210)

In reference to the above text, Esack points out, that the verse seems to sanction and legitimize discrimination, and according to most interpretations, violence against women and marital rape. (Ibid.: 202-203). However, there is a growing realization within the circle of progressive Muslim theologians that Islam can be a liberating religion

if people choose a particular hermeneutical approach to understanding the Qur'an. In other words, the Qur'an can be a potentially liberating text that urges men to take more responsibility over women. Esack provides an aspect of the nature of Allah, which as referred to in the Qur'an, ought to advance the need for men to put an end to gender-based violence, especially since it has contributed immensely to the spread of HIV in women. This, and other aspects of Islam mentioned below, can serve as ethical compasses for men of the Muslim faith, and men of any other faith for that matter, in relation to how they ought to treat women.

The aspect that Esack (and other scholars of Islam) refers to is *tawhid*, or divine unity. (Ibid.:204). In Islam, the traditional theological definition of *tawhid* is "unity of Godhood." (Engineer, 2006:399-406). However, in terms of a liberating theology, *tawhid* has striven to broaden the scope of its meaning to include "not only unity of God but also unity of mankind in all aspects." (Ibid., 403). Esack adds that in Islamic liberation theology, *tawhid* "has also come to mean a principle of holism that permeates all of creation and a struggle to repair the wholeness of creation destroyed by racism, environmental mismanagement, economic exploitation and sexism." Novel and creative interpretations of the Qur'anic concept *tawhid* recognize and acknowledge that sanctioning acts of gender-based violence, especially in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic "fly in the face of the holism of *tawhid*." (Esack, 2000:204).

If Muslim men abide by the messages contained in the Qur'an and truly believe that men and women exist in complementarity with each other, any religious and cultural practices sanctioning acts of patriarchy, sexism, discrimination and violence are clearly not acting out of a love for Allah and humankind. If humanity is to erase harmful practices by putting faith in action to ensure that women no longer suffer at the hands of their partners or bear the brunt of HIV infection, then Islamic liberation theology ought to declare that the moral and ethical responsibility of Muslim men and, to a lesser extent, women, is to ensure that practices reinforcing sexist divisions in society are done away with. If the ethical command of Islam is unity, then in the

words of Asghar Ali Engineer, “There cannot be true solidarity of the faithful unless all...divisions are done away with.” (Engineer, 2006:404). It is, therefore, necessary that the concept of *tawhid* is applied to women’s health issues in the context of HIV, in order that Islam cultivates an ethic of responsibility in men in relation to ending gender-based violence.

A concept that is intimately linked to *tawhid* or oneness with Allah and humankind is compassion. It is a valuable ethical concept that is inherent in the religion of Islam, which is referred to as *adab*. *Adab* is an interpersonal ethic that, according to Omid Safi, “is the compassionate, humane, selfless, generous and kind etiquette that has been a hallmark of refined manners in Muslim cultures.” (Safi, 2003:1-29). An example of *adab* is Sufism. Sufism is a mystical or spiritual approach to Islam. As a aspect of Islamic ethics, Sufism emphasizes the exercise of compassion. Sufism, in its advocacy for an ethically just society teaches that,

All human beings are created from a divine ray of God, are all God’s children and are completely equal in God’s sight. It is an Islam that overtly acknowledges the feminine qualities of God, those qualities of wisdom, compassion, nurturance, and sustenance. (Simmons, 2003:235-248)

It follows then, that if Sufism advocates gender equality in the eyes of Allah, it also advocates gender equality in the eyes of humanity. Men and women are conceptualized as “potential manifestations of God, made in the image of God, which in the physical state takes two forms, male and female. It is only this physical form that has differences and these are for reproductive purposes.” (Ibid.:328). Sufism attempts to do away with patriarchal practices that form the bedrock of discrimination, oppression and violence against women. The sentiment of *abad* in Islam is called into action to challenge men to take women’s issues, particularly their health concerns, seriously.

A liberating theology of compassion in Islam ought to morally motivate Muslim men to end any gender-based practice that

dishonours and dehumanizes women, especially if it results in women being infected with HIV. Sufism seems to have an answer to how this can be achieved. As a strand of Islamic thought and practice it exemplifies “a gender, racial, and religiously egalitarian Islam.” (Ibid). In the words of Safi, “*Al-tasawwuf kulluhu al-adab*: All of Sufism is *adab*.” (Safi, 2003:14). The appeal to the principle of *adab* here is simple: to cultivate an interpersonal and religious ethic of responsibility that is predicated on the spirit of gender equality and communalism.

African Traditional Religions—ATR

The spirit of communalism is the basis of Africa’s traditional religions. The principle of communalism is an important starting point for explaining how ATR can transform men and encourage them to put an end to the gender-based violence hurting black African women. The spirit of communalism in ATR is demonstrated “through relationships characterized by interdependence, justice, solidarity of humankind, respect, empathy and caring.” (Mkhize, 2008:36). Inherent in ATR is the emphasis on maintaining intimate and harmonious relationships with the physical and metaphysical worlds so that the fullness of life and well-being of humankind may experience the protection offered from the ancestors. The idea of harmony underpins the African concept of health. In another publication, this writer has reiterated that being healthy is a reflection of correct harmony and balance between persons, the natural environment and the spiritual world. (Manda, 2008:134). Nhlanhla Mkhize observes that,

Health does not simply mean the absence of disease; it incorporates balance and harmony between the individual and his or her social surroundings, including harmony with the self. Disease results from the breakdown in relatedness, including disharmony between the individual and the rest of the universe. (Mkhize, 2008:39)

The HIV and AIDS pandemic has, in so many ways, shattered harmony among people, especially men and women, and this has been particularly evident in Africa. Of course, we cannot ignore other factors such as poverty, capitalism and patriarchy. They have played a huge role in destroying harmony, but the challenge here for ATR is to vigorously promote traditional conceptions of morality and ethics, based on the communal, relational way of being. Such a way of life depends heavily on the promotion of core values such as dignity, equality and respect. It also demands that men transform how they interact, treat and perceive women, because if these values are to be upheld then men need to recognize the relational nature of being.

If we as Africans profess to be relational then this needs to be actively demonstrated otherwise, how can it be possible, as Chitando asks, “for many men to proclaim, “I am, because we are” and then proceed to engage in risky sexual behaviour in the context of HIV and AIDS?” (Chitando, 2008:57). In other words, if communitarianism and *ubuntu*, discussed in detail below, are the foundations of African ethics, then according to the communitarian way of life the basis of life ought to “reflect harmony or the state of balance between people and their milieu,” because as Mkhize argues, “harmony is the overarching principle that glues all other principles together.” (Mkhize, 2008:35-37). It is a requirement of ATR, therefore, that harmonious interaction between human beings is promoted, exercised and upheld.

The African ethic of *ubuntu* expresses the spirit of communalism and supports the values of dignity, equality and respect. It is an ethical concept that is human-centred, concerned with the interests and welfare of humankind. It is a significant concept, especially when it is expressed through the Zulu saying *umuntu ngamuntu ngabantu*—“a person is a person because of others,” or “I am, because we are.” These idioms remind us that “the well-being of a person is only possible through the community and the web or relationships that are formed from being part of a community.” (Manda, 2008:133). Furthermore, these phrases remind society that

each one of us is connected to the other in intimate ways, because *ubuntu* challenges individualism and indifference. (Chitando, 2007b:57).

If ATR is to play an influential role in challenging men to be responsible towards women, its emphasis should be on promoting the ethic of *ubuntu* or what Chitando terms an ethic of solidarity. Solidarity, as defined by Chitando implies “standing for, and standing with “the Other” (Chitando, 2008:60). This definition of solidarity is very similar to the ethic and the values espoused in *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is a “helpful resource for empowering men to adopt safer sexual practices, increase participation in care-giving and help to overcome stigma and discrimination.” (Ibid). The ethic of *ubuntu*/solidarity thus provides a framework for putting into action values such as compassion, kindness and care.

The practical application of these values challenges men to put an end to hegemonic, dominant conceptions of masculinity while simultaneously encouraging men to uphold and affirm the dignity, equality and respect for women. The values of dignity and respect are non-negotiable in any culture. However, in the African context, what makes a difference in the application of these values is that dignity, equality and respect give expression to the concept of being fully human. As Luke Pato writes, being fully human means, among other things, that “human beings belong to one another and that they need one another.” (Pato, 1997:55).

Needing one another to be fully human requires positive cooperation and interaction with one another. What this means in terms of the role of ATR in promoting responsible behaviour is that men are warned that if they mistreat women they not only dehumanize women, but also themselves. This warning ought to serve as a reminder to men that life, and indeed health and well-being, is something that cannot be attained in isolation. Therefore, the promotion of values such as dignity, equality and respect should remind African men to behave humanely towards women, because of the interconnectedness and interdependence of life.

In essence, the interconnectedness of humanity, which is emphasized in traditional African life and culture, is demonstrated through the emphasis placed on the value of life and health, the value of human beings and the value of communal social organization. (Sitoto, 2005:1-54). These three features of African ethics inform the faith of Africa's Traditional Religions and, it is these three features of ATR, and the features of Islam and Christianity that can be co-opted to, as Chitando aptly asserts, challenge men to adopt liberating masculinities. (Chitando, 2007b:50).

Concluding Remarks: A Plea for Men to Protect Women⁸

As we have discussed above, HIV infection has specific implications for the health of black African women. Firstly, they are affected in their traditional roles as wives, mothers and care-givers. Secondly, they are affected "in their reproductive roles and as disempowered members of a male-dominated society which denies women full control over their sexuality." (Walker et al., 2002:38). Thirdly, and most importantly, when poor black women are HIV positive, their lives are made even more difficult because of poverty. When women are infected with HIV, their roles as wives, mothers and care-givers are seriously compromised, because it is not only their health that suffers; it also becomes harder for them to look after themselves and their families. The effect of HIV and AIDS means that they will be unable to provide the necessary care demanded by their traditional roles. When they die, they leave children who become orphans, leaving the burden of caring for the children on other family members and/or the state.

⁸I use the word plea not to beg men or to deny the fact that women have agency. However, their agency in life is compromised, especially when men deny them the opportunity to fully exercise their agency through acts of violence. In these circumstances a plea seems urgent and necessary.

In light of this, it is clear that the effect HIV and AIDS have on women is not merely something that affects them as individuals, but it affects society, too. Their reduced contribution to society will severely impact on their families, communities and society as a whole. Abdool Karim and Frohlich state,

Women have multiple, largely unrecognized, roles in society: they are educators, care-givers in both formal and informal settings, custodians of societal values and norms, and they ensure the continuity of society. These contributions are difficult to measure, yet their importance will be known and felt only after their loss; many women will die of AIDS, and it will take generations to recover from the loss of these women's gifts to society. (Karim and Frohlich, 2000:78)

However, as this chapter has demonstrated, religions can contribute immensely to this project, because religions can provide men with sound ethical reasons on why they should do so. In this manner, religions can provide the necessary framework to empower men to take action and adopt practices that are liberating not only for themselves but for others.

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