



**A public pastoral assessment of Church response to
Gender Based Violence (GBV) within the United
Baptist Church of Zimbabwe**

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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that this is my own original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof and that I have not previously submitted it, in its entirety or in part, for obtaining any qualification.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Manzanga". The signature is written in a cursive style with some overlapping letters.

Peter Manzanga

Date: August 2020

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Abstract

In a country such as Zimbabwe where 84.5% of the population is Christian, it is expected that gender-based violence (GBV) should be minimal. However, it is not so as GBV remains very high. Sadly, churches and church members are complicit in GBV. The study investigated the role that churches could perform in their interface with communities to address GBV. The study hinged on the public pastoral role of the church in responding to GBV within its social and community ministerial spaces. The study argued for a constructive and meaningful church and community engagement as a responsive intervention to address GBV. To that end, a public pastoral care was proposed as a responsive integrated approach to church and society in addressing GBV. The study focused on the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe (UBCZ) as a case study whose interventions could mirror other ecclesio-community interactions.

To conceptualise the scope and prevalence of the GBV phenomenon, the study explored the global and national impact of GBV from the perspective of human rights infringement that disproportionately affects women in many countries. GBV is persistent despite global and national efforts. GBV actions are deeply entrenched in social structures that continue to sustain it and is prevalent in both times of peace and war. In the midst of the reality of GBV, the church has been blamed for its ambivalent response.

In light of the above, the research engaged in a quest for a public pastoral care responsive model that is rooted in possible church intervention to mitigate against GBV in the country. The model is aimed at emphasising the pertinent role of the church as a microcosm of society with a key role to play. Thus, the research achieved this by establishing some key drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe as the national context of the UBCZ and also religious drivers. An interplay between the national and religious drivers exist because the church acts as suitable environment for sustaining some of the national drivers of the country. Though negatively, this amplifies the fact that the church is a subsystem of society, which should publicly respond positively to GBV. Efforts by government to respond to this social ill are discernible as evidenced by legal and policy instruments to mitigate against GBV. NGOs and CSOs have rallied behind the government to implement the drafted GBV laws and policies but the scourge remains. This has indicated the church needs to practise what it means to be a church in the real spaces of GBV.

To understand how the church is responding to GBV, the research engaged in an empirical research in UBCZ. The research was aimed at determining how the church responds to GBV. Conceptual deficiencies of the phenomenon, culture of silence, invalid interpretation of scriptures and socio-cultural GBV issues that are sustained in the church emerged as some of the key deficiencies. This accounts for the ambivalent nature of its public pastoral response to GBV. From a biblical point of view, the research investigated God's ideal plan on gender relations for humanity by studying Genesis 1-2. The creation of Adam and Eve equally in the image of God and equally complementing each other, establishes God's ideal plan for gender relations.

To be created in His image means to perfectly relate to God and to be humane to one another in perfect love and union. The image of God was marred at creation such that gender relations became soured. In both the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT), women were subservient to men; sometimes in a manner that perpetrated GBV. The research underscored that GBV occurred in the Bible and God did not remain silent. He spoke through circumstances and socio-cultural mores of biblical times. The study established that God cared and spoke against the oppression and marginalisation of women. It follows that the church should engage in a public pastoral care role in upholding and honouring the dignity of women.

In paying attention to the need for the church to play its public pastoral care role, the research emphasised the need for the church to be the salt of the earth and light to the world (Matthew 5:13-14). As a subsystem of society, placed by God in the world to represent Him, the church should publicly fulfil its ambassadorial role by engaging with public issues that affect society. The church needs to move away from parochial ministries and institutionalised theology to interface with the current situations of humanity, as God would do. The study underscored that public theology should be utilised as a larger theoretical lens to assist the church in framing pastoral care ministries. It also emphasised the need for public pastoral care to be a congregational responsibility, which is characterised by holistic *koinonia* of congregants in the context of GBV. Such fellowship interrogates the gender imbalances that exist in the church, communities and state. In response to this, the research proposed a church-focused responsive model to GBV for the UBCZ and broader church in the country. The model underscores that the church should widen its human web of public pastoral care by systematically creating synergies with community structures in real contextual ministries. This amplifies the church's

ability to conceptualise the phenomenon leading to framing transformative public pastoral care ministries for GBV victims in churches and communities.

Opsomming

In 'n land soos Zimbabwe, waar 84.5% van die bevolking die Christelike geloof bely, sou daar verwag word dat geslagsgebaseerde geweld (GBV) minimaal behoort te wees. Tog is dit nie die geval nie en is statistieke vir hierdie tipe geweld baie hoog. Die hartseerste is dat kerke en lidmate soms ook aandadig hieraan is. Die doel van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel rakende die rol wat kerke kan uitoefen in gemeenskappe om geslagsgebaseerde geweld aan te spreek. Die paradigma van die studie is vanuit die publieke pastorale bediening van die kerk in die aanspreek van GBV in die sosiale en gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid bediening. Die studie pleit vir 'n konstruktiewe en betekenisvolle kerk en gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid as voorkomende intervensie vir GBV. Die gevalle studie het plaasgevind in die konteks van die United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe wat ook kan dien as 'n spieëlbeeld van ander ekklesia-gemeenskap interaksies.

In die kontekstualisering van die GBV fenomeen, is daar ondersoek ingestel na die nasionale en internasionale impak van GBV vanuit 'n menseregte perspektief. Baie vroue wêreldwyd is blootgestel aan GBV, ten spyte van enige maatreël om dit te voorkom. GBV aksies is diep gewortel in die sosiale strukture van die samelewing en kom voor in oorloggeteisterde en nie-oorloggeteisterde lande. Deur die eeue is die kerk telkens gekritiseer vir hul ambivalente houding teenoor GBV.

In lig van bogenoemde, is hierdie navorsingstudie gerig op die samestelling van 'n publieke pastorale model om die kerk te bemagtig om op te tree in die stryd teen GBV in Zimbabwe. Die model is daarop gerig om die belangrike rol van die kerk as mikrokosmos binne 'n gemeenskap, te beklemtoon. Die studie het hierdie doel bereik deur die daarstel van belangrike riglyne vir die hantering van GBV in Zimbabwe as nasionale konteks, en in die kerk as konteks van die studie. Daar is 'n interafhanklikheid tussen die nasionale en kerklike riglyne vir die hantering van GBV. Die kerk, as 'n subsisteem van die samelewing, se rol in die hantering van GBV is beklemtoon. Verskeie nie-regerings organisasies en kerke het hul ondersteuning aan die regering in Zimbabwe gebied in die formulering van wetgewing om GBV te beperk, maar ongelukkig blyk dit asof hierdie wetgewing nie die probleem kan stop nie. Hierdie is aanduidend tot die nodigheid van optrede vanaf die kerk se kant.

'n Empiriese studie is uitgevoer om die rol van die United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe in die hantering van GBV te verstaan. Van die kern kwessies wat aangespreek was, is konseptuele

verstaan van die fenomeen, die heersende kultuur om te swyg, foutiewelike Skrif interpretasie, asook sosio-kulturele GBV kwessies. Al hierdie faktore is bydraend tot die kerk se ambivalente houding teenoor GBV. Vanuit 'n normatiewe perspektief is ondersoek ingestel na Genesis 1 en 2 met die fokus op die verhouding tussen verskillende geslagte. God het Adam en Eva as gelykwaardig geskape in Sy beeld. Die verstaan van hierdie begrip sal bydrae dat die verskillende geslagte in 'n komplimenterende verhouding tot mekaar sal staan.

Om na die beeld van God geskape te wees, beteken om in 'n volmaakte verhouding tot God te staan en die ander menswaardig in liefde en eenheid te hanteer. Na die sondeval het hierdie beeld van God in die mens skade gely. Vroue word as minderwaardig tot mans uitgebeeld in die Ou en Nuwe Testament van die Bybel, somtyds selfs tot die punt wat GBV regverdig. Die navorsing beklemtoon dat alhoewel GBV wel in die Bybel voorkom, God nie daarvoor geswyg het nie. Die studie toon dat God vroue as gelykwaardig ag en dat Hy omgee vir vroue en wil die onderdrukking en marginalisering van vroue voorkom. Die studie hou ook voor dat die kerk in die publieke pastorale sorg van vroue betrokke moet raak om die waardigheid van vroue te beskerm.

Om die nodigheid van die kerk se publieke pastorale rol te beklemtoon, fokus die studie ook op die kerk as sout en lig vir die wêreld (Matteus 5:13-14). Die kerk moet ambassadeur van God toetree tot sosiale ewels wat die samelewing beïnvloed. Die kerk moet wegbeweeg van eng bedieninge en institusionele teologie en betrokke raak by die samelewing soos wat gesien kan word in die aardse bediening van Jesus Christus. Die studie beklemtoon ook dat publieke teologie as 'n lens moet dien vir die pastorale versorging van die samelewing. Die studie beklemtoon ook die nodigheid van pastorale versorging as 'n kerklike verantwoordelikheid teenoor die samelewing, wat karakter kan vind in 'n holistiese *konomia* van gelowiges in die konteks van GBV. Die gemeenskap van gelowiges kan geslagsongelykhede aanspreek en uitskakel. Die studie word afgesluit met die samestelling van 'n publieke pastorale model om die kerk te bemagtig om op te tree in die stryd teen GBV in Zimbabwe en hou voor dat die kerk sy bedieningsveld moet verbreed deur die sistematiese skepping van sinergie met gemeenskapstrukture vir kontekstuele bediening. Hierdie sinergie beklemtoon die kerk se vermoë om die fenomeen te konseptualiseer wat sal aanleiding gee tot transformerende publieke pastorale versorging van GBV slagoffers in die kerk en gemeenskappe.

Key words of the study

Gender-based violence, practical theology, public theology, pastoral care, assessment, response, United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe, church, community, gender relations

Acronyms

ACZ	Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe
ADVC	Anti-Domestic Violence Council
AEF	Africa Evangelical Fellowship
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AICs	African Initiated Churches
ANE	Ancient Near East
BC	Before Christ
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSoW	Commission on Status of Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSVr	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EHAIA	Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ESV	English Standard Version
FAMWZ	Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GAM	Gender Analysis Matrix
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCI	Gender Challenge Initiative
GCR	Global Christianity Report
GNU	Government of National Unity
HAF	Harvard Analytical Framework
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence

KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MWAGCD	Ministry of Women Affairs Gender and Community Development
NA	National Assembly
NASV	New American Standard Version
NC	National Committee
NGBVS	National Gender-Based Violence Strategy
NGP	National Gender Policy
NMMDP	National Migration Management and Diaspora Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NT	New Testament
NWU	North-West University
OT	Old Testament
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PI	Plan International
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PSI	Population Services International
ROOTS	Real Open Opportunities for Transformation Support
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SAGM	South African General Mission
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIM	Serving in Missions
SRA	Social Relations Approach
SWCHR	Second World Conference on Human Rights
TIZ	Transparency International Zimbabwe
UBCZ	United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNW	United Nations Women
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDEVAW	United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNVAW	United Nations Violence Against Women
VFI (U)	Victim Friendly Initiative (Unit)
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCoZ	Women Coalition of Zimbabwe
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZDHS	Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey
ZGC	Zimbabwe Gender Commission
ZNGBVS	Zimbabwe National Gender-Based Violence Strategy
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZWRCN	Zimbabwe Women’s Resources Centre and Network

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Orientation and background of the study

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a demanding challenge that defies nationality, social class, cultural background, geographical location, race, religion and henceforth affecting every corner of the globe (Ushe, 2015:99; Mashizha, 2013:9; Heise, Ellsberg & Gottmoeller, 2002:5; Chitando & Chirongoma 2013:9; Mashiri & Mawire 2013:94). According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) (2017),

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. Gender based violence undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence.

While noticeable efforts are increasing to curb GBV globally, the silence of the church has been striking (Oliver, 2011:1; Chitando & Chirongoma, 2013:9; Clark, 2016: iv).

1.1.1. Definition of gender-based violence

The United Nations General Assembly defines GBV as,

...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 deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN, 1993).

GBV acts are rooted in sex inequality (Ayodapo, 2013: 1; ELCA,¹ 2015). Bloom (2008:14) defines GBV as,

The general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society.

Emphasis is on the inequality between sexes and assumed role expectations within a given context. This entails that GBV is also a contextual issue and as such, context determines how the phenomenon plays out. According to global statistics, women are on the lower side of the spectrum as major victims of GBV (Hayes, Abbot & Cook, 2016:1541; Heise, *et al* 2002:6).

1.1.2. A global overview of gender-based violence

¹ ELCA stands for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

GBV is under-reported and the number of women suffering is higher than documented (Hayes, *et al*, 2016: 1541; Belknap, 2010:1337). Statistics about violence against women have increased and offer a global overview of the magnitude of this abuse. It is estimated that 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from intimate partners in their lifetime. In the 28 European Union member states, 43% of women have suffered psychological violence from intimate partners. It is also estimated that of most of the homicides committed in 2012, half were committed by intimate partners (UN Women, 2016). A study conducted in New Delhi in 2012 revealed that 92% of women reported some kind of abuse against them (UN Women, 2016). While the United Nations (UN) is very clear that, "...women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (UN DEVAW,² 1993), violence against women is acute.

Prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) is regarded as one of the leading forms of GBV. Most women suffer at the hands of men they know. GBV is prevalent in places where women should feel safe such as homes, churches and workplaces (Heise, *et al*, 2002:6-7; Jewkes, 2002:1423; Mutepfa, 2009:77; Shamu, Abrahams, Zarowsky, Shefer & Temmerman, 2013; Nhlapo, 2017). GBV manifests in different ways.

1.1.3. Classification of gender-based violence

GBV is classified into physical, emotional, psychological, economic, sexual and harmful traditional practices. However, the most prevalent broad classifications of GBV are psychological (emotional) and physical violence (UN VOW, 1993; ZNGBVS,³ 2012-2015:1; Ingwani, 2013:78).

- Psychological GBV – includes (but not exclusively): undermining the value of a person, bullying, controlling behaviour, denigrating a person, forced inheritance *et cetera*.
- Physical GBV – includes (but not exclusively): slapping, murder, rape and sexual assault, forced virginity testing, harmful practices such as girl pledging and female circumcision, widow cleansing *et cetera*.

The major drivers of GBV include unequal power relations between men and women, societal norms on manhood, economic factors, harmful traditional practices, infidelity, societal norms

² DEVAW means Declaration on the elimination of violence against women.

³ Zimbabwe National Gender Based Violence Strategy (ZNGBVS).

on sexual rights, less participation of women in decision-making (UN VAW, 1993; Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:94-95; ZNGBVS, 2012-2015:3-4). GBV stubbornly manifests in many forms and disproportionately affects women (Kambarami, 2006:2; Museka, Phiri & Madondo, 2013:8; Ayodapo, 2013:1; Ushe, 2015:99).

Men also suffer GBV but it is restricted to certain types of abuses unlike women whereby arrays of abuses are targeted at them. It is sometimes not easy to identify violence against men since it is in some cultures regarded as taboo to talk about it. Research is proving that GBV can be a serious threat and it is on the increase. It could range from husband battering, emotional abuse compounded with constant nagging, murder, scalding with hot water or cooking oil, denial of conjugal rights as punishment and estrangement from children by the wife. Nevertheless, GBV against women remains extremely high and ranks higher in Africa (Anonymous, 2017; Njoroge, 2013:22).

1.1.4. Gender-based violence in Africa

The highest global prevalence of GBV is in developing countries due to poverty and illiteracy. The most alarming percentages are found in Africa. It is estimated that 100 to 140 million girls and women have been subjected to female genital mutilation and more than 3 million girls are at risk in Africa alone (UN Women, 2013; Mashizha, 2013: 10). In sub-Saharan Africa, a survey carried out across nine countries (South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) in 2007 revealed that 18% of women aged 16-60 years had been subjected to IPV in the last 12 months of 2013 (UN Women, 2013). GBV is one of the hindrances for attaining gender equality and equity in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Interventions are being made to eradicate GBV. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2016), part six article 20, was an effort by participating states to curb GBV by 2015 (SADC, 2016:17-20). In spite of all the measures put in place, GBV continues to soar. For example, Head (2017) clearly states that, “South Africa has failed miserably to save women from gender based violence”. Surprisingly, about 80% of sub-Saharan Africa’s population is Christian. This reveals that Christians are participants in GBV (Togarasei, 2013:187).

1.1.5. Gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, as one of the SADC countries mentioned above and being a Christian country is not any better. In Zimbabwe GBV is escalating in spite of preventative and eradicated measures implemented by the government. In 2014, a husband murdered his wife in her sleep (Manyonganise, 2015: 2). Manyonganise reported in a headline of The Herald News of 11 September 2017, 'Hubby slits wife's throat'. GBV ranges from subtle anger to outright cold-blooded murder. According to Zimbabwe National Gender Based Violence Strategy (ZNGBVS; 2012-2015: v), 99% of women and girls are victims of GBV, although not all the cases are reported. The Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) documented that more than one in three women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 years. The percentage of women reported to have experienced violence in their lifetime increased from 29.9% in 2010 to 34.8% in 2015 (ZDHS, 2010-2011; ZDHS, 2015).

The following statistics unveil the magnitude of different forms of GBV that some Zimbabwean women are experiencing. From 2010-2015 rape cases reported ranged from 4500-8000 in five years. Reported domestic violence related cases between 2012-2014 ranged from 2000-14500 in three years. These figures reveal an increase in abuse. In addition, a survey was conducted with women aged 15-49 years and men aged 15-54 years on whether the husband has a right to beat his wife for various reasons. The responses given were in the affirmative as follows (ZIMSTAT, 2016: 59-62):

- The study revealed that 14.6% of men in the study would beat their women for going out without informing them compared to 7.1% of women who supported the action.
- For neglecting children, 21.9% of men would beat their wives compared to 12.3% of women who supported the action.
- For arguing with the husband, 23% of men affirmed the wife must be beaten and 13.9% of women supported the action.
- The study also revealed 13.7% of men would beat their wives for refusing to have sex with them and 4.8% of women supported the action.
- Also, 8.4% of men would beat their wives for burning food and 3.5% of women supported the action.
- Lastly, 43% of men would beat their wives for infidelity and 24.6% of women confirmed they should be beaten.

The Zimbabwean Government, "...is committed to the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment" (ZIMSTAT, 2016:5). In the 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSoW) at the UN headquarters in New York from 2 to 13 March 2009, Dr Olivia Muchena (former Zimbabwean Minister of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development) noted that Zimbabwe prioritised the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1, 3 and 6. The prioritised goals sought to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promotion of gender and empowerment of women. The UN's target for MDGs was 2015 and currently the UN has implemented the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 17 goals aimed at transforming the world by 2030. Gender equality and women's empowerment is goal number five among the SDGs and this indicates that gender-related issues are still a great concern (UN SDGs, 2016). Muchena (2009) further advised that, "...in Zimbabwe, women remain unequal to their male counterparts due to socio-cultural norms compounded with national and global economies that cause their inequality." Tucked under this, it is clear that Zimbabwe is not exempt from GBV and that an array of abuses is directed at women (ZIMSTAT, 2016:10; ZNGBVS, 2010-2015:6; Njovana & Watts, 1996:47; Chauke, 2006: 54; Chogugudza, 2004: 179). Thus, the government of Zimbabwe is making commendable strides to curb GBV, though the problem of GBV is far from being settled.

1.1.6. Responses to gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

In her public lecture, Muwaningwa (2015) alluded to the robust and preventative laws and policies that have been put in place to eradicate GBV in Zimbabwe. Among the laws and policies are: Domestic Violence Act 2006 (Chapter 5:16)7; Criminal Codification and Reform Act (Chapter 9:28)8; the National Gender Based Violence Strategy 2010-2015, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women and Girls and Gender Equity and HIV. Above all, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) further states that, "The Constitution of Zimbabwe protects the right to life, human dignity and personal security in Section 52, that right is protected against both private and public sources of violence..." (ZIMSTAT, 2016: 58). Government has implemented credible policies to deal with and eradicate GBV. Implementation partners of the policies are Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Ministry of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Education, National AIDS Council, Police, Traditional Leaders and civic society including religious organisations. However, the Gender Challenge Initiative (GCI) (2011:5) advises that, a lack of multi-sectorial interventions that work together create gaps in policy implementation.

The church as an institution has a strategic role to play to curb GBV. The government alone cannot completely root out GBV. It has been noted that most churches and theological institutions have not responded to GBV in a dynamic and liberating manner (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2013:9).

1.1.7. The role of the church in gender-based violence

The church has been blamed for its silence and ambivalence about violence and abuse of women. The deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, urged faith leaders to use their power for justice for the excluded and discriminated. In particular, she expressed that GBV is happening in our homes and churches (WCC, 2016). The WCC issued an online statement in which it recognised the need to address, “...sexual and GBV ranging from the domestic of armed conflict and challenge religious interpretations that encourage or tolerate sexual and GBV” (WCC, 2016). Christian leaders need to be sensitive to GBV and respond appropriately (Clark, 2016: 19; Chisale, 2020).

The church is known for discounting victims of GBV and giving them superficial love. If marriage ends in divorce, it is usually the woman that leaves the church and the perpetrator remains (Crippen & Wood, 2012:12). The WCC is not silent on GBV and it recognises that churches in their contexts are guilty of perpetuating GBV through traditions that need to be challenged. Therefore, the church is in a murky state and hampered by its own errors to transform communities on GBV in its ministerial contexts. According to Global Christianity Report (GCR), it is estimated that there are 2.18 billion Christians, representing close to one third of the world’s population and making Christianity the largest religion. It then logically follows that Christians are also perpetrators of GBV and Christian teaching could be used to mitigate it (GCR, 2011; Togarasei, 2013:187).

1.1.8. The role of the church in gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

As mentioned earlier 99% of women in Zimbabwe have experienced some form of violence. About 41% of men admitted to have committed IPV at least once in their lifetime (Gender Links, 2013). This means the Christian church in Zimbabwe is encompassed by GBV. It could be that Christians are not aware that they seem to be part of the problem and are fuelling GBV (Oliver, 2011: 2; Musodza, Mapuranga & Dumba, 2015:124; Clark, 2016:37). On the other

hand, if the church is aware of the phenomenon it is highly possible that its knowledge is only theoretical rather than practical (Chisale, 2020:1).

Zimbabwe is predominantly a Christian country. The ZIMSTAT advances that, “According to the 2010-2011 nationwide Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted by the Government Statistic Agency, 84.5 percent of the population is Christian” (ZIMSTAT, 2012:29). This raises concern about the behaviour of Christians.

The GBV situation within the church in Zimbabwe is appalling. Chipiro (2016:60) discourses about a pastor who raped four female congregants and she cites an interplay of traditional gender norms and religious beliefs as contributing to this behaviour. The scope of GBV in the church includes rape, child marriage, sexual assault, IPV *et cetera* (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015: 8). As mentioned earlier there are recent stories of Christian men who murdered their wives in Zimbabwe (Mushanaweni, 2017). The status of women in the church, better known as gender relations, is characterised by ambivalence. This is characterised by forms of marginalisation, domination and subordination by men. Because of their silence on the one hand, and their seeming participation on the other hand, the church seems to be a major stumbling block in Zimbabwe towards the emancipation of women (Sibanda & Maposa, 2013:97). Male voices, dreams and desires continue to be dominant in the church. Paradoxically, women seem to be insulated from danger within the church, but remain isolated and victimised within the church (Museka, Phiri & Madondo, 2013:111).

The church has to begin within its walls to tackle GBV (Sibanda & Maposa, 2013:133; Manyonganise, 2013:147). While religious organisations and communities have proven to be exceptional in addressing the HIV pandemic, few have addressed GBV (Owens, 2008: 15; Herstad, 2009:3; Brade, 2009:17). The Christian community is not only in the society where GBV is rampant, but is also a participant. There are atrocities of GBV within the church that have come to be expected or treated as normal (Oliver, 2011:12; Ushe, 2015:102; ELCA, 2015).

Among many GBV causes in the church the following stand out. First, religious practices emanating from wrong interpretation of certain biblical passages lead to oppression of women. Second, Zimbabwean men are brought up in a patriarchal society and patriarchal practices make inroads into the church. Third, cultural practices on the treatment of women as weak and unable to stand on their own fuel GBV in the church. Fourth, inability of clergy and laity to identify

and name GBV within the church walls perpetuates the phenomenon (Maposa & Sibanda, 2013:133; Brade, 2009:17; Maisiri, 2016:12; Clark, 2016:15-16). The ZNGBVS (2012-2015: 11) also advances the following causes: infidelity and polygamy, economic factors, limited participation of women in decision-making, commercialisation of bride price, *et cetera*.

What are the interventions taken by the church in Zimbabwe so far to address GBV? There are efforts by the church and society to enforce government prevention laws to eradicate GBV. Some churches are beginning to speak out against GBV. The Anglican Diocese of Manicaland launched a TAMAR Campaign as a way to address GBV. The TAMAR⁴ Campaign aims at re-interpreting some scripture texts that seem to promote GBV and opening dialogue between women and men on GBV issues. In addition, male headship is being redressed in some churches and appropriating passages like Ephesians 5:23 in marriages. Some pastors are giving pastoral counselling to sexual and GBV victims, though most are ill equipped to handle the phenomenon competently. The Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), a programme by WCC is involving men in response to sexual violence and GBV through contextual bible study (Chindomu & Matizamhuka, 2013:172; Togarasei, 2013:191; Hilukiluah, 2013:197; EHAIA, 2013).

In view of all these efforts, GBV is rife. It is abundantly clear that Christian men are still considered as perpetrators in GBV. Consequently, the church is still blamed for not being exemplary. Individual churches could be very instrumental in their contexts of ministry if they are first transformed, to then transform communities on GBV issues.

Therefore, this research is conducted with focus on a specific church in Zimbabwe as the title states: *A public pastoral assessment of Church response to Gender Based Violence (GBV) within United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe*. An examination on the constructive and deconstructive roles of UBCZ on GBV will be discussed in this research.

1.1.9. The role of UBCZ in gender-based violence

Based on the foregoing discussion on GBV, the researcher is convinced that UBCZ has a major role to play in dealing with the phenomenon under research by virtue of its role in society as

⁴ TAMAR is not an acronym but a campaign initiative based on the biblical story from 2 Samuel 13:1-22 about the raping of Tamar.

salt and light (Matthew 5:13-14). Generally, the church has been considered a safe haven for GBV victims, because of its role in society. Churches are institutions with the beliefs, literature, liturgy, social structure and authority necessary to rescue people from violence and other deforming features of modern life (Oliver, 2011:5; Monakali, 1997: 98). The church's role and position in dealing with GBV is critical and the church should wholly embrace its unique role.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher is going to focus on the UBCZ in conducting this public pastoral theological response of the church to GBV. UBCZ has been the researcher's denomination for over 30 years. It was founded in 1897 by the South Africa General Mission (SAGM). After sometime SAGM came to be known as Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) and now Serving in Missions (SIM) (Dhube, 1997:1). A name change came later after the missionaries handed over the church to the native leadership hence the name UBCZ. Its roots are in the eastern region of Zimbabwe called Chimanimani (in Rusitu), which is a predominantly Ndau dialect speaking region bordering Mozambique. Today UBCZ is found in nearly all communities and towns in Zimbabwe. What will be researched about UBCZ to a large extent serves as a reflection of what is happening in other denominations concerning GBV.

The belief that a man must beat his wife is an ongoing concern. Some tribes, like the *Ndau*, believe that upon marriage, a woman must be slapped by her husband for no reason other than to prove male dominance. This is called '*mbama yechindau*' literally 'a cultural slapping to assert male dominance'. It is surprising that some Christian men in UBCZ still believe this. Christian women that are brought up in a culture of male dominance believe that their husbands should sometimes beat them.

The UBCZ has played a constructive role in dealing with GBV in its ministerial spaces. As an evangelical protestant church that adheres to the five *Solas* of the Reformation, it is especially the *Sola Scriptura* that has transformed communities through its bible-based theological teachings. There has been faithful exposition of the Word of God to discourage gender disparities that exist between men and women in UBCZ. It has also acknowledged women in the church by having a national executive leadership of women to run and oversee the affairs of women in the denomination. This is commendable, because an abused woman may feel more at ease to open up to another woman than to a man. Women also contribute and participate in the highest national decision-making board, called the National Assembly (NA). UBCZ has

also acknowledged the plight and suffering of the widows and single parents by creating a platform where they share their concerns and struggles. Abuse of women by male church members is not tolerated in UBCZ and results in discipline or expulsion from the denomination. All the above efforts by the UBCZ are positive strides towards dealing with gender disparities and to a certain measure assert its public pastoral responsibility in Zimbabwe.

However, the researcher has also noted destructive roles about GBV practised and perpetuated in UBCZ.

History shows us that the faith community is also culpable in denying or supporting domestic abuse through traditional teachings that empower men and weaken women, and through an emphasis on upholding the doctrines of marriage and family while overlooking the behaviour that is actually demonstrated in the home (Brade, 2009:17).

The argument advanced by Brade (2009) unveils the reality of GBV found in UBCZ. Women suffer in silence in UBCZ, because they need to maintain their homes “stable” and they perceive male dominance as “God’s will”. Most women in UBCZ grew up in a culture that does not challenge men or even speak about the atrocities committed by men at home, at church or anywhere; except utilising culturally sanctioned channels, but usually as a last resort. A Christian man could beat his wife, engage in extramarital affairs, deprive the wife of her rights, decides when to impregnate her even if she not healthy physically, take her as part of his property, isolate her from her family members and treat her as a stranger in the family she is married into, *et cetera* (Kambarami, 2006:5; Mutepfa, 2009:78).

The older Christian generation of women in UBCZ constantly reprimand the younger women by saying, “*Ndozvinoita varume, mudzimai anofanirwa kunyararira nekuti Baba ndivo musoro wemba*”, which literally means, “That is what men do and your role as a woman is to keep quiet because the husband is the head of the home”. They would quote Genesis 3:16b, “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you”. There is a theological misunderstanding of God’s will, submission in marriage and headship that fans GBV. The Zimbabwean family set-up is predominantly patriarchal (Chogugudza, 2004:20-23; Kambarami, 2006:4; Maisiri, 2016:2). Culturally women should always take a submissive role or they will be considered arrogant both at church and in society.

In addition,⁵ there are women within UBCZ who are living in abusive marriage relationships who are not aware that they are experiencing GBV. Many women in UBCZ are ill-equipped to identify and deal with GBV practices, which they label as “normal”. Such practices include physical, psychological and emotional abuse. Those who are aware they are experiencing GBV have nowhere to turn to because they are bound by socio-cultural issues. Christian women suffer in silence as Christian men exploit them. They rarely disclose any form of violence because it is offensive to disclose family issues or ‘*kufukura hapwa*’ literally ‘exposing armpits equals exposing family secrets’. Congregants have misunderstood teachings on the silence of women in the church and submission to their husbands. Entrenched in UBCZ is a culture of silence and members sweep abuses under the carpet by labelling most of them as “domestic affairs”. GBV issues treated as “domestic affairs” might need no or minimal interference by the church. This means cultural understandings still bear a great influence on how the church decides on assisting women experiencing GBV. According to Clark (2016: 50), “The church is the first place to which many battered women turn for help, and the church is the last place where many battered women can obtain help.” The clergy and lay leaders are regrettably among those that silently support sexual violence and GBV.

In addition, the treatment of widows, unmarried women and single parents poses another destructive role that fans GBV within the UBCZ. Some married women within the UBCZ treat the above categories of women as potential husband snatchers. That has led to marginalisation and stigmatisation of such women in the church. The researcher has listened to the cries of some of these women as shall be revealed in the research. Lastly, pastors in the UBCZ and elders are ill-equipped to deal with GBV cases. A number of cases are inadequately dealt with or the victims may be told to “forgive and forget”, especially a woman for the sake of her children and saving the marriage. Some GBV cases are muffled because the perpetrator is a Christian man of some status. There is need to equip the pastor, laity and the church at large to honestly interrogate and engage in public pastoral theological responses to GBV imbalances within the church and communities.

In light of the above negative roles existing in the UBCZ (and other churches), the role of the church at large in dealing with GBV practices becomes urgent. There is a gap in UBCZ (other churches included) between theology and the practical reality of life as it relates to GBV.

⁵ These are the researchers observations

Erickson (2000:22) advances the following about theology, "...it will seek to understand God's creation, particularly human beings and their condition and God's redemptive working in relation to humankind". The question can be asked, if the UBCZ is caring for women as God's creation in matters related to GBV. The church under study needs to transform first to effectively practise its public pastoral theological care on women who experience GBV. The church has the advantage to transform communities. Oliver (2011:4) states,

Historically, certain things have been changed positively through the Church. The Church has a history of violence. It was able to transform the perspectives of the communities and society because of how it handled violent circumstances.

The following passages have been considered the source of gender imbalance in the church at large such that certain responses and attitudes were evoked. For instance, Genesis 2:21-22; Ephesians 5:21-23; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; 1 Peter 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:38; 1 Timothy 2:8-12 and Colossians 3:18-19 on the husband-wife relationship (Payne, 2009: 271; Clark, 2016:38). Passages like these have been misconstrued to suit certain denominational traditions at the expense of the marginalised and in the end promote GBV practices. Chisale (2020:2) rightly advises that the church nurtures an androcentric interpretation of biblical passages that are gender-biased. In addition, Hellenistic culture has a history of oppressing women and treated them as second-class citizens. Payne (2009: 32-33) states that, "Plato (437-347 B.C), Aristotle (384-322 B.C), Menander (ca 343-291 B.C) and many others occasionally affirmed the virtue of particular women and call men superior to women." Gender relations with characteristics of inequality have a long history.

In a patriarchal society, the role of women is mostly confined to their roles at home and in community structures (Njiru & Njeru, 2013: 23-38; Chitando & Zengele, 2013: 30-31; Bango, 2013:34-35; Chisale, 2020:3). Patriarchy plays a key role in keeping women subservient. The definition of patriarchy as a social system is not a description of every person, social relationship, Christian congregation, et cetera. It is, instead a description of a nexus of social relations, habits, laws, ideas and beliefs, often religious, in which everyone participates in varying measures (Njoroge, 2013: 20; Rajkumar, 2013:7-8; Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004:93). In the end, patriarchal practices have influence in the church (Chisale, 2020). Hence, the need to redress certain Church traditions and practices is paramount to solve GBV issues within the church for it to be effective in society.

In every church and culture, there are practices to keep, practices to change and practices to reconsider (Grand, 2013: vi). Women's roles vary from culture to culture, but there are certain cultural beliefs that need to change in the UBCZ in line with GBV. Christ liberates people through the gospel and the liberation is expected to transform cultures (Keener, 1992: 135). The interplay between culture and Christianity tends to endorse what happens in the church and community when the systems and structures remain unchanged. The role of the church should be to challenge culture where it departs from biblical values (Webb, 2001:21; Njovana & Watts, 1996: 48; Bate, 2001:68, Chisale, 2020: 3 citing Kanyoro, 2001: 45). The church should not be afraid to address GBV, as Rajkumar (2013:10-11) argues, "We may be afraid of confronting people, appearing to take sides in relationships, or triggering traumas for others by talking openly about gender-based violence."

The following reasons could be why the church is not actively engaged in GBV. First, the church might be ignorant on what to do and have invalid understanding and application of biblical principles to deal with GBV. Second, there is separation of the church from community life, as noted earlier. Third, there is lack of preparation and training of church leaders to identify and respond to GBV using church resources. Lastly, there is a lack of ability and skills to challenge the prevailing GBV tendencies. Townsend, Kroeger and Clark (2008: 36-37), also stated two reasons why church leaders fail to respond. First, cultural and religious teachings complicate matters on roles – precepts are not based on one's character, but on gender. Second, church leaders note that there are women being abused in church and in society, but they do not know that they are being abused (Townsend *et al.*, 2008: 36-37).

Within the context of the gender equality movement, women are increasingly asserting themselves and causing a backlash in Zimbabwean churches. Dawit and Busia (1995:7) assert that, "There are certainly many culturally legitimised practices, harmful to women, which some women have challenged, within their own communities, and will continue to fight." The church is blamed for perpetuating oppressive structures, which are contrary to biblically responsible teaching and the model of Jesus.

While the UBCZ has made some positive strides to curb GBV, there are still many gaps that need to be dealt with among clergy and laity and spaces where UBCZ ministries exist. Therefore, this study is a public pastoral assessment on the UBCZ's practices that contribute to GBV; as when correctly understood or interpreted, the church should be life giving if it follows

the example of Christ and understands the position of women as God intended as stated in the Bible.

1.2. Problem statement

Emerging from the above discussion, 84.5% of the Zimbabwean population is Christians and yet, GBV is still high. GBV among some Christian men ranges from subtle anger to slitting their wives' throats in cold-blooded murder. It logically follows that the church is a participant in GBV, due to their silence. This has led the church to be ambivalent in that it can transform or fan GBV practices through its positions and practices regarding women. The church must be transformed first on GBV to then transform communities in its ministerial contexts. The government of Zimbabwe has robust policies to eradicate sexual violence and GBV. However, there are still gaps in the implementation of such policies and the church is not fully engaged. The church is beginning to speak against GBV practices, but there are no ministry models that have been designed by a particular church to deal with GBV apart from sporadic voices speaking. A practical ministry model approach that is church-focused is needed more than speeches. Suggested ministry models must be public pastoral care in nature, eventually linking up with and implementing government policies on GBV. This gap remains and is real.

The ministry models designed should be able to challenge both, contemptible theological and socio-cultural GBV practices that exist in the church and communities. The theological approach must be exclusively biblical and must interact with the situations and communities of GBV victims. Sound biblical and theological views of women as God would view them must be brought to the fore. Restoration of sanity within the Church on gender imbalances leads the church to fully engage in its public pastoral role and bring change in the communities on this phenomenon. Unfortunately, the church is falling short of its light and saltiness, hence the need to research on the public pastoral care assessment on GBV within the UBCZ. The UBCZ has 120 local churches across the country with a national total of more than 18,000 congregants. It is therefore strategically placed to deal with GBV if it utilises its ministerial pockets across the nation. From a public pastoral care theological perspective, UBCZ could play a critical role that addresses GBV by establishing ministry models that could be used by the church and society. The public theology employed by the church, should complement the work of government to eradicate GBV.

1.3. Research question

In view of the problem statement presented above, the main question of this research is:

What is the public pastoral care role of the UBCZ in responding to GBV within its community ministerial spaces in Zimbabwe?

To clarify the main question, the following sub questions are posed:

- a. What is the prevailing situation, nature, extent and drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe?
- b. What is the current role of the church (i.e. implicit or explicit) in encouraging or discouraging GBV in Zimbabwean communities?
- c. Using the case of the UBCZ, how could the church constructively engage and intervene to address the challenge of GBV in Zimbabwe?
- d. How should the role of UBCZ in responding to GBV in the community be considered as public pastoral care to the communities where it is located?
- e. How can such care be understood as church pastoral care ministry and theological to encourage a meaningful church intervention, theologically grounded and balanced GBV ministry?

1.3.1. Aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to provide a public pastoral care church ministry model that is theologically sound and yet relevant to communities of GBV victims and perpetrators. To achieve the above aim, the following objectives were met:

- a. To investigate the nature, extent and drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe.
- b. To assess the role of the church in discouraging and encouraging GBV in Zimbabwean communities.
- c. To use the case of the UBCZ as a lens on how the church could constructively engage and intervene to address the challenge of GBV.
- d. To have the role of UBCZ in responding to GBV in the community considered as public pastoral care to the communities where it is located.
- e. To propose a public pastoral care model that is a meaningful church intervention ministry, theologically grounded and balanced GBV ministry.

1.3.2. Theoretical frameworks

A theoretical framework or a conceptual framework can be thought of as a map or travel plan and guides a study (Sinclair, 2007: 38; Borgatti, 1999; Simon & Goes, 2011:1-2).

The research utilised two interlocking frameworks specifically: a public practical theological framework with public pastoral care as a guiding theoretical lens. Since the research is about GBV, it is crucial to employ a gender theoretical framework. Hence, the application of the public practical theological framework using a public pastoral care nexus has been guided by Osmer's (2008:11) method where the descriptive, normative, interpretive and pragmatic questions utilise the Social Relations Approach (SRA) as a gender theoretical framework.

1.3.3. Public practical theological framework

A practical theological framework is best summarised by Hendriks as follows:

Doing theology and being church is a process, where the context influences all theological formulations and institutional designs...theology and ecclesiology will focus on a contextual praxis, that is, on a reflective engagement of faith communities in the world (Hendriks, 2007:1002).

The above description seeks to interact with the public spheres of faith communities to comprehend peoples' contexts for theology to be applicable and relevant. Hendriks (2007:1004) further advances a theological approach that captures the above methodology. He states that, "theology is correlational and hermeneutically active dialogue in which the following act as the parameters of the dialogue":

- It first of all asks about God: who is this relationally oriented triune God that reveals himself to the world in and through Scripture?
- The second question is about identity: this God who created humankind in his image and likeness, placed them as his stewards and custodians on earth. Since God is revealed as Creator, as a missional God, the church, Christians, all people, should be seen in that light. God's character and mission form the basis of ecclesiology and anthropology.
- God loved this world and gave his Son to save it (John 3:16). God is focused on this world and as such theology should teach students and church members to be actively engaged in understanding this world and serving it.
- To understand God truly, the faith community should know its own story in order

to understand its identity. The Reformers refer to *Sola Scriptura* implying that Scripture, the Word, should be normative over and against all ideologies.

- The church's mission is that of the Kingdom of God, which Scripture describes as a situation where peace and righteousness will reign supremely (Hendriks, 2007:1004).

The above-mentioned theological approach was dovetailed with public theology in this research. Van Aarde (2008:1213) says, "Public theology could facilitate a dialogue between the theological discourses. It overlaps with ecclesial and contextual theology". Koppel (2015:151) rightly advances what public theology needs to do and what should be done in public theology.

Practising public theology asks that pastoral care practitioners and theologians take seriously and engage mindfully with issues that concern groups of people and whole populations, rather than individual persons in isolation. Framing pastoral care ministries, education, and institutions through this larger social lens, helps theorists and practitioners to refine methods and purposes for our common work.

Public theology is not institutionalised theology, but it is theology that seeks discourse with social situations and human contexts (Juma, 2015:1; Dreyer & Pieterse, 2010:6; Koppel, 2016:151; Garner, 2015:23; Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015: 17). It is not a replacement or rebranding of practical theology, but rather practical theology that finds its expression in public theology (Juma, 2015:2). Jesus began his ministry by interacting with peoples' situations, stories and communities. He focused his public ministry on the poor and the oppressed (Luke 4:18) (Masango, 2010: 2).

Public theology acts as a larger social lens, that in the process should lead to framing pastoral care ministries (Koppel, 2015:151). In doing so, Juma (quoting Williams, 2014) posits the following key question in doing public pastoral care, "How is God interfacing with the human condition of the moment? A theology unable to meet this challenge maybe useless in the pursuit of affecting human transformation" (Juma, 2015:3). The following question could also be posed: What is God saying about the gender imbalances and disparities existing in the church and communities where the church exists? Theology should effectively interrogate social issues so that it helps in creating successful community affairs in addition to spiritual issues. Thus, public pastoral care focuses on both, individual persons and public issues, like GBV as well (Koppel, 2015). Regarding theology in public pastoral care, Vanhoozer and Strachan (2015:16) add, "Theology is about speaking and doing the truth divinely revealed in Jesus Christ". This

can only be achieved when public pastoral care is rightly engaged in communities that suffer GBV. This means in practising public pastoral care the pastor should be, "...involved with people in and for the community" (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 20015:17). Similarly, the designed pastoral model that the church can use to deal with GBV will eventually be utilised in the communities where the church exists.

The implications of this public practical theological framework using the pastoral care nexus can be guided by Osmer's methodology to practical theology of the four core tasks of practical theological approach: a descriptive-empirical task (What is going on?), an interpretive task (Why is it going on?), normative task (What ought to be going on?) and a pragmatic task (How might we respond?) (Osmer, 2008: 11). However, as mentioned earlier it is important to engage a gender methodological framework that links with the preceding framework on public practical theological pastoral care.

1.3.4. Gender theoretical framework for the research

A number of frameworks to study gender issues have been developed and used over the years. Some⁶ of them are as follows: the Moser Framework (also known as the triple roles framework), the SRA framework; the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM); the Women's Empowerment (Longwe) Framework; the Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis Framework; the Harvard Analytical Framework (HAF) (or gender roles framework) *et cetera* (Warren, 2007:190).

The SRA gender framework has been utilised to conduct this research in relation to GBV within the UBCZ. Overlaps of concepts are discernible in all the frameworks. The SRA framework is better on GBV within the church in this research for the following three reasons stated by March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999:102). First, it sets its goal on developmental aspects, such as human well-being and dignity. Development of humans means survival, security and

⁶ A brief description of some (among others) gender frameworks follows: the Gender Analysis Matrix (GAM) "uses a participatory methodology to facilitate the definition and analysis of gender issues by the communities that are affected by them" (Rani, n.d). The Harvard Analytical Framework also known as the Gender Roles Framework or the Gender Analysis Work focuses on gender roles. It aims at demonstrating, "...that there is an economic case for allocating resources to women as well as men". The Women's Empowerment (Longwe) Framework is "... intended to help planners question what women's empowerment and equality means in practice, and, from this point, to assess critically to what extent a development intervention is supporting this empowerment". The Social Relations Approach is "...a method of analysing existing gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, responsibilities, and power, and for designing policies and programmes which enable women to be agents of their own development" (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:33).

autonomy, which is lacking in the context of GBV in the church. Second, the SRA seeks to address social relations that systematically create differences in genders in society. As such, the church is one of the institutions of society with such differences. Third, the SRA focuses on institutional analysis and the church is an institution that needs to be analysed as well. Its approach challenges the assumptions of the church on gender relations and assists people to identify problems in their own communities; leading to transformation or solutions to those problems.

By using the SRA framework in analysing GBV within the church, the research has done the following: (a) answered the accessory and complicit nature of the church in GBV in the church, (b) outlined why the church is failing to curb GBV as a transformative agent within society, (c) explored the social and cultural practices within the church that continue to fan/promote GBV, (d) discussed “biblical” and theological errors nursed by the church that perpetuate GBV practices within the church and developed constructive, effective and applicable models that will curb GBV within the UBCZ, so that the church can fulfill its public pastoral care in society.

The SRA method acclimatises well with the practical theology approach. It allows the way of, “... doing theology that begins with the world of human action and has practical consequences for better practice...” (Darragh, 2007:1). The research shared this approach of doing theology.

The hermeneutical circle approach was also utilised in this study. It is sometimes called the hermeneutical spiral because of its nature of capturing the ongoing expansion of understanding. Research is viewed as a process that encourages interaction between the text and context. The text and context eventually result in context informing analysis and understanding. The hermeneutic circle can further be understood as a hermeneutic triad that involves understanding, interpretation and application. The three elements may appear distinct but they are closely interwoven (Australian Catholic University, n.d).

1.4. Methodology

The study employed a practical theological approach whereby the practical theological model of Osmer served as a guide (Osmer, 2008). Osmer (2008) proposes a practical theological approach that is not necessarily different from other practical theologians, such as Dingemans, (1996); Louw, (1998); Hendriks, (2004); Anderson, (2001). However, his practical theological

process is simplified and easy to apply. Osmer's process focuses on four core practical theology tasks, which are: a descriptive- empirical task (What is going on?), an interpretive task (Why is it going on?), normative task (What ought to be going on?) and a pragmatic task (How might we respond?) (Osmer, 2008: 11). Accordingly, these four core tasks have been utilised as the guiding processes of the study as described below.

1.4.1. The descriptive - empirical task

The descriptive task starts with episodes, situations or contexts that need to be interpreted. In doing public pastoral care, there is need to interpret the texts of current lives within the church. Such lives are also called the, "...living human documents". In the process, the descriptive task seeks to answer the question: What is going on? (Osmer, 2008:32). To answer the question, the study analysed cultural values and practices that have been allowed to make inroads into church systems, resulting in GBV. To achieve a plausible treatment of this question, the research conducted interviews (within UBCZ) to understand peoples' contexts and situations

1.4.2. Literature study

A contextualised study on emerging literature on the role of the church on GBV issues was analysed. The research interacted with literature on patriarchal and cultural practices that perpetuate GBV within the church (a descriptive analysis on GBV and the church). In addition, literature on biblical texts that seem to encourage GBV has also been analysed. Apart from books, more literature on GBV was accessed from sources, such as UN agencies, internet, government ministries and organisations working on GBV issues in Zimbabwe.

1.4.3. Fieldwork

Empirical data was collected through two methods, namely, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Fieldwork was conducted in a way that encouraged people to identify and be able to challenge assumptions about gender roles for themselves (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:68).

1.4.3.1. *Sampling and access to study sample*

The researcher conducted KIIs and FGDs at the UBCZ national women's church conference that is normally held annually for five days. Men, youths and pastors also attended the women's church conference though women spearheaded it. The conference provided a suitable opportunity to reach various people from across the country. An interview guide with discussion guiding questions was used to guide KIIs and FGDs. To select participants for the study, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique. Barbour (2001:1115) and Palinkas, Horwitz, Green and Hoagwood (2013:3) explained that in purposive sampling, individuals or groups knowledgeable or experienced about the phenomenon of interest, are selected as respondents. Benoot, Bilsen and Hannes (2016:2) added that,

Purposive sampling is used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon under study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry, thus the term purposive sampling (Benoot *et al.*, 2016:2).

Hence, based on the knowledge and experience of respondents in the UBCZ, the researcher purposively sampled participants who fit the description above. The description of the study participants is indicated below.

1.4.3.2. *Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*

KIIs were conducted with 10 key people with at least 20 years' experience on how gender, cultural and church tradition issues work in UBCZ. The 10 key informants were: the national church advisor and his wife (who were the first black leaders of the constituted UBCZ from the 1970s to the early 2000s), the former church chairman and his wife (the successor to the first church leader), three ladies from the former national executive of UBCZ's women's leadership (from the 1980s to the late 1990s) and three ladies in the current national executive of UBCZ women's leadership. These participants were key informants for this research, because of their experience and knowledge regarding gender issues in the church. Second, they have been at the forefront of preserving (during their leadership) certain church traditions on gender issues that are crucial for this research. Third, they have a vast experience on cultural treatment and experiences of women both, in the community and in the denomination.

1.4.3.3. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Nine FGDs of 12 participants each (total 108 members) were accessed during April 2018 at the UBCZ women's annual conference. FGD participants were drawn from members across the country. The researcher ensured that no more than two members came from the same district. Participants in FGD 1, FGD 2 and FGD 3 were of the same age group, because their long experience in the church, culture and church traditions shed more insight and understanding on the research topic.

1.4.4. Triangulation of data

This is, “a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several view points and methods to achieve credible results in research” (Yeasin & Rahman, 2012:156). Triangulation uses more than one method to collect data for a phenomenon to answer a research question. Barbour (2001:1117) adds, “In principle, it sounds eminently feasible to combine, say, observational fieldwork and interviews or focus groups in order to get a broader view”. The data gathered during KIIs and FGDs was cross-examined to ensure its validity, accuracy, confirmation and completeness.

Therefore, the research compared each response from KIIs and FGDs to extract all the similarities in response to the questions. Second, the research also probed all the differences emanating from KIIs and FGDs. Reasons for such differences were established in order to gain more insight and understanding of the phenomenon. This method of analysing data allows the research better verification and ascertains legitimacy of data without predisposition.

1.4.5. The interpretive task

Reasons for the phenomena that were discovered are provided in the interpretive task which seeks to answer the question: Why is it going on? Here the study seeks to examine issues that are entrenched in peoples' situations, lives and contexts in relation to GBV fanning within the UBCZ. Why does GBV exist and continue within UBCZ? Why does the UBCZ seem to be failing to identify and appropriately deal with GBV issues? The data collected under the descriptive and interpretive tasks was analysed using the SRA framework.

The responses provided by people who are observing and experiencing GBV in the communities and the denomination ensured that GBV issues were not theorised by technical experts, but were based on real life experiences of people being affected directly.

A qualitative approach was used to collect data from fieldwork. A qualitative approach was preferred over the quantitative approach for three reasons. First, it is more compatible with the manner of doing practical theology which deals with peoples' situations, lives and contexts (natural conditions of people). Second, "qualitative information is searched in order to find out about the nature of a phenomenon" (Allwood, 2011:1425). Third, the data collected under the qualitative approach represents a better picture of the phenomenon under study whereas a quantitative approach is more theoretical, basic and hypothetical. Once this was established, the church's public pastoral response to GBV was possible.

1.4.6. The normative task

This task seeks to interpret the Bible and church tradition. The goal of feminist biblical interpretation strives for the liberation of women from oppression by men. According to feminists, the Bible is used as a tool to oppress women and states that the Bible upholds the views and desires of men, while neglecting those of women (Gerstein, 2012:6-7). The research was undertaken within the reformed evangelical tradition and does not view the Bible as an oppressive tool for women. The reformed evangelical tradition, "...regard scripture as divinely inspired of God's revelation, the infallible guide for faith and practice" (Pierand, 1996:379). The biblical text was approached from a grammatical-historical framework and largely depends on a study of commentaries and other relevant literature. Precisely, the grammatical-historical exegesis is "a detailed analysis of the text in conforming to the original language and historical situation" (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:234; Poythress, 2007:87; Silva 2007; Goede & Van Rensburg, 2009:601). A grammatical and historical exegetical analysis of the texts, assisted the researcher to understand how such texts could be understood and applied on GBV within the UBCZ.

Osmer (2008:139) notes that theological interpretation "...focuses on the interpretation of *present* episodes, situations, and contexts with theological concepts". At this stage of the research, the author seeks to answer the question: What ought to be going on? Osmer also calls this stage prophetic discernment. He elaborates it as,

...the interplay of divine disclosure and human shaping as prophetic discernment. The prophetic office is the discernment of God's Word to the covenant people in a particular time

and place. Prophetic discernment involves both divine disclosure and the human shaping of God's word (Osmer, 2008:133-135).

The existence of GBV within the church by Christians seems to be the result of patriarchy, cultural traditions, social constructs about gender, gender inequalities and other factors. The normative stage of this research served to provide guidance on how GBV could be curbed within the church. This is possible after an analysis of the biblical text which is the normative source.

1.4.7. The pragmatic task

The pragmatic task answered the question: How might we respond? It provided guidance and transforming assistance for church leadership and congregants to respond to the phenomenon. The biblical text shared some similarities in the way women are treated in the UBCZ, but there were certain issues that need to be challenged and redressed biblically to curb GBV. In constructing a response to this phenomenon, the research was sensitive to the culture and relevant but biblically informed as well.

Thus, the church should have ministry models that challenge the accessory and complicit nature of the church on GBV. The models should be normative and biblically informed so that the church would make an informed public pastoral care response on issues that promote GBV practices.

1.5. Delimitation

GBV is a broad subject with many aspects that could be covered. As highlighted earlier, men can also suffer abuse although the percentage is very low. In this study, the research is focused on GBV in relation to women. Attention was given to biblical, social and cultural practices within the church that continue to act as seedbed in infringing the rights of women. As noted already, cultural practices differ from one country to another on the treatment of women. The result of this study was to challenge UBCZ to develop public pastoral care ministries for GBV victims and assist church membership to begin to evaluate certain theological, social and cultural practices that infringe on women's rights within the church.

1.6. Meaning of key terms

- Culture in this study means the way of life, which includes the systems of beliefs, values and assumptions of a particular group of people (Chisale, 2020:3; Reeves & Baden, 2000:2).
- Church in this study refers to a group or assembly of people that by grace through faith confess Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Lord of their lives.
- GBV means, "...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 deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (UN, 1993; Bloom, 2008:4).
- Public theology is the quest for churches and theologians to redefine and contextualise the calling and role of Christian faith and churches in public life (Koopman, 2012:1; Juma, 2015:2; Koppel, 2015:151).
- Public pastoral care is defined as, "...as a form of practical theology specified as an intentional enacting and embodying of a theology of presence, particularly in response to suffering or need, as a way to increase among the people the love of God and neighbour" (McClure, 2012:270; Hurding, 1995:78)

1.7. Ethical considerations

The study's ethical risk is minimal. Although the empirical research was through interviews, there was respect of a person's worth, justice and privacy whenever it is required, and as is stated in the North West University (NWU) code of conduct (NWU, 2005:46). All the interview questions were carefully designed not to cause harm or discomfort to the participants but to promote dialogue between participants and the researcher. Research participants reserved the right to keep their information confidential and were not coerced to divulge it without their consent. Information obtained from the participants was used after sorting with their permission and their anonymity was protected. All this was respected throughout the research.

The research identified the following possible risks as result of the discussions with participants and how to mitigate such risks:

- a. It was possible that during the interviews some women may recall and revive their GBV experiences leading to noticeable emotional instability.
- b. Someone might realise that she was experiencing GBV in her marriage and needed to confront the spouse or get assistance.

- c. Emanating from interview questions, some participants could consider approaching UBCZ church leadership to discuss church traditions that perpetuate GBV.

To mitigate for a and b, the researcher identified a renowned non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the country, called Msasa Project. Msasa Project has branches and trained social workers across the country and referred women could easily get help without travelling long distances. Msasa Project provides counselling, relief, shelter and legal services to victims of GBV. The researcher alerted the organisation in advance so that aid could be given to participants when needed. In mitigation for c, the researcher informed the UBCZ executive leadership of the interviews to be conducted and the possible risk(s) so that they were prepared to handle them.

1.8. Consent of participants for KIIs and FGDs

Participants voluntarily decided to participate in this research without coercion. The researcher pointed out possible risks and outcomes of the research to participants. Apart from possible risks, the benefits of the research and discussions were also brought to the fore. It was clarified from the onset that if a participant wished to withdraw from the research at any stage, they could do so. Pseudonyms were used to conceal the identity of KIIs and for FGDs group numbers were used. Throughout the research, it was the responsibility of the researcher to constantly check if the participants were still committed to continue with the discussions or not. Both the participants and the researcher honoured confidentiality of the information discussed as proven by signing an undertaking of confidentiality prior to discussions.

1.9. Undertaking of confidentiality: Gatekeeper

All the participants in the research belonged to the United Baptist Church and were under the jurisdiction of the head of denomination. Possible risks of the research and mitigation measures were discussed with the head of denomination. The researcher requested permission from him to conduct the research with church members. A letter from the head of denomination was given and served as proof of his granting permission for the research to be carried out with church members. The researcher also signed an undertaking of confidentiality with the head of denomination.

1.10. Outline of the chapters of the study

Chapter 1: Introduction

An introduction to the study and it mainly aligned with the structure of the research proposal.

Chapter 2: Current trends on gender-based violence

The focus of the chapter was to explore the current trends on GBV to establish its reality and dimensions as a global phenomenon. The chapter also conceptualised the notion of GBV and discussed several dimensions of GBV.

Chapter 3: An analysis of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

The chapter discussed the GBV situation in Zimbabwe in the context of the UBCZ. It achieved this by first analysing GBV factors and their interplay with each other. Second, the chapter discussed selected contextual GBV drivers in the country and their underlying causes. Finally, the chapter utilised the SRA as a selected gender theoretical framework to understand how GBV plays out in the country.

Chapter 4: Responses and efforts to address gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

This chapter discussed responses and determinations by different sectors in Zimbabwe towards addressing GBV. In doing so, the chapter discoursed on the efforts through government programmes, civil society organisations (CSOs), NGOs, media and the church. The SRA framework was used as a lens to better comprehend the interventions made by the above partners and their success.

Chapter 5: Understanding and responses to gender-based violence with the UBCZ: empirical responses

This chapter was an empirical research; it utilized interviews with KIIs and FGDs in UBCZ. Church traditions and cultural practices on GBV that are embedded within the church were identified during interviews. Ultimately, the level of analysis at this stage was to respond to the question: What is going on? (Osmer, 2008:32) in real church situations regarding GBV. This was crucial because, the church can only appropriately engage in public pastoral care against GBV once it knows and identifies its own practices and be able to respond from a biblically informed perspective. The data gathered during the interviews was analysed using qualitative thematic analysis coding which entailed identification of major themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes. A qualitative approach was preferred over the quantitative approach for three

reasons stated in this proposal above. A qualitative approach together with the SRA proved to be more compatible with a public practical theological framework using public pastoral care as the guiding lens. It was assumed in the chapter that situations, lives and context point to reasons for the phenomenon in the church.

Chapter 6: A biblical analysis of gender-based violence

Invalid interpretation and application of certain scriptures fan GBV in the church. Therefore, a biblical analysis of specifically selected scriptures from both the OT and NT was done with a goal to establish a normative understanding: What ought to be happening? A grammatical and historical method of reading and analysing biblical passages was used to arrive at a normative understanding of the texts and curb GBV in UBCZ. The chapter assumed that God wants women to be treated the way He treats them as human beings created in His image. Therefore, biblical analysis and application of His Word give a normative perspective and treatment of women. Oppressive cultural and religious traditions should be redirected through the normative role of scripture.

Chapter 7: Understanding public pastoral care concept within spaces of real-life challenges of gender-based violence from the intersection of biblical understanding, public theology, practical theology and pastoral care

This chapter amplified the notion of public pastoral care with a view to utilising the concept in the context of GBV. It strongly argued the public role of the church in engaging with human situations in society. To be the church in society means to care for one another in *koinonia* holistically and being able to extend such care to the communities in ministerial contexts. One of Osmer's (2008: 133-135) questions in doing practical theology: "What ought to be going on?" influenced the discussion of this chapter. First, the chapter discussed understanding of the church within practical ministry as a subsystem of society. Second, it discussed the operational understanding of public theology. Third, it established an understanding between public theology and public pastoral care and expected to use the public pastoral care concept in the context of GBV.

Chapter 8: Towards a public pastoral care responsive model to gender-based violence: A UBCZ and broader church proposition

The major goal of this chapter was to propose a pastoral care model that is biblically sound and culturally relevant to empower the UBCZ and broader church to mitigate GBV in ministerial spaces. The proposed model should also link and integrate with Zimbabwean government laws and policies on GBV. The proposed model should be adaptable to other denominations and organisations to alleviate GBV. This chapter determined how UBCZ and the broader church could play a public pastoral role on GBV within its communities. This is the pragmatic task. How should the church respond? This is where the theology of the church needs to integrate with the contexts, situations and lives of the communities affected by GBV. The theology of the church in this chapter strived at dispensing a consistent doctrine of the Christian faith on God's view of women, which is based on the scriptures, positioned in the locale of culture and phrased in a language that is related to their contexts (Juma, 2015: 1). With God as the point of departure in practising public theology, the church should be able to engage in pastoral care of GBV victims because God is concerned about people's situations (Hendriks, 2007:1004). The church would seek to establish an ongoing dialogue with individuals and communities to offer pastoral care on GBV issues. Through discourse with communities, victims will be encouraged to make sense of their situations and identify divine interventions (Juma, 2015:3).

Chapter 9: Findings, conclusion and recommendations of the research

This chapter brought the central arguments together, made some recommendations on how churches could respond to GBV as a major microcosm of society and made preliminary suggestions for further study on GBV.

This chapter has introduced and outlined how the research is going to unfold. In view of this, it is important to establish an understanding on the global trends on GBV as a global phenomenon.

Chapter 2: Current trends on gender-based violence

2.1. Introduction

GBV permeates many nations, social classes, cultures and religions (Gerhardt, 2014:14). Though there are men experiencing GBV, research extensively prove that it is a multifaceted phenomenon that predominantly affects women (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2013:9; Kahlor & Morrison, 2007:3). The aim of this chapter is to explore the current trends on GBV to establish its reality and dimensions. Specifically the chapter achieves this by first, conceptualising the notion of GBV. Second, it discusses the prevalence and the various dimensions of GBV and documents such dimensions as a violation of human rights. Third, the chapter engages in an exploration on the currents trends on GBV. Fourth, the chapter also seeks to conceptualize gender and sex as the basis of differences that exist between male and female in every culture. Finally, the chapter discusses the causes of GBV and provides a summary and conclusion.

2.2. Conceptualisation of gender-based violence

GBV is a reality and its conceptualisation will assist in discerning solutions in communities. Moreno, *et al.* (2015:1685) stated that:

Turning of the head and closing of the eyes have occurred despite global estimates that one in every three women will experience physical violence, sexual violence, or both, from an intimate partner, or sexual violence from someone other than a partner in her lifetime.

The international community acknowledges GBV as an infringement of the freedom and participation of women in society. There was a time in the early 1970s when the international community regarded GBV as a private matter that could be solved among individuals without the involvement of the national and international community (Blanchfield, Margesson & Seelke, 2008:1). In the late 1970s and 1980s, the international community started paying attention to violence against women as a global problem and a violation of human rights. This gave birth to public forums in which people began to deliberate on the issue (Blanchfield *et al.*, 2008: 1). Consequently, efforts to deal with violence against women focused on (among others) human trafficking and female genital mutilation. While these initial efforts were crucial in attempting to curb violence against women, they were scratching the surface. The root causes were not dealt with and they remain evasive and confusing as mentioned above (Chitando &

Chirongoma, 2013:9; Kahlor & Morrison, 2007:3). Gerhardt (2014:15, c.f. Ozaki & Otis, 2017:1076-1099) advises that,

...the underlying causes of global violence against women and girls are rooted deep in our cultures, and the scandal of this violence is symptomatic of a pervasive and deep misogyny.

GBV against women is the scope of this research. The research does not dismiss that men suffer GBV too as earlier acknowledged. Examples on how men suffer GBV have been provided in chapter 1. The term 'gender-based' used for such violence is shaped by gender role and status in society (Russo & Pirlott, 2006:179-180). Russo and Pirlott (2006:180) further maintain that,

In particular, gender roles and expectations, male entitlement, sexual objectification and discrepancies in power and status have legitimized, rendered invisible, sexualized and helped to perpetuate violence against women.

Underpinned in the preceding quote is that violence against women goes beyond differences in sex. Many issues are involved that continue to infringe and exert discomfort and marginalisation on women in society.

Many scholars allude to the rampant nature of GBV irrespective of geographical location (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2013: 9; Russo & Pirlott, 2006:178). Further, the following statements by Amnesty International (2004: iii-iv) help to reinforce the widespread nature of GBV in various countries.

- In the United Kingdom, a married woman is locked in the house and barred from communicating and interacting with people.
- Women in Asia and the Middle East are killed in the name of honour.
- Migrant and refugee women in Western Europe are attacked for not accepting the social mores of their host community.
- Girls in West Africa undergo genital mutilation in the name of custom.
- Young girls in Southern Africa are raped and infected with HIV and AIDS because the perpetrators believe that sex with virgins will cure them of their disease.
- In Ethiopia, a young girl is ambushed and sexually assaulted from school.
- In Kenya, a school teacher forces himself on a school girl.
- In South Africa, a young man kicks his girlfriend for receiving 'a suspicious' phone call and eventually murders her.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a woman has a knife pushed through her vagina.
- In Zimbabwe, a man rapes a woman for supporting the opposition political party as a way of punishment, instilling fear and humiliating her.
- In Malawi, the husband beats a woman for bad cooking.

Whether in times of peace or violence, women relentlessly face discrimination and violence inflicted by the state, the community, family and intimate partners. In the end, women feel inhibited, oppressed and marginalised in every way. They cannot freely exercise and enjoy their human rights (Amnesty International, 2004:1-2; Russo & Pirlott, 2006:183).

Research is charting new ways to conceptualise study, intervene and prevent GBV against women. Different methodological issues have opened new challenges for researchers that seek to comprehend this multifaceted phenomenon. In particular, the feminist perspective of gender issues has qualitatively transformed the way researchers conceptualise, define and study many issues on forms of GBV. Feminist perspective has even escalated the focus for research beyond psychological characteristics of the individual perpetrator and started to reconceptualise rape and other forms of violence as forms of power and control (Russo & Pirlott, 2006:182-183).

Feminists have also employed a number of terms to articulate (conceptualise) gendered violence, which include,

...battered women, violence against women, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, family violence and gender based violence. In some cases, these are overlapping or complementary terminologies... (Hall, 2015:3).

In other words, how one conceptualises violence against women leads to the terminology given to the violence (Chisale, 2020:2). In feminist studies on GBV, patriarchy has been and continues to be the main reason for physical and sexual violence against women (Walker, 2003: 262). More so, for the feminist movement, violence against women has been seen in the "...public sphere (which encompasses political and economic activities) and the private (which encompasses the family and relationships, beliefs, activities in which a person engages in her private capacity)" (Hall, 2015:3). In response to the public and private concepts, MacKinnon (1989:190) argues that,

...the public and private paradigm offers no recourse to women for whom the private sphere is not a haven of freedom, but instead a space wherein they are raped, beaten, and oppressed. Thus, the feminist response must be to explore this erroneous binary and demand public (state) responses to what was previously deemed private (and therefore unpunishable) violence.

The idea of exploring the binary is appealing towards addressing issues of GBV. However, there is also a need to delve deeper to understand the underlying causes in both the private and public domains. This is important to avoid a situation whereby solutions to the problem are

divorced from reality. Though arguing from a subjective dimension on the experiences of women (Chisale, 2020:2), the feminists' maverick role awakens both the secular and religious worlds to a real situation regarding the experiences of women. An understanding of the underlying causes that ignite GBV in a given context is key to conceptualise what is played out in both private and public domains. The point of departure and motive of the church in understanding this phenomenon may differ from the feministic approach. The premise of the church in seeking to understand GBV derives from God who loves humanity and cares for the marginalised in society (Hendriks, 2007:1004).

GBV has indeed been treated and mostly, continues to be treated as a private/domestic affair. The privatised approach simply perpetuates violence against women. "A feminist perspective however provides a deeper understanding of violence by analysing how it is connected to, embedded in, patriarchal structures of power" (Shaw, 2017:1). In this case, feminists who pursued the legal procedure had the assumption that there would be justice for women and awareness on violence against women would be made public (Hall, 2015:7). The feminist movement is public about GBV. Consequently, the state has been able to provide support services like shelter and better legislation for victims of violence. Nevertheless, this has not helped in reducing violence against women significantly. Hall (2015:8) further advances that, "...where state services do not address the structures of violence that support individual expressions of violence, they become complicit in these structures through that omission." This means GBV remains elusive, because it is practised differently in structures of society. The need to study and discern how social structures operate becomes pertinent.

The feminist movement has put in place seven short-and long-term approaches to fight GBV.

- Short term – the important role of safe homes, seeking medical help, legal referrals
- Long term – capacity building, working with men, human rights training, acting as advocates for survivors (International Women's Development Agency, 2016).

The above efforts to fight GBV are good and commendable. However, one is left wondering if the provision of the above services will ultimately eradicate the phenomenon. Understandably, improvement of women's livelihood through such services is important, but the underlying perception of women in any given community needs to be deeply examined. This will pave the way for transformed thinking and eventually transformed communities.

2.3. Prevalence and forms of gender-based violence

The prevalence⁷ and forms of GBV are widespread across societies. Among the forms of GBV against women, the most prevalent is IPV (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002:1233; Russo & Pirlott, 2006:194; Goldfarb, 2011:55; Mutepfa, 2009). IPV will be discussed separately as a major dominant form of GBV across the globe. Other forms of GBV include (not limited to) child sexual abuse (experienced by 20% of girls worldwide), women and girls trafficking, female genital mutilation (common in African countries and Middle East), honour killings, forced early marriages affecting 60 million girls worldwide and half of whom live in South Asia (Population Services International (PSI), 2015: 2). The broad forms of GBV have been classified into two major groups as direct and indirect GBV.

2.3.1. *Direct gender-based violence (sometimes classified as physical)*

Direct or physical violence or abuse covers an array of acts directed at the woman's body. Specifically,

...physical violence is the intentional use of physical force that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. The severity of injuries ranges from minimal tissue damage, broken bones to permanent injury and death. Acts of physical violence include: slapping (with open or closed hand), shoving, pushing, punching, hitting, beating, scratching, hair pulling, strangling, biting, spitting, grabbing, shaking, kicking, burning, throwing, twisting of a body part, forcing the ingestion of an unwanted substance; restraining a woman to prevent her from seeking medical treatment or other help; and using household objects to hit or stab a woman, using weapons like knives or guns (Population Services International, 2015:10).

Other forms of GBV under this category include: sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment in all private and public spheres), slavery, human trafficking, genital mutilation, murder of women, forced marriages (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2013).

Direct GBV is readily noticeable, recognised and easy to name, because of its nature opposed to indirect GBV. In some instances, women have concealed the causes of wounds, bruises and swelling from neighbours, nurses, pastors and police. Some women in abusive relationships would rather say, "I fell" or "I bumped against a wall". The reason(s) being that they fear further

⁷ A detailed analysis on the prevalence of the phenomenon has been covered in chapter one of this this research.

abuse if they speak the truth or lose financial support from the husband if he is arrested. Concealment is largely blamed on the unequal power relations between men and women. Socio-cultural factors continue to act as accessories that infringe women's freedom to openly share their GBV experiences (Ayodapo, 2013 EIGE, 2015; Manyonganise, 2015; Ellsberg *et al.*, 2015; Pillay, 2010).

2.3.2. *Indirect gender-based violence (sometimes classified as psychological)*

The UN Special Rapporteur (2011) on violence against women states that "...institutional or structural violence is any form of structural inequality or institutional discrimination that maintains a woman in a subordinate position, whether physical or ideological, to other people within her family, household or community". This means norms, attitudes, stereotypes that people hold in relation to gender in their communities and societies around the world inflict GBV against women. Such attitudes, norms and stereotypes are tantamount to normalising violence against women in a psychological manner.

In many societies, there are,

...multiple power structures that produce and reproduce hierarchical distinctions, for example regarding race, (dis)ability, age, social class and gender. This means that while all women face discrimination based on gender, some women experience multiple forms of discrimination, of which gender is only one component (EIGE, 2017).

Indirect or psychological GBV is manifested in the following (not limited to): denial of liberty, forced marriage, sexual harassment, treatment of women as commodities, verbal abuse *etcetera*. This category of GBV is elusive or subtle and some women may not be able to identify and name it as GBV.

It is important to note that the classification of GBV above is still debatable, because GBV types are not mutually exclusive. In both classifications, GBV cannot be understood apart from the social structures, gender norms and roles that sustain and validate it as routine and tolerable. For the purposes of this research, the above categorisation will be followed.

While it is important to categorise GBV, it is also equally important to identify the sites in which types of GBV are practised. Therefore, the matrix below illustrates the context and what happens in each site. Three major sites are identified as family, community/society and state.

The diagram is taken with some alterations from a training manual by Frederick (2001) *Prevention of Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings: Training Manual*.

Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered one of the key sites of GBV. • Prepares its members for social life, forms gender stereotypes and perceptions of division of labour between sexes. • This is where physical and psychological abuses occur (battering, confinement, forced marriage, murder, control of women without their consent, threats, insults, neglect, forced abortion/pregnancy, sexual abuse <i>etcetera</i>). • Because violence within the family and household takes place in the home, it is often regarded as private and information about it is lacking, leading to under-reporting of GBV issues.
Community/Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a group sharing common social, cultural, religious or ethnic belonging, it perpetuates existing family structure and power inequalities in family and society. • Justifies the behaviour of male abusers aimed at establishing control over women in the family, and supports harmful traditional practices such as battering and corporal punishment. • Workplace can also be a site of violence. Either in governmental service or in a commercial company, women are vulnerable to sexual aggression (harassment, intimidation) and commercialised violence (trafficking for sexual exploitation).
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimises power inequalities in family and society and perpetuates GBV through enactment of discriminatory laws and policies or through the discriminatory application of the law. • Is responsible for tolerance of gender violence on an unofficial level (i.e. in the family and in the community). • To the extent that it is the state's recognised role to sanction certain norms that protect individual life and dignity and maintain collective peace, it is the state's obligation to develop and implement measures that redress GBV.

While the family, community (society) and state could be pointed out as fertile grounds for GBV, IPV remains a major source as discussed below.

2.4. Intimate Partner Violence: A widespread form of violence

IPV is a widespread and high-ranking form of violence against women that has caught scholarly attention for decades (Kruttschnitt *et al.*, 2018:477; WHO, 2013). Synonymous terms for IPV often used are “wife beating”, “battering” or “domestic violence”. IPV is defined as a pattern of abusive and imposed behaviour, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners. Rio and Valle (2017: 1171) advance that, “Controlling behaviour alone often is the first expression of mistreatment”. It includes a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against adult or adolescent women by a current intimate partner, without her consent (Population Services International, 2015:3; EIGE, 2017:35-40; Heise *et al.*, 2002; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002).

From the preceding definition of IPV, it reveals that this form of GBV is complicated as it includes a range of abuses which could be difficult to fully comprehend. The term IPV also emphasises that, this form of GBV originates not from a total stranger, but from someone close and known to the victim. It has been understood as a form of violence against women and it is difficult to plumb its depth. In this type of violence, women suffer extreme emotional depression, suppression, beating and ultimately are even murdered. Citing the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Watt and Zimmerman (2002:1233) revealed that an estimated 40-70% of homicides are perpetrated by intimate partners and that one in every three women has been beaten, forced into sex or has been abused in their life.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) conducted a population-based survey to establish the prevalence of IPV. Data was gathered on IPV from more than 24 000 women. The women consulted also represented different cultures, geographical locations and urban/rural settings. The results below summarise the findings by WHO (2010) and reveal that IPV is a deep-seated form of GBV.

- 13-61% reported ever having experienced physical violence from a partner.
- 4-49% reported having experienced severe physical violence by a partner.
- 6-59% reported sexual violence by a partner at some point in their lives.

- 20-75% reported experiencing one emotionally abusive act, or more, from a partner in their lifetime.

According to UN Women (UNW, 2018), IPV remains a global challenge. An estimated 35% of women experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner. However, national studies show that 70% of women have suffered/experienced physical/sexual violence from an intimate partner. Furthermore, results of another study reveal that of women who were victims of homicide in 2012, nearly half of them were murdered by their intimate partners (UNW, 2018).

IPV has its dynamics. Among them is the belief that man has the right to control the behaviour of his wife and who she socialises with. Such restrictions are not equally expected of a man from his wife. In addition, a woman who challenges a man's right by asking for money or reminding him about the needs of children may be punished. In countries like Malawi, South Africa, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, IPV is predominantly understood as chastisement (Heise *et al.*, 2002: 6). In some situations, where the husband beats his wife, police will not intervene because GBV is considered a domestic affair and legal instruments may not treat wife abuse as an offense (Ayodapo, 2013:3). Counts, Brown and Campbell (1992:315) maintain that, "Such justification for male dominance and abuse of women emanate from gender norms, which are social norms proper roles and responsibilities of men and women."

In situations of extreme IPV, people often ask; "Why doesn't she leave him?" Women who experience IPV are caught up in a quandary to stay with or leave their partner. Some can leave and return several times, before they finally leave for good (Landenburger, 1998: 704). Unfortunately, leaving does not necessarily guarantee a woman's safety. It is possible that violence will continue or even get worse after the woman leaves a partner. Leaving puts a woman at risk of getting murdered (Heise *et al.*, 2002: 7). The WHO and Weed list some reasons why women experiencing IPV may delay to leave (WHO, 2012; Weed, n.d: 9-10),

- Lack of alternative means of economic support
- Concern for children
- Isolation from family, friends, places of worship, and community resources
- Facing reality
- Lack of support from family and friends
- Stigma or fear of losing custody of children associated with divorce

- Love and the hope that the partner will change
- Religious and cultural beliefs, teachings, and traditions offered to females by spiritual leaders, congregational laity, educators, family members, and other segments of society instruct women and girls to assume a subservient role to males. Often these precepts are said to be ordained by God
- The perpetrator's threats to kill, kidnap, or physically harm the victim's children, parents, siblings, pets, and the victim herself, or threats to kill himself. It should be noted that all threats made by perpetrators must be taken seriously. By far the most dangerous times for a victimized woman are when she begins disclosing the abuse and when she attempts to leave her abusive partner.

On the other hand, women would rather continue to endure IPV for the following reasons pointed out by Ayodapo (2013: 2-3). First, a woman may remain with an abusive partner, because she is financially/economically dependent on him. She may be unskilled or not employed, but simply a housewife with children. Second, she may remain with an abusive partner, because culture condones the behaviour of the abusive partner. Leaving might put her under the spotlight as a stubborn and uncultured woman in society. Third, a woman suffering IPV would rather maintain her identity by being called someone's wife or lover, particularly in Africa. Women may jostle to get the title "Mrs" at the cost of their personal happiness.

2.5. Gender-based violence: A human rights violation⁸

Among the global human rights abuses, GBV remains the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violation in the world (WHO, 2013). It continues in every country in the world. It has social, religious and cultural roots (Gerhardt, 2014:13,36; UNICEF, 2013:13; Cruz & Klinger, 2011:1; Kahlor & Morrison, 2007:25; Heise *et al.*, 2002:1). Women affected by GBV are deprived of their right to enjoy life, as they should. This is caused by (among other reasons) our societies around the globe that have,

...institutions that legitimize and obscure and deny abuse. The same acts that would be punished if directed at an employer, a neighbour, or an acquaintance often go

⁸ Human rights standards refer both to the substantive rights that are defined and codified in international treaties, declarations and covenants, and mechanisms or institutions that operationalise and enforce those rights, for example by investigating claims that rights have been violated, clarifying the application and content of human rights principles, and ensuring that states comply with the obligations they assume when they sign human rights agreements (WHO, 2017:10)

unchallenged when men direct them at women, especially in the family (Mutepfa, 2009:77; Heise *et al*, 2002:1).

Women and girls remain disadvantaged and vulnerable. This is evidenced by their limited access to resources, both social and economic (Oxfam, 2013; Mashiri and Mawire, 2013:14). Just like their male counterparts, women are fully created in the image of God. However, their God-given dignity is trampled upon and violated (Chauke, 2006: vi). Even though working statistics on GBV are available, the exact figures remain difficult to establish (Hayes *et al.*, 2016:1540; Smith & Welchans, 2000).

There is international awareness of GBV against women and girls as human rights violation. The Second World Conference on Human Rights (SWCHR) in Vienna in 1993 has been regarded as one of the achievements of the women's movement. In the same year, the UNCHR set a declaration that incorporated women's rights with the mechanisms assuring protection of human rights. According to DEVAW,

...the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW), which is currently the main international document addressing the problem of gender based violence (DEVAW, 1993:3).

Cruz and Klinger (2011) make reference to the International Labour Organisation's approach (ILO) on GBV as violation of human rights.

The ILO uses a rights-based approach to gender-based violence, which violates victims' fundamental human rights as articulated in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These principles are included in Article 1 which provides that, 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'; in Article 3 which provides that 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person', and in Article 5 which provides that 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Cruz & Klinger 2011:13).

Having these instruments in place is highly commendable as a good point of departure. However, the interpretation of the laws needs to continue cascading down to local communities in people's language for transformation to take place. Thus, the church as a sub-system of society has a role to play in upholding the rights of women.

2.6. Current trends and debate on gender-based violence

This section discusses the current trends and debates in relation to GBV. First, trends on GBV are covered and second, debates on GBV will be discussed. While trends and debates on this phenomenon maybe wider, only those issues relevant for this study will be discussed.

2.6.1. Trends on gender-based violence

The research is indebted to Lunn and Howard (2009) in following a regional approach to highlight issues related to the subject. It must be admitted from the start that trends on GBV are immensely complex and interrelated. Each regional trend should be understood as a mirror of the trends around the world. Lunn and Howard (2009:1) rightly advise that it is important to note that issues raised for a region do not exclusively apply to that region only.

In the so-called industrialised world, GBV remains a phenomenon that needs attention just like in the developing countries. In the United States of America, it is estimated that one in four university-aged females has been a victim of rape or attempted rape. In 2007, the US Department of Defence recorded 1 400 reports of rape among its staff. It went on to assert that 34% of female service personnel suffered sexual harassment (Lunn & Howard, 2009:1). The study can ascertain from this that GBV continues to affect women even in developed countries worldwide. This shows that even though percentages rank high in developing countries, they are not always the only ones experiencing this phenomenon.

Another industrialised country where GBV trends continue is Japan. Japan has a low percentage of GBV compared to other industrialised countries. This has largely been attributed to the misogynistic culture and attitude to GBV. The culture of silence about the abuse of women keeps women subdued and they are not free to report GBV and thus keeps the percentages inaccurate or they may not look bad. Underpinned in this culture of silence one might find widespread forms of GBV against women (Lunn & Howard, 2009: 2).

Women have never been spared from GBV in times of peace or armed conflict. Levenkron (2010:24) in *Death and the Maidens "Prostitution", rape, and sexual slavery during World War II* states,

Armies have always marched over the bodies of the countless women-women they raped, prostituted, inseminated and enslaved. Sexual violence also occurs in peacetime, but in times of war, this phenomenon multiplies and the number of victims grow significantly.

Reilly (2018:631) advances, “The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) is widely celebrated as the foundational moment of the UN women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda.” However, in Africa, GBV is highly compounded with armed conflict in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, Somalia, *et cetera*. Hundreds of women have been raped and some killed⁹ in DRC. Stearns (2011:310) maintains,

According to United Nations reports, over 200,000 women have been raped in the eastern Congo since 1998. Demographic surveys suggest that up to 39 percent of women have experienced sexual violence, at the hands of civilians or military personnel, at some point in their lives. Given the nature of sexual violence, it is difficult to know how pervasive the phenomenon really is and what exactly is at the root of this epidemic, but there is no doubt that the situation is extremely dire.

In Rwanda (during the Hutu and Tutsi conflict) 500 000 women were sexually abused (Ganzevoort & Sremac 2012: 348) In the Caribbean, troops have been apprehended for perpetuating sexual GBV. Those who were supposed to protect them ended up victimising the indigenous vulnerable women (Lunn & Howard, 2009:4; Martin, 2005:4). Thus, the general trend with armed conflict is that a high number of women are abused and continue to live with dire consequences of GBV. War, sexual abuse and killing of women are inseparable during armed conflict in any country. Where these atrocities against women occur, “...silencing has been deemed preferable to opposing the taboo against talking about the subject, and banishment preferable to inclusion” (Levenkron, 2010:24). Some reasons women keep silent about the atrocities are fear of stigmatisation and being labelled as prostitutes. Communities have a tendency to misinterpret these issues to women’s disadvantage. In resolution 1820 of 9 June 2008, the UN Security Council for the first time denounced violence committed against women

⁹ Testimony excerpts of raped women and activists during the DRC war from, “*Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The collapse of the Congo and the Great war of Africa,*” by Jason K. Stearns 2011:48, 161, 310, 382. “And once the pillage started, soldiers lost control and raped and even killed sometimes... The three nuns were lying in the convent with their underwear around their ankles; he suspected they had been raped... All of us have been raped, every single one of us... Activist and Vagina Monologues founder Eve Ensler wrote in the Huffington Post that she had heard horrific stories ranging from “women being raped by fifty men in one day to women being forced to eat dead babies... the New York Times reported how a woman was “kidnapped by bandits in the forest ,strapped to a tree and repeatedly gang-raped. The bandits did unspeakable things, she said, like disembowelling a pregnant woman right in front of her... All of these stories are true. The conflict has seen acts of cannibalism, girls as young as five being raped with gun barrels and sticks, and women buried alive.”

and girls in wars (Halbmayr, 2010:38). GBV committed in wartime is multifaceted ranging from rape, murder, racial¹⁰ abuse and humiliation, torture, enslavement *et cetera*.

Not only does GBV exist in times of armed conflict, but it is also embedded in countries where peace prevails (Levenkron, 2010:24). Where peace prevails, laws could discriminate against women on the basis of sex or gender. For instance,

Saudi Arabia is widely considered one of the most conservative nations on earth where daily behaviour is strictly regulated and where an extensive infrastructure of police and religious authorities ensure that legal norms are applied (Lunn & Howard, 2009:5).

Women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia (though this is changing), they have to wear full length *abayas*¹¹ when outside the home, they have to be escorted by a male relative when travelling, they have to seek permission from a male person to study, to travel, to work or access health care (Equality Now, 2017). Women are treated as minors. There is protest against this kind of treatment from within the country and international human rights organisations fighting for the liberation of women in Saudi Arabia. Religion and cultural norms remain and continue to subject females to GBV and perpetuate male dominance.

On the other hand, the laws that protect women against GBV in other countries are well crafted and clear, but they are not implemented or enforced for the benefit of women. For example, in Asia and in particular India, article 14 of the country's constitution clearly states,

State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them,' while articles 16(1) and 16(2) prohibit discrimination in general, and gender discrimination in matters of public employment. To promote equality, Article 15(3) provides that the state is free to make 'any special provision for women and children (Narula, 1999; Lunn & Howard, 2009: 7).

With such a clear legal framework it is surprising to learn that GBV manifests in rape, forced labour, murder, *et cetera* of the low class (poor women) in India. India is used here as lens to reflect what is happening in other countries where laws are put in place, but not upheld to alleviate GBV.

¹⁰ The following is a clear example of racial violence and humiliation against Roma, Sinti and Jewish women in World War II; "Forced sterilization in the name of pseudo-scientific experiments, a more permanent and severe form of violence, was carried out on thousands of women... There is evidence of forced sterilization by means of radiation, injections, and operations. As victims were mostly Roma and Sinti, as well as Jewish women (including children as young as eight years old), these forced sterilizations are considered as a racist measure" (Halbmayr 2010:44).

¹¹ Full length dress worn by Muslim women

Finally, studies are beginning to shift from men playing a negative role on GBV to identity and culture (discussed below in this chapter). Latin America has been characterised by a patriarchal form of machismo (Rio & Valle, 2017:1772). This is a term that, "...has generally come to refer to an exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male to male interpersonal relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male to female relationships" (Zona Latina, 1999). Ellsberg *et al.* (2000:1595) state that in Nicaragua machismo is acute and 20% of women have suffered GBV at the hands of their own partners. This aggression and power over women is seen as the normal identity of man and society expects them to be so. While this is acceptable behaviour in that particular society, women remain the major victims of GBV.

2.6.2. Debate on gender-based violence

There is a debate regarding high prevalence of GBV during times of armed conflict (Lunn & Howard, 2009: 3; OXFAM, 2013:1; Reilly, 2018:631- 649). It is usually women, girls and children that have horrific and excruciating experiences in times of political unrest. Migration because of war continues to cause a lot of women to bear the pain and consequences of war (Anitha *et al.*, 2018:747-774; Delaney, 2016). Specifically, women are not financially independent, women are raped, beaten, and killed during war and this is an outright human rights abuse (Anitha *et al.*, 2018:747). Some women are abducted and kept as servants and forced sexual partners of the soldiers. The factors of male dominance (patriarchy), misogyny, cultural constructs and stereotypes about women are some of the issues being looked into in this debate (Halbmayer, 2010:40). The following quote from Levenkron (2010:24) strongly suggests the foregoing thought,

Wartime *gender based violence*¹² has much wider social and cultural implications for the woman and the social group to which she belongs. The soldier invades the woman's body just as he invades her country; he crushes her autonomy and control over her life.

In the same vein, Reilly (2018:632) argues that those that make laws to protect women against violence, continue to see women as victims and passive beneficiaries of such laws in a top-down approach. In other words, the implication of Reilly's argument is that including women in such discussions empowers them. They cease to be passive recipients of what has been crafted in their absence. In some wars, women from a particular race are targeted and subjected to GBV in various forms (Reilly, 2018). For instance, there was widespread rape of the Tutsi

¹² Writer's addition, not found in the authors original words.

women culminating in a form of genocide, as stated by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Wood, 2006:307).

In World War II the Jewish women suffered GBV (Levenkron, 2010:24-27; Halbmayr, 2010:38-50). Among many reasons for this anomaly during armed conflict, the following two explanations are given by Lunn and Howard (2009:3 c.f Wood, 2006). First, during armed conflict there is a social breakdown associated with war. The deterrents against women and girls are disregarded leaving them (women and girls) vulnerable for abuse. Second, in some situations the military specifically targets a particular race of women and abuses them as a form of punishment, as in the case of the Tutsi, Roma, Sinti and Jewish women cited above. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay said: “From time immemorial, rape has been regarded as spoils of war. Now it will be considered a war crime. We want to send out a strong message that rape is no longer a trophy of war” (Lunn & Howard, 2009:3). The masculinist identity instilled in the minds of the soldiers also plays a big role when engaging in GBV during war (Wood, 2006:328). As such GBV,

...is rooted in unequal gendered power relations and often increases in times of crisis.

This is due to a number of factors, including: a breakdown of law and order leading to impunity for the perpetrators of violence; risks associated with displacement; and the use of rape as a weapon of war (OXFAM, 2013: 2; Anitha *et al.*, 2018:747-774).

While a time of conflict is regarded as a negative time, it can also create an opportunity for the victims to think about change¹³. Instead of viewing women and girls as victims, granting them the opportunity to think and talk about their situation could lead to better solutions to the problems (Reilly, 2018:632).

Apart from GBV during armed conflict, there is a debate around femicide. It must be noted at the outset that not all the reasons for femicide are similar across the globe. Femicide ranges from honour killings, dowry related death, female infanticide, intimate partner killings, ritual killings for traditional charms (*muti/juju*) in Africa, *et cetera*. Women have been and are still being murdered in Africa (e.g. Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique) and their private parts, nipples and other body parts taken for ritual purposes.

¹³ “Crises can challenge discriminatory gender norms and unequal power relations, enabling women and men to reflect on existing gender roles, and to value the traditional roles differently. For example, in conflict situations women can assume prominent roles in peace building and mediation, and men may take on greater care responsibilities” (OXFAM 2013:2)

Across international institutions, several terms are used to refer to femicide, including 'femicide', 'gendercide', 'intimate partner homicide' and 'gender-related killing of women and girls (EIGE, 2017:3; c.f. Corradi, *et al.*, 2014:601).

In a radio talk show about femicide, a woman made the following comment, "As we women, we are disposable." Underpinned in this statement is that women are just murdered and dumped anywhere like trash. Men can eliminate them at any given time and by any means as they wish. Anitha, Roy and Yalamarty (2018:747) explain "disposable women" as "abused and abandoned with impunity." This means after committing demeaning acts against women, the perpetrator is not held accountable for his actions. The intentional killing of women has become so rife in South Africa (Khumalo, 2019) and other countries. It is noted that,

...femicide was not developed as a feminist theory until it re-emerged in conjunction with second wave feminism in the 1970s, when Diana Russell (1977) used the term at the International Tribunal on Crimes against Women (Shaw, 2017:2).

Femicide has existed from time immemorial and it took courage for one woman to stand and name it. It is a cause of debate and serious concern currently. The following quotation in a South African context just illustrates one case of femicide among many.

Karabo Mokoena's memorial service was held in Soweto, Johannesburg. Mokoena was found dead, burnt beyond recognition and buried in a shallow grave in a deserted patch of veld. She has been murdered and set alight by her boyfriend (Willis, 2017).

Shaw (2017:2) citing Cockburn (2004:30) notes that, "The act of femicide intersects with complex economic, cultural and geographical factors, revealing that violence is embedded in patriarchal structures of power". As such preference of a boy child in China has led to "...gender selective abortion and infanticide against female babies" (Shaw, 2017:7). This has led to females being pressured by husbands, culture and societal norms to keep on giving birth until a male child is born. By succumbing to this, pressured women face health complications during birth and ultimately the mother and child are at risk (Grech, 2015:852).

In Zimbabwe and other African countries, a man may not be content to be a father until his wife has given birth to a baby boy. Extramarital sexual relations may even be culturally encouraged in search of a boy child. By implication, this asserts that females are less valued than males and no doubt increases their vulnerability when it comes to GBV resulting in death (Hudson, 2010:67). Grech (2015:852) notes that femicide can also be caused through marginalisation of women in accessing medicine. A lower percentage of women in India and Pakistan receive

immunisation as compared to their male counterparts. Violence against women is embedded in patriarchal structures and there are still women who continue to suffer in silence.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are also among issues debated in relation to GBV. Gender equality and women's empowerment are goal number five among the 17 SDGs (UN SDGs, 2016). Gender equality refers,

...to the gender norms, roles, cultural practices, policies and laws, economic factors and institutional practices that collectively contribute to and perpetuate unequal power relations between men and women. This inequality disproportionately disadvantages women in most societies (UN Women, 2015:10; Reeves & Baden, 2000:10).

Gender inequality leads to women's disempowerment and discrimination. As a form of GBV, it is shaped by the following, according to the UNW (2015:23):

- Economic, political and social factors, systems and norms, including policy and legal frameworks and structures
- Historical factors (e.g. deep-rooted cultural practices), war, colonization
- Structural distinctions on the basis of age, income, location, ethnicity, disability, gender identity and other characteristics.

Leadership and participation of women in different programmes in communities are still met with resistance emanating from community and institutional structures. For instance, patriarchal communities may not readily accept the leadership and participation of women in influential positions. Research debate is also advocating for the inclusion of men and boys in challenging the norms, beliefs and attitudes that undermine gender equality in communities (OXFAM, 2013:2). Exclusion of women in decision- and policymaking militates against gender equality and women empowerment, because decisions made are rooted in culture, norms and doctrines (Reilly, 2018:632) that elevate male status. Consequently, international forums on GBV are voicing the inclusion of women in policymaking spaces to ensure that responses established support women to eliminate gender inequality. The presence and contribution of women allows for decisions and policies to be more contextual and liberating, especially for women.

Gender equality and empowerment are inseparable. Schuler, Lenzi, Badal and Bates (2017:11) argues, "Although expressed in various ways, most definitions of women's empowerment involve their acquisition of resources, agency, and the ability to make strategic life choices in the context of gender inequality" (Schuler *et al.*, 2017:1101). Empowerment is understood as a

...bottom up process of transforming gender relations through individuals or groups developing awareness of women subordination and building their capacity to challenge it (Reeves & Baden, 2000:35).

The notion of empowerment could be a source of resistance from patriarchal societies if wrongly interpreted or loosely used. Therefore, Reeves and Baden (2000:35) clarify the notion of empowerment which they call a 'bottom up process,' it means "women, individually and collectively, freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above." Empowerment encourages a paradigm shift from silence and a culture of subordination to freely and honestly speak their concerns. In this case, women are the "...agents of change in transforming gender relations" (Reeves & Baden, 2000:35; cf. Schuler *et al.*, 2017: 1100-1121; Rowland, 1996; Oxaal, 1997; Johnson, 1992a; Wieringa, 1994). Empowerment begins with the affected communities identifying stereotypes, norms, cultural beliefs, religious beliefs *et cetera* that are preventing women from realising total empowerment. The stereotypes, norms, cultural and religious beliefs that men have about women seemingly emerge from a misunderstanding about gender and sex in any given context of human existence. Therefore, the following section is seeking to establish a conceptualisation about the notions of gender and sex.

2.7. Gender and sex conceptualisation

The difference between male and female serves as a basic organising principle for every human culture. Societies might differ on specific tasks they assign to females and males, but the distinctions remain (Bem, 1981: 354). The distinctions and assigning of tasks are predominantly determined by sex and gender:

Sex refers to the biological characteristics that categorize someone as either female or male. Whereas gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male (Baden & Reeves, 2000:30; WHO, 2014).

Men produce sperm and women ovulate, give birth and breastfeed children. Sexual differences are the same throughout the human race (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:17). Sex and gender are usually used interchangeably though they are distinct terms. For instance, when one is filling in a form, usually there is a space for gender or sex and this means the terms could be used interchangeably.

Identifiable biological physical features on a person leads society to categorise sex as male or female. Based on this categorisation, the inequality of women in relation to men has been

viewed as natural and a fact of their biological difference from men. Though the biological difference is far beyond doubt, it fails to account for why a very high number of women suffer GBV, have limited access to power and have inferior status to men (Baden & Reeves, 2000: 30; Afshar, 1994: 130 ; EIGE, 2013:15). A question to reflect on at this point is: Are women any less human because of their biological differences to their male counterparts?

To be able to comprehend and challenge the cultural value attached to a person's biological sex, one needs to understand the notion of gender. Baden and Reeves (2000:30) state that, "Gender is how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man". In other words, through gender we are able to construct an identity regarding: "who am I, what I do, and how I do it" (Pattison, 1985:442). Thus, the idea of gender including the hierarchical power relations that exist between women and men is socially constructed and does not emanate from biology. March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999:17) advance that, "Our gender identity determines how we are perceived, and how we are expected to think and act as women and men, because of the way society is organised". In addition, this results in having role expectations and responsibilities that are linked to gender in every culture. For example, in Zimbabwe if a man and woman are going into a house, the man enters first. The same scenario will be interpreted as being rude in America where a woman enters first. There are underlying reasons for this behaviour as determined by cultural mores in different contexts.

In the end, all societies end up having gendered power permeating social institutions such that "gender" is always present (EIGE, 2013: 17). Afshar (1994:139) argues that the use of concepts like *gender* continues to build blocks of traditional perceptions of women and men and therefore, it is preferable to use the word *women* instead of gender which bears unequal power relations. The question that stands out is whether the change of terminology without transformation of the mind and perceptions is going to solve GBV and other abuses women continue to face. Indeed, words/terms are powerful and influence perceptions and behaviour. This research suggests that the change proposed has to be far deeper than just switching around terminology.

While sex is a biological given and gender is a social construction, there are stereotypes that are associated with gender. Such stereotypes are immersed in societies and daily human consciousness. They stem from particular historical, cultural and social contexts (EIGE,

2013:13). From an early age, children learn how their cultures and societies define the roles of women and men and internalise them as a gender schema (Bem, 1981:354; EIGE, 2013:15; Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011:766). Cognitive psychologists identified two types of stereotypes. First, is the descriptive stereotype, which has to do with beliefs about traits that one has as woman or man. Second, is the prescriptive stereotype and involves beliefs about gender one should have. For instance, the expectation that women *will* be nurturing is descriptive. Whereas the belief that woman *should* be nurturing would be prescriptive (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011:766).

Viewed as a springboard, sex and gender stereotypes dictate how women and men behave in society (Ridgeway & England, 2007; Reskin 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Stereotypes on gender translate or evolve into gender discrimination and women may suffer GBV if they defy the socially accepted stereotypes. In addition, because of stereotypes certain occupations and privileges are considered more male than female. For instance, in Zimbabwe (and other African countries) a woman does not have the privilege to query where her husband has been, while the husband may query his wife. Therefore, “Society is largely responsible for perpetuating gender roles and shapes opportunities and expectations for both genders” (EIGE, 2013: 16). Such opportunities and expectations serve as accessories for GBV. This now entails a discussion on some causes of GBV.

2.8. Causes of gender-based violence

Bate (2001:72) states, “When people form human communities, it is their shared meanings and understanding that unite them. These symbols are culture texts which are understood differently by people within a culture than by those outside”. Thus, what might be regarded as a cause of GBV in one setting, may not necessarily be so in another setting. Causes of GBV differ; there are some causes that cut across cultures. Discussed below are common causes of GBV entrenched across races. The following causes will be discussed, namely: normative role expectations for males, normative role expectations for females, patriarchal practices, cultural beliefs and practices, and religious beliefs and practices.

2.8.1. Normative male role expectations

Gender stereotypes are considered as gender assumptions (or gender constructs) that people assign for males and females.

The distinction between male and female serves as a basic organizing principle for every human culture. Although societies differ in the specific tasks they assign to the two sexes, all societies allocate adult roles on the basis of sex and anticipate this allocation in the socialization of their children (Bem, 1981: 354).

Men are predominantly considered guardians of the land and family lineage in Africa (Maisiri, 2016:24). While this is true, “normative role expectations vary depending on social location and cultural context. Men and boys behave in a certain socially sanctioned expectation to suit their relevant contexts” (Levant & Richmond, 2007:131). EIGE (2013:14) further asserts that, “...society transmits gender roles and shapes opportunities and expectations for both genders”. For instance, the social and cultural expectations on Zimbabwean men would vary from men in Swaziland. What is considered as a male role in one country, might be regarded a female role in another. Nevertheless, certain role expectations remain similar across nations.

David and Brannon (1976) quoted by Levant and Richmond (2007:131) identify four forms of masculinity. First, men should avoid feminine things, because participating or behaving in a feminine way compromises one’s masculinity. This makes male behaviour superior and better to that of their female counterparts, hence allowing the dominance of women and girls by men and boys. In Zimbabwean Ndaou culture, it would be very absurd to see a man sweeping, washing nappies and plates, bathing children, cooking, fetching firewood from the bush *et cetera*. Men and boys would rather wait for their female household members to fulfil the mentioned tasks, even if they had spent equal hours working in the field. A wife might get sick, but her roles remain relatively unchanged as long as she can wake up and walk. There is a saying in Ndaou language which says, “*Mudzimai unorwara unoporera pachoto*” it literally means, “A sick woman gets healed while cooking or performing her duties for her family”. This type of behaviour and expectation is socially constructed and not innate or God-given (Kumwenda *et al.*, 2018:2; EIGE, 2013:13).

Second, cultures and society expect men to strive for success and achievement. Men are associated with aggressiveness and perseverance to achieve their goals in life. Because of this, men are culturally and socially expected to be more assertive for the success of their family and communities. Decisions that promote success and achievement are not easily accepted or even sourced from women, even in situations where the wife appears to be more intelligent and sensible than the husband. Where a man adopts ideas from a woman, credit is not duly attributed to her, but to the man. A woman must remain obscure by serving the interests of her husband

and a woman belongs in the home environment (EIGE, 2013:14). West and Zimmerman (1987: 128) note that,

Things are the way they are by virtue of the fact that men are men and women are women- a division perceived to be natural and rooted in biology, producing in turn profound psychological logical, behavioural and social consequences. The structural arrangements of society are presumed to be responsive to the differences.

Third, it is normatively accepted that men should not show weakness, but boldness. It is the role of men to remain fearless and robust in adversity. To bow down is considered a sign of weakness, which is commonly associated with women. The implication is that, to be strong is to be man and to be weak is to be woman. This negative perception of women escalates GBV in societies. For instance, a man may not easily admit that he is wrong in front of a woman even if he is clearly wrong. In case of death in the family, a man must prove that he is a man by not crying. Should a man cry in front of people, other men would console him by saying in Shona, “*Murume unoshingirira haachemi*”, or in Zulu, “*Indoda ayikhali*” which literally means in both languages, “A man must be brave and not cry”. In leading the family, Chauke (2006:32) and Maisiri (2016:24) note that a father must show a controlling power over his family. Such strength of man as opposed to weakness in a family is demonstrated through “moderately” beating his children and wife where circumstances warrant that they should be beaten. This is regarded as normal behaviour in most Zimbabwean tribal cultures (Holleman, 1952:277).

Fourth, men are culturally and socially expected to seek adventure, even if violence is necessary. This normative role expectation allows men the liberty to engage in other activities and acts which they would not allow their women to engage in. In a typical Ndaue culture, a real man cannot spend the entire day sitting with his wife at home. He would be regarded by the rest of the community as, “*Wakadyiswa*” which literally means, “He was given a love potion” to keep him at home. A real man goes out to where other men spend the day to socialise, get advice and fight if circumstances call for that. Seeking adventure, men may also step outside the boundaries of marriage by engaging in sexual encounters with other women. Eventually some of the men will bring home a second or third wife. In these incidences, we find a woman’s autonomy in experiencing life as men do, is undermined and this contributes to GBV (EIGE, 2013:10). This also shows the relationship between men and women is not equal. Hence, men employ intimidation, isolation, emotional abuse, *et cetera* if women seek adventure and this perpetuates or results in GBV.

2.8.2. *Normative female role expectations*

Colonialism in Africa has been blamed for disturbing the status quo of male-female relations in African countries. Makaudze (2009:22) argues that the social relations that existed before colonialism were perfect for the Africans. On the other hand, Folbre (1988:61-70) advances that colonialism found the oppressive structures and roles between male-female relations already in place. Females have always been expected to play a passive role as opposed to their male counterparts (Maisiri, 2016:27). Thus, submission to the husband and other persons in society is a key role for women. Submission is clearly embedded in African culture. Important to note is that, culture is not static but always dynamic. This implies that the normative roles of women on submission must be evaluated in light of the changing culture. This would assist women to relate to their environment in a better manner. Nevertheless, culture and society may not allow women to embrace the changes in culture. This continues to put women in a disadvantaged situation. Men use the submissive role of women to exploit and oppress them (Ayanga, 2008:37). Women are dissuaded from engaging in certain roles in society, because culture does not permit them. Maimela (1994:6) puts this well, "...it is convenient for males to use aspects of African culture in order to perpetuate their privileged status."

Society expects women to learn in silence. A woman may not confront her husband, even if she feels the husband is treating her unfairly. In incidences where a woman challenges her husband, the result has been beating, isolation, insults and ultimately the woman is murdered. The Ndau culture has a common saying; "*Mudzimai unombuta mvura*" which literally means, "A woman must always keep water in her mouth". This proverb puts emphasis on the silence of women in any situation. Even in religious circles, women are not free to express themselves, because their religion expects them to learn in silence. Yet when closely examined, their imposed silence sends most women to early graves through various forms of GBV (Ayanga, 2008:41).

A woman's place is predominantly in the home and her role is considered less important or passive than that of a man (Maisiri, 2016:27). From an early stage in their lives, women are taught not to be assertive and adventurous like their male counterparts. Thus, most of their roles do not go beyond the home environment; as sanctioned by society. Women that do not execute "their prescribed duties in the home, including performing conjugal rights duties, taking care of the children and cook for the family risk being punished or getting divorced" (Maisiri,

2016:27; Hindin, 2003:501; Kambarami, 2006:3). The ability to perform all the prescribed roles for women earns them the title, “*Mukadzi chaiye*” literally “A real woman”. In this case, a woman is defined by society through what she can do, not through who she is as a person.

Society has sanctioned that man can live independent of a woman, but woman cannot live independent of a man. Therefore, women can only find meaning and purpose in fulfilling roles that satisfy men. They are always expected to be, “gentle, passive, subordinate and please men” (Kambarami, 2006:3; see also EIGE, 2013:36). Some women complain that their men treat them like children and they just have to comply. There are certain socially endorsed roles for women that must change across cultures to curb the plague of GBV. The best people to change such roles are the people living in that particular culture. Having roles for men and women cannot be avoided, but roles should not oppress and abuse women. Roles should be used in a complementary manner in families, communities and nations without superiority of roles for a particular gender.

2.8.3. Patriarchal practices

Patriarchal practices across religions and cultures mitigate against the emancipation of women and perpetuate GBV (Kambarami, 2006:1; Museka *et al.*, 2013:111, Chogugudza, 2004:11). Reeves and Baden (2000:28) and Goldfarb (2011: 58) define patriarchy as a systematic social structure that institutionalises male physical, social and economic power over women. They go on to advance that from a feminist perspective, the systematic social structures are both localised and overarching. This means patriarchal practices are felt and experienced by women at every level of their existence in society.

There are certain behaviours that discriminate against women, because of their gender (Du Toit, 1998:11; Manyonganise, 2015: 2). For instance, certain occupations are strictly viewed as male positions and if a woman and a man happen to serve at the same level, sometimes the woman’s salary could be lower. Thus, in patriarchy men possess superior power and economic privilege as something regarded as “normal” (York, 2009: 15-18; Eisenstein 1980:16; Ayodapo, 2013: 2). In patriarchy, women do not have control over their sexuality and they are often powerless in a culture where patriarchy is viewed as the natural order of life (Pillay, 2010:560). Women are kept submissive and may not be able to negotiate their feelings and aspirations. An attempt to gravitate away from male power and dominance results in physical or psychological abuse.

In an African patriarchal society, a man has the right and cannot be accused of raping, disciplining or scolding his wife. Such beliefs and practices continue to exacerbate GBV. From childhood, females are taught to be passive, inconspicuous and emotionally dependent. The male child from an early stage is taught to socialise and be emotionally independent (Ayodapo, 2013:2). African women today are dealing with repercussions of patriarchal history and that needs to be challenged in a theological and culturally relevant manner.

There are patriarchal practices in Africa that infringe on women's freedom to sexuality and fuel GBV. Chief among such practices is the payment of *lobola/roora* (bride price) by the man as a determining factor that the woman now belongs to a particular man. There is nothing wrong with the practice, but the patriarchal interpretations emanating from it fuel GBV. Payment of a bride price gives a man the right to dominate and control the woman and the woman is robbed of her freedom by being reduced to the level of the husband's 'personal property'. Some African countries practise levirate marriages upon the death of the husband or the wife. The widow must be married to the brother of the deceased husband. Women are subjected to spiritual, physical and emotional abuse (Nwachuku, 2006: 54-73). In the case of the deceased wife, the husband must get a virgin girl as his wife from the family of the deceased wife (Kambarami, 2006:7-8). In both situations, the woman is at a disadvantage as far as her sexual freedom is concerned. In the end, patriarchy is embedded in a gender ideology that places men at the top and women as their subordinates (Monyonganise, 2017: 2).

It is important to note that the term 'patriarchy' serves as an overarching pointer to male power that causes GBV. However, the term may not fully explain the complex nature of GBV caused by patriarchy from country to country. GBV may not be uniform across time and space. There is need for detailed historical and cultural analysis to understand GBV in relation to patriarchy (Reeves & Baden 2000:28). This is important, because what might be considered negative patriarchal practices in one culture, might be viewed in a positive way in another culture. It is therefore crucial to let the locals identify and recommend the negative and positive patriarchal practices prevailing in their communities to curb GBV. The next section discusses cultural practices that result in GBV by focusing on African cultural practices with negative impact on women.

2.8.4. *Cultural beliefs and practices*

Reeves and Baden (2000:2) define culture as, “The distinctive patterns of ideas, beliefs, and norms which characterise the way of life and relations of a society or group within a society.” The way we think and interpret daily experiences around us is heavily influenced by our cultures. It is also from culture that people get their identity as ethnic groups or nations. According to Bate (2001:71),

Our perception, our common sense, our preferences and our tastes are all influenced by culture. Culture influences and even conditions our understanding concerning the truth about things, our explanatory models of reality as well as our epistemological systems of human reason and human judgement.

If one is robbed of one’s culture, one is equally robbed of identity. Important as it is, among many causes of GBV, certain cultural beliefs and practices have negatively impacted women and girls in various countries. Thus, the way we think about sexuality and gender is influenced by our cultural beliefs and practices. Cultural beliefs and practices towards women in any given culture are among the most difficult to challenge (Dawit & Busia, 1995:7). There are culturally harmful practices within communities and some have been challenged by women and continue to be challenged. In some cases, outsiders (people who do not belong to that culture) have had tensions with insiders (people of that culture) when attempting to challenge some harmful practices regarding women (Dawit & Busia, 1995:7).

Many African countries are ruled by a culture of silence. Women are not allowed to voice their concerns within the family and in the community; unlike their male counterparts. For instance, in traditional courts, women just go to listen and accept whatever men decide on their behalf. Attempts to speak are usually not allowed and are remarked by the statement: ‘*Vakadzi ngavanyarare uko!*’ which literally means ‘women must keep quiet’ (Manyonganise, 2015:2; Mkandawire, 2009, Dawit & Busia, 1995; Njovana & Watts, 1996). In the Shona culture, there is a proverb which emphasises that secrets of the home should remain untold, ‘*Chakafukidza dzimba matenga*’ (Manyonganise, 2015:2). The cited cultural proverb would encourage the abuser to continue tormenting the woman, fully aware that no one will ever know about it. A woman that does not divulge home or family secrets or physical harm inflicted on her is considered as cultured and a decent woman worthy of emulating. It is against this culture of

silence that some women have been left maimed, crippled and murdered in GBV¹⁴. In Zimbabwe, in 2014, a woman by the name of Isabel Masuka was murdered in her sleep and nobody knows what she had been silently experiencing in her marriage before the fateful night. Men are said to be the ones who craft culture and bend it to suit their needs and desires (Chirumanzu, 2014).

Harmful cultural practices¹⁵ and beliefs continue to subject women to GBV. In the era of HIV and AIDS, because of their subordinate position, most women cannot negotiate safe sex with their husbands, even if they know that the husband is unfaithful (Oduyoye & Kanyoro, 2006: 25 ; Dube & Kanyoro 2004; Phiri & Haddad, 2003). Some men would even lash out at their wife saying, ‘I only use a condom when I have a prostitute, not my wife’ (Machingura, 2012: 51). In Malawian culture, older men engage in sex with younger virgins to remove their fear of sleeping with older men (Mkandawire, 2009:7). This exposes the young girls to serious health problems. In both, Zimbabwe and Malawi (and other African countries) women go through genital mutilation against their will and from an early age their labia are elongated simply to give sexual pleasure to their husband. A woman’s ill health cannot deter a man from his conjugal ‘rights’ (Mkandawire, 2009:7; Manyonganise, 2015:2).

In addition, as mentioned earlier, *lobola* is inherently good for establishing a relationship between two families. However, the interpretation that settles in a man’s mind is, ‘I bought you’. Some families are charging exorbitant *lobola* prices and this just creates a possible foundation for GBV later on in marriage. Mkandawire (2009:8) states, “In a survey in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, 82% of women said it is accepted that, if a man provides *lobola* for his wife, it means that he owns her. This marriage tradition undermines the ability of women to escape abusive relationships.”

¹⁴ “Some of the most banal reasons for this loss of control included the woman taking too long to cook dinner, arriving home late from the hairdresser, going to visit her family without his permission, questioning his fidelity, and suspected witch-craft. In other cases, women were raped and then beaten to death to ensure their silence. It is unlikely that such extremes would traditionally have been tolerated within the extended family or the community. However, economic difficulties and rapid urbanisation have weakened the extended family structures which might have provided for a woman’s safety, often leaving women isolated from traditional sources of help” (Njovana & Watts 1996:47).

¹⁵ “In recent years, some international advocates have increasingly argued that harmful traditional practices should be addressed through anti-VAW programs” (Blanchfield *et al.*, 2008:10-11).

Other harmful cultural beliefs and practices, like widow cleansing to prove that the widow was innocent in the death of her husband are acts of GBV. Widow cleansing is a common practice in many African countries. It is when a certain man from the community sleeps with the widow to protect her from the evil spirit of the deceased husband. To prove that the widow was innocent in the death of her husband, other African cultures¹⁶ compel the widow to drink water used to wash the husband's corpse. Vomiting the water implies that she is guilty (Ushe, 2015:107-108). In Zimbabwean Shona and Ndaou cultures, the widow must stay awake the whole night sitting beside the casket of the husband, while others sleep. This is practised at a night vigil before the burial of the husband. All these cultural beliefs and practices infringe physically and psychologically on women.

The above discussion proves one point: culture is powerful and influences the way people behave across the globe. The best people to transform cultural beliefs and practices are owners of the culture themselves. To substantiate this, Bate (2001:71) notes,

However, it is on the deeper level of the good that communities and individuals find their synthesis and make their judgements about what truths to live by and what to let be. Culture then is a reality in human life and experience, which touches all dimensions of our humanity and consequently all dimensions of Christian experience.

This means religious beliefs and practices are not independent of traditional cultural beliefs and behaviours.

2.8.5. Religious beliefs and practices

Weed (n.d) states that, "One of the most challenging aspects of helping clergy and other pastoral ministers enhance their pastoral skills on this topic (*GBV*¹⁷) is the fact that some deny the problem exists within their congregations". Writers from other disciplines acknowledge the prevalence of GBV in religion and are inviting churches to work with organisations to curb the phenomenon (Damron & Johnson, 2015: 3). The denial of GBV within the church intensifies the cycle of abuse under the guise of church beliefs and traditions. Damron and Johnson (2015:9) further state, "Churches and religious leaders typically devote a large part of their

¹⁶ In other African cultures, the widows are expected to mourn the husband's death for a period of time and throughout this period she must wear dresses that depicted their mood of mourning. The widows wear black clothes and is not allowed to go out of the house for forty days or to cook or touch any food meant for another member of the family. She is seen as unclean until she has gone all the relevant traditional rites (Ushe, 2015:108).

¹⁷ Researchers addition

ministry to preparing individuals for marriage and relationships that mirror the spiritual guidelines of the faith system”. This suggests that religious leaders seem to be turning a blind eye to issues affecting the church. Women might feel the urge to stand up and challenge certain practices, but their history of subordinate placement in the church keeps them muzzled and marginalised (Chisale, 2020:2).

The church is caught up in a crisis caused by its religious beliefs and practices that continue to fan GBV within the church. Most of the beliefs and practices have been adhered to for a protracted time and have been regarded as normal. Faith and creeds are very crucial for religion. However, faith is supposed to change people and their behaviour. Faith must also challenge the way people behave, calling upon them to live without compromise and emphasising the need for introspection regarding GBV. The church must stop saying “Amen” to beliefs and religious practices that continue to fan GBV (Oliver, 2011:1; Brade, 2009). While many religious beliefs and practices are evident in Christianity, only a few are highlighted in this section.

The belief that men are superior to and dominant over women is not only confined to traditional cultures, but is also found in religion. It is generally expected that patriarchal practices should not be named among Christians. On the contrary, history has proven that the church continues to perpetuate patriarchal practices in communities and endorse such ideologies with scripture. In other words, cultural lenses are used to interpret scripture sometimes to the detriment of women in the church. For instance, Ayodapo (2013:2) citing Borapai (1995) notes that in, “Genesis 2:21-24, the church asserted that a woman was never created as a person but one rib of man and as a result, she was nothing but a part of him and she has no identity of her own, but that of her husband.”

Women may not take influential leadership roles or positions at a local church and nationally. No matter how committed and devoted a woman might be in serving the Lord her capacity to serve is usually confined to docile¹⁸ positions. Therefore, “men may hold onto very narrow, limited roles for women, seeing women as subservient and auxiliary to positions of men” (Rayburn, 2015:28). The situation becomes even worse if someone is a widow, divorcee, single

¹⁸ “Girls who have been instilled with culturally traditional religious beliefs supportive of ideas of female inferiority and subservience may not be able to see themselves outside a helping, dependent, submissive role played out with paternal, protective men who determine their lives and define their very being” (Rayburn, 2015:28).

parent and unmarried. These women are discriminated against in churches and they deserve particular attention (Njoroge, 2013:20). Conversely, men that fit the categories of the just mentioned women may not be discriminated against and stigmatised in the church. By implication, women are perceived to be second class humans in church. This is based on the invalid understanding of Genesis 1:27-28 regarded as the “order of creation” which seems to set the stage for the gender imbalances that exist in the church. Genesis 2:18-24 is also manipulated to advance male prejudice in the church and women are restricted to being helpers. Ushe (2015: 106) states, “Religious programming also binds women into accepting humiliation as if it is the same as the Christian virtue of humbleness” This could also mean that abusive doctrines and practices crafted should be embraced without criticising them. Across the Christian churches women are the majority numerically, but they remain powerless and this has constantly made them victims of GBV (Sibanda & Maphosa, 2013: 97; Chisale 2020).

Invalid interpretation of biblical passages like Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12, *et cetera* by certain churches has led to the silencing of women in the church. The following authors advance the idea that the Bible is used to reinforce lessons where women are supposed to be obedient to their husbands under all circumstances (Vengeyi 2013b: 69; Jenkins, 2006:160; Ushe, 2015: 105). Such obedience “under all circumstances” comes with endurance and sacrifice to the detriment of women. Forums, such as midweek women’s fellowship have been created so that women have an opportunity to speak woman to woman in the absence of men. While this move seems to be positive, women still remain excluded from men and do not have a platform to share with men what they feel about what they go through. This pattern continues to regard women as inferior to men. What we have here is a ‘theology’ of exclusion that manifests clearly as GBV. This type of ‘theology’ continues to ignite an emotional crisis in women (Maposa & Sibanda, 2013: 105; Museka, Phiri & Madondo, 2013: 114).

In some African Initiated Churches (AICs), women still experience marginalisation in the following areas. First, they still practise forced marriages. The leaders of the church presume to have received a vision from God and announce who should be married to whom. The so-called ‘prophecy’ cannot be refuted, because the prophet would have spoken. In this case, these churches have adopted a traditional practice to suit its religious outlook. Parents of the young girls also use force, beating and intimidation of the girls to accept such marriage arrangements within the church (Vengeyi, 2013: 65-66; Chakawa, 2010: 38-45; Kabweza, 1979: 60). Women

are married against their will and worse not to the husband of their choice. Second, it is the practice of many AICs that a menstruating woman may not mingle with other congregants due to her 'uncleanliness' caused by the menstrual flow. This invalid interpretation of scripture is based on Leviticus 15: 19ff. It is interesting to note that the same passage of scripture from 15:1-18 speaks about the uncleanliness of man, but the AICs do not treat men in the same manner they treat women. Here we have an interpretation that seeks to isolate women. Third, deprivation of birth control methods based on Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it..." subject women to sexual abuse and many health complications. The belief is that failure to bear many children is a sin against the unborn souls (Vengeyi, 2013a: 67). Deprivation of family planning methods physically and psychologically lead to GBV. Goodley and Stennis (2015: 133) note that,

...too many churches of African ancestry have been silent, condoning or minimizing violence under the guise of religious doctrine. They are desperately needed to help create solutions to address men's violence against women. Regardless of ethnic background, domestic violence is pervasive among communities of African ancestry.

Finally, idolised maleness is an ingrained belief that cuts across Christian denominations and other religions. "The picture of the ruling man becomes an idol, being likened to and honoured like God. The symbol loses its ability to point to ultimate truth" (Berman, 2015:131; Johnson, 1992a: 36). Using the book of Hosea, Berman (2015:131) illustrates this by saying that Gomer is seen as representing the complete opposite of God; while Hosea is seen as maintaining what it is to stand for God. Thus, the husband is seen as of greater worth and value than the wife. "A husband is very close to the divine, according to the implications of the metaphor, and the wife very far in the opposite direction" (Berman, 2015: 131; Hampson, 1990: 152). The view of God as majestic, righteous, merciful and worthy of respect and worship is misunderstood through transference of these attributes to men. Hence, they become idolised in the church. For instance, Sarah called Abraham 'Lord' in Gen. 18:12. The apostle Peter (1 Pet. 3:6) quotes and commends the act of Sarah and commends women to address their husbands in the same manner (Berman, 2015:131). While the practice is commendable if understood in its context, some Christian denominations push this to the extreme and eclipse the correct understanding of the texts.

Consequently, the church has a responsibility to deal with GBV, "through preaching with a new voice, preaching in emancipating ways that do foster gender-based violence borne out of patriarchal ways of viewing the Bible. More public voices should be heard, with a view to

liberating victims of *gender based violence*¹⁹ (Ingwani, 2013: 83). There should be a transformation that unshackles women and men. When the shackles are removed, women can be freed from abuse (Ingwani, 2013:83-84; Moyo, 2002:392). Deviant interpretation and understanding of scripture continue to keep women subservient and less equal to men in the name of religion. Yet a theology that begins with the understanding of God's mind on the status of women leads to better interpretation of Scripture and ultimately to a God honouring treatment of women in the church (Hendriks, 2007:1004). What we have in the church are cultural patriarchal practices that continue to be normalised, resulting in GBV in the church.

2.9. Conclusion and summary

The chapter discussed trends on GBV from a global perspective and found that GBV is prevalent across the globe. Debate on GBV centres (among many debates) around the increase of violence against women during armed conflict, femicide, male dominance and gender equality and women empowerment. This is caused by the unequal power relationships between men and women as revealed in structured relationships. The chapter has also revealed that GBV remains a global cause of concern and a human rights violation against women. The research also found that GBV manifests in different forms as physical and psychological violence and disproportionately affects women globally. GBV can be difficult to comprehend and harness due to its manifestation in various contexts. Furthermore, normative roles that men and women are socially expected to fulfil in society determine what it means to be male or female in a given context. Consequently, individuals in communities and churches have gender stereotypes about men and women that must be challenged. Different societies and institutions discriminate against women differently. This suggests an analysis of the phenomenon especially by participants of the cultural context; to arrive at better solutions that mitigate against GBV.

The research revealed that male dominance and authority in many societies and communities is one of the major driving factors for the persistence of GBV. Most women remain subservient to men in different structural relationships because most of them are bound by socio-cultural tenets that discriminate and disempower women. Across the globe, religious beliefs and practices keep women subjected to men. This suggests that the church is complicit and needs to transform in order to play a meaningful public role to address GBV. Transformation begins with God and knowledge of how he views the human situation and context. Osmer (2008) uses

¹⁹ Not in the authors words.

the same approach as well in his method of doing practical theology. It is suggested in this chapter that people in their communities need to identify the causes of GBV and begin to work on solutions relevant to their contexts towards transformation.

Having considered GBV in the community the emerging question that could be posed for the next chapter is: What is the GBV situation in Zimbabwe as the context of the United Baptist Church?

Chapter 3: An analysis of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the GBV situation in Zimbabwe as the national context of the UBCZ. The chapter achieves this by discussing the phenomenon in the following five sections. First, the chapter discusses GBV in Zimbabwe with an aim to establish an informed prevalence of the phenomenon. Second, a discussion about GBV factors and their interplay, shows that one factor is not exclusively the only cause of GBV. Rather one factor influences another in making GBV more prevalent. Third, the chapter discusses selected contextual GBV drivers in the country and the underlying causes of such drivers. Given the discussion on the contextual drivers, the following question could be posed: What is the suitable gender theoretical framework that could be utilised to address GBV in the country? Thus, the fourth section discusses a gender theoretical framework to study GBV in Zimbabwe. The SRA framework is utilised in this research. Fifth, the chapter ends by providing a summary and conclusion on the discussion about GBV in Zimbabwe.

3.2. Zimbabwean government and gender-based violence

The government of Zimbabwe has proven to be assertive and committed, “...to eradicate gender based violence and promote gender equality” (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015: iii). The country’s commitment is identifiable in that, Zimbabwe consented to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1991; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2007; and the SADC protocol on Gender Development in 2009 (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015:iii). By ratifying and participating in these instruments, Zimbabwe acknowledges that GBV is a public social ill both regionally and internationally.

Apart from the above regional and international conventions that Zimbabwe subscribes to as a nation, the country designed its own national instruments to eliminate GBV. In 2007, the nation implemented the Domestic Violence Act and the Anti Domestic Violence Council (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015: iii). Some of the policies found in Zimbabwe have been mentioned in chapter 1 and it would be redundant to include them here.

Complementary efforts by NGOs in the country seek to raise awareness and curb GBV (ZIMSTAT, 2016:58; ZNGBVS, 2012-2015: iii). The Zimbabwe National Gender Based Violence Strategy (2012-2015: iii) states, "...the needs of many survivors remain unmet and prevention efforts are diminished due to limited resources and coordination among the various sectors." While efforts to meet the needs of survivors are inevitable, this research argues that dealing with the root causes and major drivers of GBV should take precedence. Such root causes include an interplay of (among many) patriarchal practices, religious practices that oppress women, social norms, cultural norms and values that promote gender inequality *et cetera* (Ozaki & Otis, 2017; Johnson, 2015b; Maisiri, 2016; Gerhardt, 2014; Kambarami, 2006; Chisale, 2020). Furthermore, implementation of government policies remains hampered by "a lack of multi sectorial intervention that work together to deal with gender based violence" (GCI, 2011:5). The research would also argue that those involved in the multi-sectorial interventions should not be collaborators in harbouring GBV factors, for this would impinge on their effectiveness. The church is among sectors of society and is blamed for its ambivalent nature on GBV issues in and outside the church. The following section explores GBV situation in Zimbabwe.

3.2.1. Prevalence of gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

The ZDHS (ZDHS, 2015; also cited in Home Office,²⁰ 2018:16-17) revealed the following key findings regarding the state of GBV in Zimbabwe:

- The UNFPA noted that 'about 1 in 3 women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence and about 1 in 4 women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15'.
- There is an increase in women that report having experienced violence in their lifetime - from 29.9% in 2010 to 34.8% in 2015. It is noted that the key perpetrator of violence is the current, former husband or partner.
- 14% of women aged 15-49 report that they have experienced sexual violence; 8% have experienced sexual violence in the 12 months before the survey. Current and former husband/partner and current/former boyfriends are the most common perpetrators of sexual violence, followed by other relatives and strangers.
- More than one in three (35%) ever-married women aged 15-49 have experienced spousal violence (physical or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner). 20% of ever-married women have experienced physical or sexual violence by their partner in the year

²⁰ Country Policy and Information Note Zimbabwe: Women fearing gender-based harm or violence

before the survey. The experience of spousal violence is relatively common throughout Zimbabwe, ranging from 20% in Matabeleland North to 45% in Mashonaland West.

- Almost 40% of women aged 15-49 who have experienced physical or sexual violence, sought help to stop the violence. More than half of these women sought help from their own families, while 37% went to their husband/partner's family. 21% sought help from the police.

During the 16 Days of Activism against GBV the UN resident coordinator, Mr Bishow Parajuli said, “there are still many thousands of gender based violence cases reported across the country – and we know that even one case, is one too many and we must end this social ill” (UNDP, 2017). The statement serves as a dipstick to plumb the depth of the phenomenon in the country. Like many countries, Zimbabwe still needs to strive very hard to achieve the UN SDGs (UN SDGs, 2016).

The Zimbabwean constitution²¹ has a clear provision of assurance and protection of equality regardless of gender. Based on the constitution the National Gender Policy (NGP) 2013-2017 has its vision clearly stated as, “A gender just society in which men and women enjoy equality, contribute and benefit as equal partners in the development of country.” The goal is also unequivocally stated as, “To eradicate gender discrimination and inequalities in all spheres of life and development” (NGP, 2013-2017:11). This entails efforts by the nation to have balanced representation and participation in public spheres. Coupled with the efforts being made; there is also an increased awareness of GBV.

However, women's representation in the highest positions in government, cooperative sectors, and other economic and social institutions continues to reflect certain aspects of GBV. In his keynote address (17 May 2017), the chairperson of The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) said the following:

Statistics show that women constitute only 34% of the current parliament [...] The statistics also show that women are underrepresented at the highest levels in Government and in the corporate sector and other economic and social institutions. According to the research done in 2015, out 64 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of companies listed on the stock exchange, only three CEOs were females (4.68 %) and out of the 103 CEOs of

²¹ “Chapter 4 of the 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution, Part 2, Sections 51, 52 and 53 provide for the right to dignity, personal security and freedom from inhumane and degrading treatment and all forms of violence (NGP, 2013-2017:6)

state owned parastatals there were only 15 female CEOs. Out of 26 permanent secretaries, only 8 are females (Home Office, 2018:16).

This means that women in Zimbabwe are still under-represented in many sectors of society and that productive effort is still needed to ensure that gender parity is achieved in the country.

The UNDP further alludes to representation of women in leadership positions at various levels in public service and calls for greater attention and need for improvement (UNDP, 2017). The NGP (2013-2017:4) concurs that, “the reality however still falls short of the target as there still exist disparities in a number of areas.” To prove disparities that still exist, the following evidence is provided in the NGP document. The disparity on gender inequality still favours more men than women as can be seen from the Table below (NGP, 2013-2017:4). The researcher has just selected a few services to highlight a point.

Public Service Institution	Percentage (%) of Women
Parliament of Zimbabwe House of Assembly	24%
Parliament of Zimbabwe Senate	14%
Cabinet Ministers	20%
Permanent Secretaries	26%
Public Service Directors	33%
Supreme and High Court Judges	29%
ZRP Deputy Commissioners	25%
Zimbabwe Defence Forces Highest levels	0%

The above Table reveals that more men occupy influential positions in the public service as compared to women. Is it by design or is there a shortage of capable women to lead fully any of the public service positions? According to the Home Office (2018:7 also in ZGC, 2017),

Women experience discrimination and remain disadvantaged in society. They are also under-represented in public life. However, limited female representation in parliament is guaranteed by a ‘quota’ system implemented through the constitution ensuring a minimum of 60 seats for women out of 270 until the next set of elections in 2023. The most recent appointments to government in September 2018, saw six women appointed to a cabinet of 20, including the first female defence minister for Zimbabwe.

The rights of women are well articulated on paper in Zimbabwe, but intentional effort is needed to ensure that what is on paper becomes a living reality.

Prosecution in Zimbabwe acknowledges and is able to name the existence of GBV. In June and July 2017, a judge of the High Court of Zimbabwe prosecuted a man for murdering a woman in a bar (Home Office, 2018:25). What stood out in this prosecution were the words uttered by the judge in the prosecution. He said,

This is [...] not a case of murder in a gender-neutral context. The genesis of the attack that led to the killing of the deceased must be understood for what it was – a form of gender based violence. It would be truly amiss for this court to fail to make this connection to gender based violence from the onset because that is ultimately what the killing was about in this case (Home Office, 2018:25).

If the judiciary is alert like this and is able to correctly identify and name GBV for what it is, why is this phenomenon so prevalent in Zimbabwe? Some reasons could be cited for the increase in GBV. First, many victims of GBV opt not to report their cases of abuse to the police, because they are afraid of stigmatisation and constraints of social attitudes. For instance, one of the social attitudes is that society would perceive reporting a husband for abuse as indecent and a lack of respect by the victim. Second, in some cases, police have been reluctant to intervene in cases of GBV and treated such cases as domestic affairs (Home Office, 2018:8). Third, the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (IFRC quoted in Home Office, 2018:2-22) stated that,

In some cases, respondents reported that the police also had an attitude that did not encourage them to follow through their cases, for example, being told that they provoked the perpetrator. They said that such police attitudes discourage women from following through with the cases.

This leaves women in a quandary and they continue to suffer GBV in Zimbabwe.

Given the state and prevalence of GBV in Zimbabwe, one is left wondering about the root drivers of this phenomenon. There are many drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe that could be unearthed. The following section will analyse some key drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe.

3.3. Gender-based violence factors and their interplay

The increase in GBV in Zimbabwe is a pointer for the need to investigate its underlying factors. Identification of the factors does not immediately provide final answers and solutions to the problem. There are no easy answers to the problem that the country is facing because the factors are many and complicated. Fowler (1983:3) alerts us to the fact that factors that contribute to GBV have left society in a quandary. No single factor can exhaustively explain why a particular

gender (women) suffers GBV, while the other gender (men) seems less affected (SIDA,²² 2015:10).

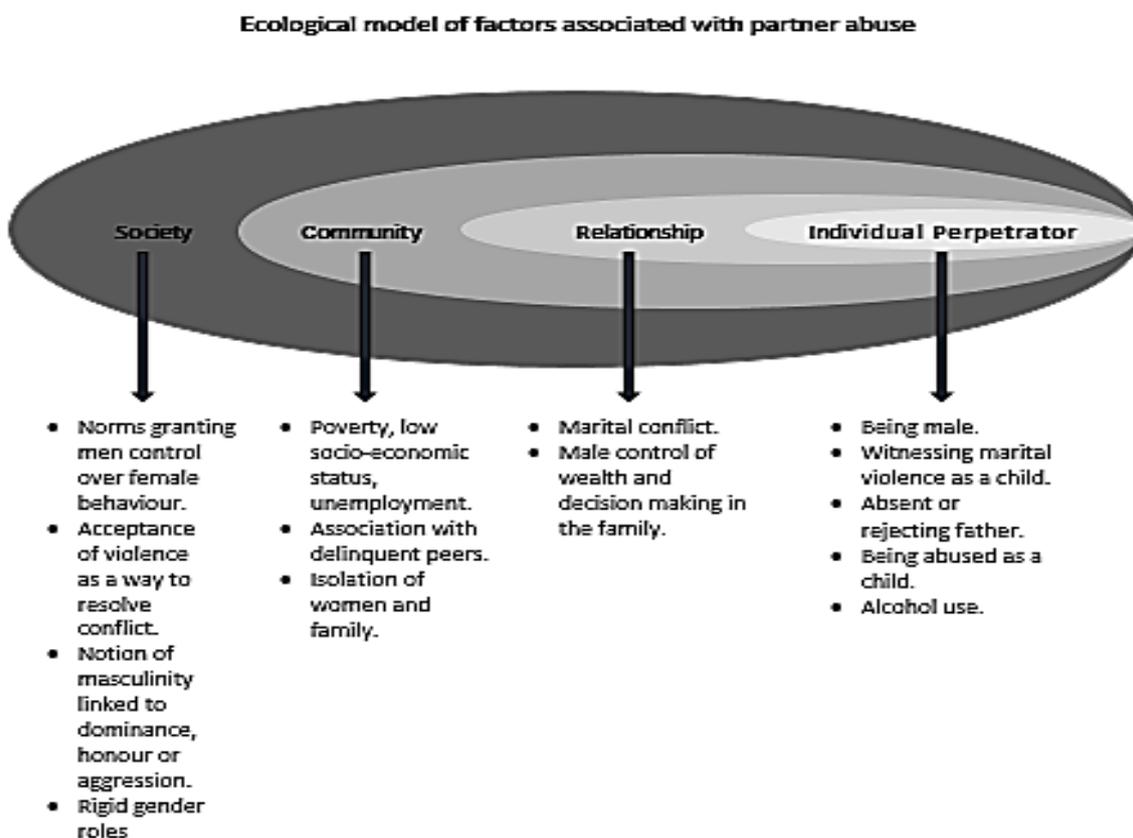
According to Bisika (2008:1885), GBV is extremely difficult to understand and has its roots in the inequalities and inequities that exist between women and men. The inequalities and inequities have an interplay with the social, cultural, economic and political issues (Bisika, 2008:1885). In the same vein, the *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation* (CSV, 2016: 8 c.f. SIDA, 2015: 6), conducted a review of GBV and noted that, “many studies (e.g. Jewkes, 2002; Wood, 2006; Shamu *et al.*, 2013) found that imbalances of power in gender inequality and discriminatory patriarchal practices against women to be root causes of GBV”. Many factors that contribute to GBV have been identified and many of them are similar across the globe, though they are played out differently in a given culture and social setting. For instance, patriarchy is found in any culture, but the way it is expressed in Zimbabwe may differ from other nations. Another example is wife battering, what construes battery in various nations differs, but the result is the same in that women suffer GBV.

The interplay of the contributing factors to GBV remains overwhelming. To better comprehend the interplay of the causal factors, research is increasingly using an ecological framework approach to understand the interplay. The “ecological framework” developed by Helse distinguishes risk factors at four levels: individual, relationship, community and societal level (Helse, 1998: 264 cited in WHO, 2005). These factors are associated with an increased likelihood that an individual will become either a victim, or a perpetrator of violence. The model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the risk factors of GBV and their interplay, and may therefore, be used as a guide for designing interventions in the fields of prevention and response (WHO, 2010). The following diagram, adapted from Helse (1998:210; c.f. WHO, 2012) best summarises the interplay of factors associated with GBV. What happens at each level, ends with women as victims that bear the consequences of the decisions made by men. In its research on GBV, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (2015:6 c.f. CSV, 2016: 8) states that, the UN Joint Programme Partners for Prevention (P4P) reported, “...the use of violence was associated with a complex interplay of different contributing factors at the individual, relationship, community and greater societal level”. This

²² Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

further shows effort by research organisations to utilise the ecological framework as a way of attempting to understand the interplay of GBV factors.

Figure 1: Gender-based violence factors ecological framework



source: Adapted from Heise, 1998 (210)

We may understand the interplay of factors as follows. A young boy who grew up witnessing violence by an individual perpetrator (e.g. father) is most likely going to live out the behaviour in his married life. Such behaviour is then treated as normal by the community. Then out of the community, society is formed and is predominantly comprised of people with the same perception of women. Thus, the manifestation of GBV in many institutions of society has its origins at an individual level, which in turn permeates the network of the human environment. On the other hand, a woman raised in an abusive environment at an individual level is likely to become a victim at all levels, because of the way society perceives women. She has no power to change the social, religious or political beliefs of her environment. Heise, Ellsberg and

Gottmoeller (2002:7) advance that, “in this model²³, violence against women results from the interaction of factors at different levels of the social environment”. Therefore, the ecological framework best illustrates that no single factor of GBV is independent, but under the four categorisations, the factors are interconnected. Each level of social environment in the model has its own factors that interact with other levels (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottmoeller, 2002:8).

The interplay or intersection of how these levels generate GBV in Zimbabwe is discussed below. As such, the following section discusses key drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe.

3.4. Gender-based violence drivers in Zimbabwe

Underpinned in the selected drivers is the normalised female oppression by men that continues to nurture GBV (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:95). Dealing with wife battering (as an example) could be just the beginning of a long story. This means an analysis of the underlying causes of GBV is pertinent in relation to the drivers that are going to be discussed. Understanding the underlying causes, helps one understand better what is played out as GBV and would assist towards crafting better solutions. Therefore, as this section discusses some drivers, it is also going to respond to the following question: What are the underlying causes of GBV drivers? This leads to a discussion of the first driver of GBV.

3.4.1. The family structure in Zimbabwe

The family instils norms and values that would make a child socialise with the outside world; that is the community, market and state. According to Massaquoi (2015:27), “...the family is the first experience that individuals have relationships with.” The norms and values inculcated from the family structure form a worldview that will influence the gender relations between men and women in spheres of operations. A closer study of the Zimbabwean family structure shows that men occupy a position of control over household matters, while women occupy subservient positions. As such women have been described as, “particularly vulnerable to

²³ “The model can best be visualized as four concentric circles. The innermost circle represents the biological and personal history that each individual brings to his or her behaviour in relationships. The second circle represents the immediate context in which abuse takes place: frequently the family or other intimate or acquaintance relationship. The third circle represents the institutions and social structures, both formal and informal, in which relationships are embedded in neighbourhoods, the workplace, social networks, and peer groups. The fourth, outermost circle is the economic and social environment, including cultural norms” (Heise, Ellsberg & Gottmoeller, 2002:7).

violence, because of their low status and lack of power within the family” (Njovana & Watts, 1996:47). Within the family, it is expected of men to take charge of their family and failure to do so devalues or degrades the importance of men in the community. Sometimes, the male leadership has to be demonstrated through taking tough measures against the wife and children. The driving cause of this is what society has taught men directly or indirectly and that behaviour defines what it means to be a father within a family. Kambarami (2006:3) advances that,

the family, as a social institution, is a *brewery* for patriarchal practices by socializing the young to accept sexually differentiated roles...In the Shona culture, patriarchal practices shape and perpetuate gender inequality and strip women of any form of control over their sexuality.

In the same vein, Hayes, Abbott and Cook (2016:1541) add that, “patriarchal society encourages male violence against women and, therefore, there is a need to deal with the inherent gendered structure of society instead of individual men.” Implicit in the argument by Hayes, Abbott and Cook is the allusion to the underlying cause identifiable as ‘gendered structure of society’. This means there is community or societal pressure for men to behave as they do and for women to accept the situation as it is. This does not justify the maltreatment that women experience. Society is structured in such a way that, “...create and reproduce systematic differences in the positioning of different groups of people” (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999: 103). Women that seek to assert authority over men in a home setting lose respect from within the family and suffer stigmatisation from society. Hence, they are forced to maintain their dignity under unbearable conditions in most cases.

Consequently, this is one way of explaining that GBV cases are committed within the family structure. This is attributed to the influence of customs in the family structure that are powerful, influential and favour men, rather than women. For example, women cannot make decisions for the husband and children. It is preferable to have a drunk and irresponsible father preside over issues, than a sober and intelligent mother. Due to the underlying influence of strong customs, a woman’s brilliant idea or decision is never intelligent, until male authority supports it. Okome (2003:71) cites Lightfoot-Klein (1989:47) who rightly states,

Custom in Africa is stronger than domination, stronger than the law, stronger even than religion. Over the years, customary practices have been incorporated into religion, and ultimately have come to be believed by their practitioners to be demanded by their adopted gods, whoever they may be.

We add here that the worldview of Zimbabwean men and women is controlled by customs. Customs are important. Without the customs, one is stripped of a sense of belonging in family, community and society. Utilising the ecological model discussed above, the interplay of customs learned at individual level resurface in relationships, community and society as a controlling undercurrent. However, customs continue to negatively infringe on the rights and personal safety of women (Home Office, 2018:11; CSV, 2016:18), because they have not been identified as the underlying causes of GBV.

The power, control and prominence of men over women can be dovetailed with the customary law in Zimbabwe. Customary law is viewed as, "...predominantly patriarchal in its modes of perceiving reality and constructing meanings" (Vambe, 2003:473; Jackson, 2012:46). Such perceptions and constructions tend to elevate men over women in Zimbabwean families. Ndulo (2011:87) further advances that,

Customary law has great impact in the area of personal law in regard to matters such as marriage, inheritance and traditional authority, and because it developed in an era dominated by patriarchy some of its norms conflict with human rights norms guaranteeing equality between men and women.

During the colonial period, the customary law was organised into an unyielding tool that clearly discriminated against women. For instance, women were treated as minors which meant they could not enter into marriage, transactions, or even family planning methods without the knowledge or consent of a male guardian. Single women had to have their fathers or a male within the family as guardians (Njovana & Watts, 1996:49; Home Office, 2018:13). The family institution in Zimbabwe functions in such a manner that it continues to generate inequalities between men and women. An unearthing of the underlying causes for such behaviours calls for a need to re-examine what it means to be a father in homes, where men and women should exist in a mutual relationship with each fulfilling their role.

The formative stages of marriage groom a woman towards staying with a husband. Thus, upon marriage a woman must stay with her husband's family and is expected to do all the household chores. This intention is to groom her, but also for her to earn a reputation for herself as a capable daughter-in-law (*Muroora*). Even in situations where the husband migrates to other countries due to work, she is left in the custody of the husband's parents and must still perform all the household chores (Chauke, 2006:108). In addition, by keeping her under other male custodians and the husband's parents, implies that she finds her worth and purpose as long as

she is subservient to other people (males). The reason for this is to protect her from being exploited by other men and it is culturally acceptable for men to protect their women. However, where does one draw a line between protection and protection? It is clear that men are independent and not subject to anyone in marriage. Men can also decide to get another wife, while they are 'protective' of the current wife. In view of the above, family in the Zimbabwean context is influenced by patriarchal relationships in such a way that there is a systematic positioning of women that continues to make the husband superior and the wife inferior (Obbo, 1980: 51; Althaus, 1997; Ansell, 2001; Moosa, 1996).

Under the family structure, certain communities and religious groups in Zimbabwe still approve polygamous marriages. "In a traditional polygamous family, a man would therefore marry a number of wives who would live and work together in the fields to produce food and enhance the family's wealth" (Bledsoe, 1980: 115-125; Chaka, Mubaya & Mukamuri, 2014: 9). Women are considered as a source of wealth and means of getting wealth through their labour in the fields. Most of the labourers found in the fields are women and children. A few men work in the fields with their families. The proceeds from the field are predominantly claimed and managed by men as their own. Women in this type of marriage have learned to accept this as a normal, which the husband would use to exercise control within the marriage. This unequal social relation is tolerable and is within social norms as sanctioned by society (Hindin, 2003:502). More so, the husband sometimes acts as the supervisor only. His role is more important and receives more recognition than that of the wives who labour tirelessly. Underlying this, is the understanding that a woman cannot own anything since she is there only for marriage in another family, which exploits and subdues women. These circumstances are conducive to GBV and are tolerated as normal behaviour in polygamy. Under such circumstances, women are left with "limited exit options, either for leaving the marriage or adopting a corporative position within it" (Jackson, 2012:42).

The social relations should shift from oppressive norms and role expectations regarding women in Zimbabwe. In a number of families there are still practices that, "treat women and girls as property of men within individual families as well as in society, and thus place them in emotional and physical danger" (Ozaki & Otis, 2017:1077). Concisely, the Zimbabwean family structure is patriarchal in nature even in this age of globalisation (Musodza *et al.*, 2015:125; Kambarami, 2006: 9; Chogugudza, 2004:18). A woman in the home, church, community, and state lives under subordinate patriarchal practices that emanate from the family structure. This

promotes fertile ground for GBV. Relationships in most marriages are not built on mutual reciprocity between husband and wife. In the end, this does not encourage or build autonomy for women, because they remain solely controlled and dependent on males. Autonomy does not mean in this case disobeying the husband, but mutual reciprocity with recognition of the woman as a capable and able person and this would transform social relations (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:104). Having looked at the family relations as the primary cause of violence against women, there are other drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe.

3.4.2. Marriage customs that result in gender-based violence

Education and culture change have drowned certain marriage practices engrained in people's culture in Zimbabwe (Meekers, 1993:35). For instance (among others), the traditional *musangabere* (whereby a man used to grab, carry and run away with a woman of his choice to his homestead) is no longer practised, because it can lead to someone serving a long time in prison. Also, the *mutenga tore* (whereby two male friends could exchange their sisters in marriage) custom is no longer practised. However, there are customs that continue to make women vulnerable to GBV. Such customs have continued to ensure that the cries of women are "muzzled and muffled" (Chitando, 2004:152). This section analyses three marriage customs still found in Zimbabwe that continue to fan GBV though they are done with 'good' intentions.

First, a custom like *chimutsa mapfiwa*, still exists though people do not use the exact term, but the elements are still there and practised indirectly. *Chimutsa mapfihwa* is when upon the death of a married daughter, the family arranges for the younger daughter to get married to her late sister's husband. The major reasons for such marriages are procreation, access to property of the deceased daughter and care for the late sister's children. If the son-in-law marries another woman, care of the children will be compromised and access to property will be denied. So, the second daughter is used as a point of entry to the material benefits and access to more support from the son-in-law. Though the home belongs to the son-in-law according to the Shona culture, the in-laws continue to value the input of their late daughter as well. In the event that the family of the deceased woman no longer has an unmarried daughter, they approach a granddaughter to marry the son-in-law. With the consent of male leaders of the family, the matriarchs usually have secret and enticing strategies to ensure that the son-in-law gives in.

It is in these situations that most young girls are currently forced to marry somebody much older. They are also deprived the privilege to choose a man of their choice and would remain stuck with a man they did not choose for the benefit of the family. If the man was abusive to the deceased, the young woman has to inherit the abuse as well. If her sister died of HIV and AIDS, she is coerced to risk her life simply because the family cannot risk losing the riches, which their late daughter assisted to amass. Usually the people negotiating and manipulating this type of marriage, do not really care about the well-being of the woman they would force to enter into such a union. Some young girls cannot resist the coercion, because culture sanctions it and the coercion sometimes encompasses spiritual threats. Customs and decisions engineered by men are final with women subserviently standing on the receiving end.

Second, another marriage custom that is still infringing the rights of women and perpetuating GBV is *nhaka* or levirate marriages. This is where a widow marries a brother or younger brother of the deceased man as arranged by the family. Though this custom is slowly fading away, some women continue their married life with men they do not love, because they were forced to marry them. A woman who denies *nhaka* may not continue to stay in that family, but has to go back to her family. She will have to abandon what she worked for and leave the children behind (Kambarami, 2006: 8). Mothers and their children are inseparable. This will force women to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their children. In some cases, the man inheriting the widow might already have a family. This puts the life of the woman at risk given the prevalence of HIV and AIDS. In some cases, most of what she worked for with her late husband may be plundered irresponsibly by the inheriting man. The man inheriting the woman may not be employed and the woman could be employed. That would mean the woman has an extra burden to support the man and he might even control the money she earns. This marriage custom in Zimbabwe allows GBV to continue. Women continue to be treated as second-class citizens by the patriarchal society that makes oppressive decisions for women. Women may be limited to decide against this practice, because of the rules that are “expressed through norms, values, laws, traditions and customs...they entrench ways of doing things, often to such an extent that they seem natural or unchangeable” (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:106). If women in these situations were asked why they engaged in such practices, most of them would say they had no choice, but had to obey their culture. Therefore, it seems what is labelled cultural may not be altered and must be accepted as “normal”.

Third, a subtle custom tucked within marriages is *chiramu*. The custom allows the brother-in-law to fondle the breasts of the wife's younger sister(s) and other parts of the body. Predominantly, young girls experience this kind of abuse when they come to stay with their sisters in towns as helpers or going to school. He can also make sexually suggestive statements to the sister-in-law. The man is allowed by culture to do this as long as he does it in the absence of his wife and in-laws. This usually happens because the young girl cannot admit or report what the brother-in-law is doing due to the age difference and lack of knowledge about GBV. There are known clear cases where this behaviour led to rape and impregnation of the sister-in-law. Once this happens, the issue is kept a secret within the family. With nowhere to go or turn, women endure the abuse. Many GBV cases reported in Zimbabwe are committed within the family (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:99). The socially perceived male superiority over women encourages this kind of behaviour.

Women are positioned second to man structurally in Shona society. The problem is with the socially constructed attitudes by society towards women. A change in attitudes will allow for change in treatment regardless of where women serve in life. Thus, the underlying traditions and customs found in the culture influence treatment of women. There is a need to create balanced relationships between women and men. Such balanced relationships should target transforming the subordinate classification of women by creating conditions that empower them. Women may not speak, argue, act, implement changes or new ideas, *et cetera*, because they have not been empowered to do so. Empowerment can only be achieved through transformed gender relations. This leads to another driver of GBV in Zimbabwe.

3.4.3. *Bride wealth (Roora) and gender-based violence*

Similar to many African countries the negotiation and payment of bride wealth (*Roora*) is common in Zimbabwe and, "is the basis of marriage and family obligations" (Meekers, 1993:35). The payment of bride wealth to the bride's family has traditional good intentions that make marriage binding and important for those intending to get married. Chauke (2006:101) states that, "the African cultural practice of *lobola* is considered important, and is inextricably linked to marriage, growth of family and communities." Thus, traditionally in Zimbabwe, *roora* is intended to cement a relationship between families of the bride and the groom. The practice of getting married is not necessarily for the two, but there are expectations on how the marriage plays out for the family, community and society. There is value and respect attached to the

woman for whom *roora* has been paid, as compared to one who stays with a husband without the payment of bride wealth. Payment of bride wealth also instils in women a sense of belonging and seriousness of the husband's relationship with her.

Men in particular take charge and control the process of payment of *roora* (Obbo, 1980: 51; Ansell, 2001; Moosa, 1996). During bride wealth negotiations, the woman getting married cannot say how much she is worth. Men dominating the event decide how much she is worth and other women witnessing the occasion may have no contribution (Little, 1973:38; Stewart, 1995:30). This means women take a passive role and simply concur with what men have decided. Though women are present at these functions, they are only seen, but not heard. Men continue to make decisions for women under the supposition that men own women. Payment of *roora* keeps the woman subordinate to her husband. As a backlash from women, Meekers (1993:35) advances that, "Nowadays, women who are educated or who are engaged in wage labour often challenge their husband's authority and want a greater influence in decision-making". When men feel that they are being challenged by women, the result is excessive imbalance of gender relations that exploit women.

On the other hand, bride wealth has come to be viewed as a source of income. This entails some families resorting to exorbitant charges for their daughters. This may have been caused by the protracted economic crunch the country is experiencing. According to Chiweshe (2016:229), "This has far reaching consequences on gender relations especially in marriage women are left with little power to negotiate on issues such as safe sex or the use of family planning methods." In some instances, the prospective son-in-law just gives up when the charges are unrealistic. Consequently, the young woman also gets discouraged by losing her partner because she is not allowed to speak for herself in this case. The positioning of the woman as a "commodity" by her male parent renders her powerless and subject to continuous unfair treatment in marriage. Women's position remains unchanged and it appears as if they exist only to serve male interests. Matope, Maruzini, Chauraya and Bondai (2013:192) argues, "...women in marriage have less bargaining power as well as economic power and lack gender empowerment as the unequal power relations are premised on *roora*."

Underpinning the bride wealth practice in Zimbabwe, is the idea that a woman's worth is primarily found in the payment of bride wealth and not in love. If marriage is not premised on love as the determining and controlling factor, it is a source of GBV (Chauke, 2006:103).

Chauke citing Aschwanden (1982:158-161) further advances that, “A girl belongs to her own family...every important decision affecting her is made by her own people...a man (husband) holds a girl’s legs, but her family has the head.” The implication of the foregoing quote is that a woman has no control over her own life, let alone her body. Bride wealth intrinsically grants the right for a man to do as he pleases with his newly acquired ‘asset’. The notion that men pay money to get a wife encourages a social hierarchy where women are treated like property. The treatment would even be worse in the case where her parents charged a high amount of money. While bride wealth remains a cultural practice, understanding the underlying good intentions of this practice and transforming how men relate to women on this issue would encourage gender parity.

Matope, Maruzini, Chauraya and Bondai. (2013:192) argue that, “the payment of *lobola* has a gendered construct which constrain both the men financially and the woman by stripping her of her human rights.” In this situation, it logically follows that generally men feel women owe them and this has resulted in the abusive treatment experienced in marriage by most women. The woman remains subservient and voiceless under the impression that she has been bought. In some cases, the marriage becomes extremely abusive and she may not decide to go back to her parents, because they cannot afford to pay back the son-in-law. The concept of patriarchy in the payment of bride wealth entrenches the system of gender inequalities (Chiweshe, 2016:229). Men are in total control of the marriage patterns of women and would even require that the bride must be a virgin before the bride wealth is paid (Obbo, 1980:51). Conversely, the same requirement is not expected from men, even if they have lost their virginity. In this situation, one social group is expected to behave and maintain certain standards of morality, which the other group is not expected to, or even questioned. This continues to create inequalities between men and women. Male superiority and power over women are promoted through bride wealth. Lewis (2004) cited by Chiweshe (2016:231) “argues that culture is the vehicle by which patriarchal values that valorise masculinity are transmitted from one generation to the next. Culture is used as an excuse for many cases of gender inequality.” Another driver of GBV is women’s subordination to men.

3.4.4. Subordination of women to their male counterparts

Zimbabwean cultures are predisposed to male dominance and female subordination in marriage (Chimbandi, 2004: 7). Wardell and Thomson (1994:5) describe culture as having layers like an

onion. The layers can only be fully understood by the people within the culture (Chauke, 2006:27). Not all the layers in a given culture promote equality between women and men in society. Women endure the negative aspects of submission in the name of normalised cultural practices. Therefore, culture influences behaviour in marriage and could serve as a springboard from which most abuses against women in marriage emerge. As such, underlying submission are cultural gender norms and values (Hindin, 2003:502).

A real wife (*mukadzi chaiye*) in a Zimbabwean marriage context is one that submits to her husband. Her willingness to behave according to the cultural expectations earns her a good reputation (*unhu*). A woman that deviates from cultural and societal norms is labelled as not being a good person (*haasi munhu*) (Manyonganise, 2015:1). A son who brings home a submissive and obedient wife is esteemed as one who married a real person (*akaroora munhu chaiye*). In seeking to be *mukadzi chaiye* and *unhu* does not condone GBV. A closer analysis of the above descriptive behaviours expected from women reveals that men have a leading role in constructing the kind of behaviour they want to see in women. According to Manyonganise (2015:2), “patriarchy is embedded in gender ideology which places men at the top and women as their subordinates...in different social positions and patterns of expectations.” Power is the major driving force in this case where almost all authority is vested in men who control women in marriage. Consequently, men would continue to uphold subordination of women, because this promotes their privileged position in the home and society (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:108).

Women may not fully realise their identity and rights in marriage, because of their position (Kambarami, 2006:2). The effects of submission are realised, for instance, in decision-making by women. Women are not able to make decisions independent of their husbands. However, the husband has the liberty to decide on his behalf and for the wife. This emanates from the notion that a wife is a stranger (*mutorwa*) when she is married and cannot therefore make critical decisions without her husband’s knowledge. “More often women find out that they do not belong to either their families of birth and to families to which they are married” (Manyonganise, 2015:3). In some marriages, the wife could be more sensible and intelligent than the husband; she must remain submissive and take instructions from the husband. Her subordinate position may not allow her to negotiate even on issues affecting her health. A woman that instructs the husband to use protection during intercourse, risks being beaten or sent back to her parents or divorced. As a result, many women have contracted HIV infection,

because social relations created by culture and society sanctioned that they must remain submissive to their husbands (Sida, 2015:9; CSV, 2016:10). Culturally, to be sent back to one's parents or being divorced comes with a stigma of shame, failure and this keeps most women in abusive marriages. The other reason for remaining 'submissive' is that parents may not be able to pay back the bride wealth (Bere-Chikara, 1970:22). This has resulted in women having little or no control in marriages, because submission is not properly understood. This does not shutter hope for change on social relations regarding submission. The true meaning of submission needs to be understood by both men and women and suggestions need to be framed where cultural conceptions on submission need to change. While submission remains one of the drivers of GBV, Ndulo (2011:90) advises that, "...women are entitled to the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms within the family and society".

Furthermore, in the event that the husband assaults the wife, culture expects her to remain submissive to the husband. Cultural norms allow that the husband reserves the right to beat his wife for issues ranging from neglect of children, improper ironing of the husband's clothes or failure to cook a good meal *et cetera*.

Much of the wife beating in Zimbabwe is likely to stem from gender roles and social expectations. Violence against women in Zimbabwe is common ... because violence within marriage is widely tolerated (Hindin, 2003:502).

Women that report cases of GBV would sometimes withdraw their cases, due to societal pressure because a real woman does not expose her husband and her home (Manyonganise, 2015:2). In this situation, a culture of silence that muzzles women and subjects them to constant abuse exists. Gender relations warrant how a woman must behave in a family situation even if she may not agree with the treatment she is getting. The husband and pressure from societal norms exert control over her when she fails to measure up to the 'normal' expectations (Paluck & Ball, 2010:3). Society defines and approves of what is normal behaviour and submission is on such approved behaviour. The societal norms generate GBV by exalting the status of men and by denigrating women's status.

Submission in Zimbabwean marriages has contributed to the death of some women. Chapter 1 of this research cited the story of a man who slit his wife's throat in her sleep. The husband had neglected the family for close to 20 years as he engaged in other love affairs, while the wife raised the children alone. Upon his return, the wife accepted him into the family and did everything possible to make him feel welcome. Nevertheless, the husband slit her throat in her

sleep as he suspected her of infidelity while he was away. In this sad story, marriage gives a lot of power to man and it is almost as if the lives of women are in the hands of men. This story is representative of men that have assumed excess authority and control over women in gender relations. Women suffer verbal, physical, sexual abuse and ultimately death because ‘true submission’ prohibits them from revealing what is happening in their homes. Old women advise the younger women to be submissive and never argue with or refuse their husbands anything. Submission that is oppressive and endangers the life of a woman is not true submission, but a death sentence.

Child naming could be suggestive and indicative of the treatment that women receive from their husbands, all in the name of submission. Some names given to children are English words and phrases. The following examples of names reveal the suffering or treatment that women may have endured through submission. First, the name *Hofisi* (Office) carries the idea of a woman who was constantly incriminated and accused. The office is considered as a space or an environment for being questioned and accused without retaliation. Second, names like *Panichi* (Punish) and *Misery* bear the connotation of a woman who was tormented and experienced extreme poverty, desolation and depression. Third, the name *Government* carries the idea of a woman who felt governed, denied freedom of action, harassed and dominated. Last, *Hardlife* and *Honest* the meanings to these two names respectively carry the idea of a woman who was left to fend for herself and one who felt cheated due to infidelity, but she remained honest. All the names except one were picked from an article by Mashiri (2009: 71).

Viewed from within the context of wife submission, the names serve as leads to the nature of GBV women experience in marriage. The fact that a woman is not allowed to speak, but has to remain submissive; names

...function as indirect communicative vehicles in situations where direct comment is not feasible. The practice of derisive naming derives from the Shona people’s attitude towards resolving conflict and working out tension while maintaining relationships with others; that is keeping harmony and saving face (Mashiri, 2009:66).

Finally, social norms encourage male dominance and wife submission. Social norms, “communicate ideas about social approval or perceptions about what is normal or desirable in a given community, such as perceptions of the prevalence and acceptability of GBV” (Paluck & Ball, 2010:3). The behaviour displayed by men towards women could be linked to the norms

that a community approves as acceptable and unacceptable. Therefore, this suggests an intentional review of norms to address abusive wife submission.

3.4.5. Vulnerability of housemaids/house cleaners and gender-based violence

Housemaids or house cleaners is a category of people that is almost invisible in society. According to Zenebe, Gebresilassie and Asseffa (2014:105), “housemaids are part of women with low socioeconomic status and most of their backgrounds are either poor or divorced family and/or dead parents.” Their circumstances lead them to engage themselves in this less desired type of employment. Desperation for survival to support their families is sometimes inseparable from their vulnerability (Vengeyi, 2013b: 47). Hence, they remain vulnerable to sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological and physical abuses within the families where they are employed. Some eventually have frosty relationships with their employers emanating from the abuses inflicted on them by the employer (Mwanaka, 2013). Frosty relations are situations whereby the house cleaner would vent her maltreatment on the child when the parents are not present. While the abuse of house cleaners is prevalent in Zimbabwe and unacceptable, their abuse of minors or revenge in some ways is not warranted.

The housecleaners’ seemingly less desired occupation in society makes their plight barely remembered in national discourses on GBV; yet they constitute the majority of the abused women in the country. House cleaners also constitute the majority in different churches (especially in urban places) in Zimbabwe, yet the church is silent on issues regarding their abuse and livelihood. The abuser(s) could be prominent men and women within the same denomination and sharing the same Christian faith with the house cleaner. They are caught in an extreme state of poverty-stricken backgrounds and a desire to make a livelihood. This pushes them to silently endure abuse, because they seem to have no other point of exit. If they disclose the abuse by the employer or whoever is linked to the employer, they risk losing their job.

Some house cleaners face restrictions such as not being allowed to watch television, eat in the same dining room with family members (they eat alone in the kitchen), not interact more with family members, their clothes must not mix with those of the family both during washing and on the washing line *etcetera*. House cleaners are always the first to wake up at as early as four o’clock in the morning and the last to go to bed every day. The money they are given as a salary is extremely low to meet their most basic needs. Employers pay little or no attention towards

their betterment and this contradicts the laws of the country. “They are taken for granted yet they put the lives of their employers in order... They should be regarded professionally as provided by the law” (Majome, 2016). However, mention should be made that there are exceptional cases in Zimbabwe where house cleaners are treated like a family member. Nevertheless, cases of abuse abound.

Sexual abuse of house cleaners by male employers, their sons and relatives is a pervasive problem and treated as normal in the families where the abuse is committed (Vengeyi, 2013a:48). To demonstrate that such maltreatment exists, Vengeyi (2013b:48) quotes the following joke from a newspaper in Zimbabwe,

Darling our maid is pregnant. Husband replies; That’s her problem. Wife says, but I am worried. Husband responds, That’s your problem. Wife says, The neighbours are talking. Husband says, That’s their problem. Wife says, They are saying it is your pregnancy. Husband says, That’s my problem!

The joke reveals the sexual abuses experienced by house cleaners in Zimbabwe without being funny. These women are vulnerable and are treated as sexual objects, unable to voice their abuse. In the absence of other family members from home, most house cleaners face sexual abuse. Their risk of contracting HIV and AIDS is extremely high. The only thing that eventually displays the sexual abuse is if they fall pregnant. But falling pregnant adds to their dilemma.

A house cleaner that falls pregnant attracts a lot of verbal, emotional and physical abuse from her mistress. Most women fear that their husbands are responsible for the pregnancy. In the NewsDay newspaper, Saunyama (2016) narrates a tragic story of Tazorodzwa Takavada who was flogged to death with an electric cable by her mistress. The mistress suspected that her husband was responsible for the pregnancy. The tragic death of Tazorodzwa Takavada represents many atrocities committed against house cleaners. In a separate incident, a pastor fled after impregnating a house cleaner and the house cleaner was dismissed from work (Bulawayo24news, 2018). In the same newspaper on 12 May 2018, a story is narrated of a man who sodomised and had sex with the maid, while the wife was at work. The man was sentenced to 18 years in prison. In other cases, house cleaners are forced to abort; sometimes resulting in them dying in the process. Apart from being murdered and forced abortions, these women are primary suspects if anything goes missing in the house. Their position makes them vulnerable to anything and this does not justify the abuses they are facing. They deserve better.

Many countries in Africa have good laws to regulate a number of issues. Zimbabwe has a statutory instrument for domestic workers (men and women) that clearly stipulates commendable treatment of the employees under discussion. The application of the statutory instrument to the prevailing cases is minimal or almost non-existent. This continues to exacerbate GBV against house cleaners. Apart from the laws that govern their lives in workplaces, house cleaners in Zimbabwe lack pressure groups that represent them in society. Hence, the development of their human well-being and security remains compromised. Their existence is determined and controlled by the employer and other members of the family. Their dignity is close to zero for they are used as pawns by whoever wishes to do so in most families. The house cleaner's social role in society makes it difficult to voice their concern for they belong to a low status in society. In this state, they will never understand when their ill treatment is socially shared (Paluck & Ball, 2010:15).

3.4.6. Religion and gender-based violence

Religion is ranked high among the drivers of GBV (Home Office, 2018:33; Ndulo, 2011:87). Christianity is known and commended for standing up against public issues like human rights abuse, democratic political rights, economic justice and other humanitarian issues. On the contrary, the church is blamed for its complicity towards GBV. Rogers (2003:195) argues that, "it is possible to say that the Church has helped to create conditions conducive to the provocation of domestic violence in societies around the globe." In the same vein, Chisale (2020) in her article, "*Deliver us from patriarchy*": *A gendered perspective of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa and implications for pastoral care* argues that the church is predominantly theoretical and remains one of the fertile grounds for GBV (Chisale, 2020: 1). GBV has not been receiving much attention from the church (Koegelenberg, 2013:7). This section focuses on religious men and GBV. This is another hidden driver of GBV in Zimbabwe. This probably accounts for why there is a folding of hands when it comes to GBV within the church. Those who are trusted and expected to protect them are causing harm to the sheep.

There is an interplay between being male and being religious. In her article, *Investigating the nature of and relation between masculinity and religiosity and/or spirituality in a postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa*, Meyer rightfully states that,

...religiosity/spirituality ...relates with and inform men's notion of masculinity, their cultural values and the degree to which they are involved in both marriage and parental

responsibilities ... these constructs interact with each other in a distinct manner to produce a specific... masculinity, which in turn informs the social construction of a 'Christian man': who should be a Christian man, and how should such a man behave (Meyer, 2020:2).

Though Meyer is writing with a South African context in mind, the points raised accurately mirror the Zimbabwean context as well. The interplay she raises informs and defines what it means to be male in religion and determines the manner in which males should behave (Meyer, 2020:2). Not only does religion/spirituality define masculinity but it also presupposes how women should behave in relation to men (Meyer, 2020:2). Relationally, religious beliefs are understood as encouraging male dominance and submission of women (Brown, 2015:2). In Zimbabwe, most Christian men come from male-dominated homes in which women remain subjected to them. If religion/spirituality defines masculinity in a manner that encourages women's domination, it means certain traditional (cultural) practices find a fertile ground at church (Meyer, 2020:2; Brown, 2015: 3; Hoffmann & Miller, 1997; Moore & Vanneman, 2003; Chisale, 2020). In the end, there is an interrelationship on what it means to be male at home and at church and the same applies to women too. Meyer (2020:5) further advances that,

notions of gender roles and responsibilities would have developed from traditions communicated from and within a faith-based institution (based on specific theologies), and integrated into a specific culture and extended to gender operations within the familial home and, at times, the work place.

The question at hand is: How could the church formulate an understanding that does not perpetuate abusive cultural practices that do not fan GBV? Christianity has the potential to address GBV (Meyer, 2020:6).

Religious leaders are fully aware of the benefits emanating from teachings of scriptures towards improving the status of women. On the contrary, Damron and Johnson (2015:5) state,

These same religious leaders are often shocked and horrified, on the other hand, when they discover the extent to which abusive spouses have misused their religion to justify violent behaviour.

This is a pointer to the reality of GBV that exists in religious circles. GBV within religious confines can be very tricky to identify because the religious beliefs regulate behaviour (Meyer, 2020:5 ; Brown, 2015: 4).

Clark (2016:36) states that, "Violence among families of faith reflects the cultures they inhabit, but interweaving the narrative is their faith and religious identity." Practically, cultural mores

influence religious behaviour. Transference of patriarchal patterns is evident in Christian teachings and these promote GBV in Zimbabwe and even control the status of women (Kambarami, 2006:5). A passage like Genesis 2:18 is taken as the bedrock that aids extension of patriarchy from culture to religion. The creation of Eve as second and as a “helper for him” remains bent towards patriarchy. Also, Ephesians 5:22-24 is understood in a way that drags patriarchy into religion (Stephens & Walker, 2015:209). The unequal social relations that exist in the family set-up as an institution are replicated in the church and reinforced through invalid interpretation of scripture. Hence, women remain subordinate in ways that do not allow them to contradict and expose men. This makes women prone to GBV in the church.

Shockingly, some clergy and laymen are guilty of perpetuating the phenomenon. Usually it takes a while for cases to be identified and reported if the perpetrator serves in church structures. It can take even longer if the perpetrator is the shepherd of the flock. In 2014, a pastor was sentenced to 50 years in prison for sexually abusing four female congregants under the guise of attempting to cast demons from them. After committing the misdemeanours, he threatened to curse the victims if they reported the abuse. The offenses took more than a decade to surface, because of the intimidation that these women faced. In a separate incident, another leader of the apostolic sect impregnated 13 women within a month (News24, 2014). Cultural and religious mores forbid women to confront men and worse in situations where the perpetrator is a ‘man of God’. The future and survival of the women seem not to matter and is trampled upon. The gender relations between women and men, even where women should feel secure, remain unequal (Mugugunyeki, 2014). Women remain almost invisible in the church because the clergy promote practices that entrench their privileged position.

The abuse of women by the clergy is not only limited to general female congregants. A pastor’s wife is treated with high esteem because the husband leads the church. She is expected to display a motherly character and be accommodative to all the congregants. It is sad to note that the smiles witnessed on her face could be hiding an array of abuses by the perpetrator – the pastor himself. Some pastors’ wives are abused physically, emotionally, economically, socially, verbally and psychologically by their husbands (Hilukiluah, 2013:199). The abusive pastor would stand in the pulpit the following Sunday. In some cases, after the preaching, the entire congregation would come and kneel at the altar to praise his exceptional sermon. However, one congregant, his wife, remains seated on the bench with closed eyes as if she is praying for the congregants kneeling at the altar. She cannot go there and join the rest of the

members, because last night she was beaten and verbally attacked by the man who has just preached a powerful sermon.

The following words (quoted word for word) from a video clip by a pastor's little daughter best describe the GBV that a pastor's wife went through and how it affected the family. The title of the video clip is, "My daddy hurts my mummy" (Restored, 2013)

- When my mummy comes to church and looks sad, that's because my daddy hurt her.
- Just because she's got not bruises or broken bones doesn't mean his words haven't hurt her.
- He calls her fat and ugly and I don't know why because she's the most beautiful mummy there is.
- And he won't let her talk on the phone and checks his watch if she is a minute late and tells her she is useless and mad.
- And I hide under my bed at night, because if I wake up in bed, I know my mummy is safe and she's put me back to bed.
- And on Sunday when daddy stands at the front and preaches his words and I sit there quietly. Inside I am crying because he hurts my mummy and that hurts me.

The six sentences above reveal the physical, emotional, psychological and verbal GBV that a pastor's wife experienced. On the other hand, we are also given a glimpse into how cultural and religious beliefs inform each other in determining men's behaviour and the position of women. Even spiritual abuse is evident here because the preacher is her abuser and she is not free to worship God, as she should. The combination of cultural beliefs would not allow the woman to express how she feels about the abuse. A pastor's wife may suffer in silence because she wants to protect her husband's job, which is also a source of income for the family. If she exposes the husband, she ruins the only source of income for the family. On the other hand, cultural aspects such as exposing your home (*kufumura musha*) might deter her from exposing her husband (Hilukiluah, 2014: 205; Monyonganise, 2017:111). The 'teaching' on submission from the Bible might also restrain her from exposing the GBV she might be experiencing. Lastly, fear of further abuse after exposing him might also deter her from revealing her ordeal. An analysis of the pastor's wife situation reveals that she was caught up in two spheres that are being a wife at home and the pastor's wife at church. The two spheres are not supposed to be different but abuse creates a divide between them. The second sphere she is caught up in is the church. The church prescribes certain rules of behaviour for a pastor's wife. She must be motherly and exemplary in all her endeavours and other female congregants look up to her. It

is against the rules of the church for her to expose her husband. There is also an interplay between cultural submission and biblical submission, whereby cultural submission gains more leverage over biblical submission. The result of this is invalid interpretation of scriptures on submission at the expense of women for the benefit of men in the church. This entrenches unequal social relations between women and men in the church.

A pastor's wife can be a very lonely and she can be a depressed person, because the perpetrator is the man she lives with and is respected by the church. Patriarchal practices also influence pastors and affect gender relations, which manifest in the way they treat their wives. This means even in Christian homes patriarchal elements continue to dominate through social control of women (Clark, 2015:74). As noted earlier that the home environment is the brewery of a number of abuses, some pastors' homes reflect gender inequalities. The teaching of scripture on husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church fails to level the playing field on social relations (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). The clergy may take too long to be exposed, because he is a wolf in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15).

The situation of women under some church leaders remains deplorable. Damron and Johnson (2015:29) articulate,

... women have been placed in a one-down, inferior position by patriarchal systems, they have often been quite reticent to speak up for themselves and indeed may not even be sensitive to their victim role in abusive situations with power-seeking and dominance-craving male persons.

Clark (2015:36) advances that,

some religious women feel that God does not permit them to leave, that marriage is forever despite how cruel their husband's treatment, that this is their cross to bear, or that perpetual forgiveness of their husband for his repeated behaviour is God's expectation.

Lack of alternative means through religious binding of teachings worsens the situation of women and leaves them trapped. "Violence is also embedded in social structures, including those of religion" (Clark, 2015:74).

3.4.7. Migration and gender-based violence

Zimbabwe is regarded as a source, transit and destination of migrants (Home Office, 2018:36). Migration is sometimes accompanied with treatment and attitudes that disproportionately affect

women by men in authority at the ports exist or entry. As such, Zimbabwe has both regular and irregular migrants to South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, *et cetera*. According to Mashiri and Mawire (2013:11), “Irregular migration status increases vulnerability to experiencing gender based violence. This is due to poverty, lack of legal protection, lack of power, discrimination, and exploitation” and proper travel documentation. The migratory nature of the Zimbabwean women and men is a bedrock of GBV, emanating from the country’s inability to cater for the needs of its people for nearly two decades.

Migrants from Zimbabwe to other countries are neither called refugees nor voluntary economic migrants. Their migration is largely propelled by humanitarian need, though they also do not seek humanitarian assistance (Kiwanuka & Monson, 2009:5). The migrants are engaged in an array of formal and informal jobs in Southern Africa and beyond. Countries like South Africa and Botswana have considered the availability of skilled workers from Zimbabwe as an enhancement to their economies. Some women in Zimbabwe have been victims of political violence as they faced rape, verbal abuses, imprisonment and some later fled from the country (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:95). Some have been sucked into trafficking schemes unexpectedly, because they would like to escape the economic struggle in the country. According to the Home Office (2019: 36; cf IOM, 2017),

The country was caught in a trafficking ‘storm’ when over 150 women were trafficked to Kuwait between 2015 and 2016. The Kuwait trafficking case has brought the problem of human trafficking in the Zimbabwean population to the fore.

The reasons for migrating are many, apart from political and economic reasons. A research conducted shows that 29% of the migrants cited leaving the country solely for economic reasons and 42% cite economic reasons alongside other issues like persecution *et cetera* (Kiwanuka & Monson, 2009: 25). Among the migrants, some have permanently established themselves elsewhere (ZIMSTAT, 2009:19).

It is against the above background that GBV is inevitable. There are men as well that have been very unfortunate and suffered because of migration. In the past, it used to be more men migrating to other countries, while women remained at home to look after and care for the children (for the married). According to Ayon, Messing, Gurrola and Garcia (2018:880), “women are migrating at rates higher than men, leading to a feminization of migration.” This section focuses on how migration affects women in relation to GBV. Second, it also analyses how GBV affects married women left behind in Zimbabwe by their husbands.

First, some that migrate from Zimbabwe to other countries have been subjected to GBV in foreign lands. Many women engage in informal cross-border trading as a coping strategy to their livelihoods and they dominate this type of trading (Kiwauka & Monson, 2009:56). Some have been subjected to sexual abuse and harassment in the process of migrating at the Zimbabwean borders (ZIMSTAT, 2009:81). Lack of proper travel documents to cross the borders or not having enough money to pay duty fees, make these women vulnerable to transactional sexual abuse in exchange for crossing the border. According to Mashizha (2013:3),

Beitbridge district handles an influx of deported migrants over any given period. Preliminary information obtained from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) suggested a high burden of GBV amongst deported migrants.

A number of women have testified to different types of abuse when they were deported through Beitbridge border post in 2013. The most reported forms of GBV in the study were emotional or psychological abuse (38.8%) followed by physical violence (36.4%) and the least was economic abuse (14.4%) (Mashizha, 2013:32).

In the process of migrating, some women have been raped and murdered. Those fortunate to arrive at their destinations would secure food and shelter through means that could fuel GBV and all this against their will. Some women are forced into prostitution by men who would make a living out of the displaced and disadvantaged women. Women without proper documentation are assisted to cross the border and are sometimes raped or emotionally abused. Further, Kiwanuka and Monson (2009:67) advance that, “for fear of arrest and deportation some women offer sexual services at the borders and most of these women are unable to report the crimes committed against them.” Some women have contracted sexually transmitted infections. This no doubt boils down to human rights abuse by their perpetrators. Women suffer at the hands of men because of gendered social relations between women and men. The abuse of Zimbabwean women migrants, “happens due to beliefs, traditions, behaviour or attitudes that are harmful towards the individuals according to their sex” (Mashizha, 2013:8).

Whether a woman is a migrant, wife or with a top professional qualification, the social relations between men and women remain unbalanced. Gender inequalities continue to discriminate against and oppress women. Therefore, the political and economic demise of the country has caused an environment that makes women vulnerable to GBV. Human dignity is trampled upon and despised in migration, because of the gender constructs that society impose on women and

men. The idea of structural relationships is apparent here again for men have control of their own lives and that of women. There is also abuse of power by those in authority at the border post. They decide what action is appropriate to allow passage and release of these disadvantaged women. As they do so, their own interests are served and these women are at their mercy. Practices that promote the border officials' privileged positions are perpetuated (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:108). Most migrating women remain compliant, because they are powerless to change the situation. The entrenched perception of women as weak and pliable to anything continues to create unequal social relations.

Second, the migration of married men to other countries also serves as a source of GBV in Zimbabwe. Men migrate to other countries in search of employment opportunities leaving their wives and children behind. In the absence of men due to migration, women are left with double family responsibilities. Some husbands would neglect their wives for a prolonged period by not visiting or giving them financial support. The majority of the neglected women would end up in open markets where they would sell bananas, sweet potatoes and yams to support the family. In these markets, some women are exposed to verbal, physical and sexual abuse for economic reasons.

On the other hand, men's prolonged absence from their wives contributes to engaging in sexual affairs with women in a foreign land. Some have established permanent families abroad and completely abandoned their families in Zimbabwe. Under these circumstances, the migrants become vulnerable to HIV infection and this places their wives who remain at home at greater risk (ZIMSTAT, 2009: 89). Some return from abroad and demand conjugal rights. Most women have no option but to comply; risking their lives to sexually transmitted infections. Women would endure keeping the family and innocently contract infections because of gender inequality in marriage. A woman's denial of sex from the husband warrants beating, separation or divorce. Male domination and control over the wife are at the core of this situation. The core value of the women risking their lives is protecting the family. This does not make their abuse acceptable.

Migration of men to other countries increase, "...opportunities for discrimination, exploitation, violence, and oppression" of women (Ayon, *et al.*, 2018:881). Most women in Zimbabwe (and other countries) are economically dependent on their husbands and this increases their chances of exploitation, violence and oppression by men. The fact that most women are not "agents of

their own development” continues to make them economically dependent. Their security, well-being and autonomy in these situations is always compromised and men control their lives. Mashiri and Mawire (2013:97) confirms this by saying, “Women’s economic disempowerment and definitions of a good woman have therefore hindered women from even protecting themselves from gender based violence.” The government is making efforts to address issues of migrants (Home Office, 2018:38). The economic situation of the nation also acts as one of the major drivers of GBV.

3.4.8. Economic collapse and gender-based violence

The economic deterioration of the Zimbabwean economy resulted in shifting of roles within homes. The economy briefly improved in 2009, because of the Government of National Unity (GNU) but later receded after 2013 when the GNU ended. According to Masiyiwa (2017), “Zimbabwe economic deterioration is one driver of abuse according to Musasa Project, a nongovernmental organization in Harare that provides shelter for the abused.” Generally, in Africa men are responsible for working and providing for the family. Robbing a man of his ability to support his family makes him “feel inferior or insignificant and insecure as the authority figure of the household” (Maisiri, 2016:25). This is so because the traditional social relations in the family are that the father’s role is to work and provide for the family while the wife remains at home to care for the children. Underpinned in this role is that he should always be able to control and determine how his family affairs should be run.

The collapse of the Zimbabwean economy left many people retrenched and some never got employed since the downward spiral of the economy. According to a qualitative research conducted by Tlou (2014), “at least two out of ten men in my community are formally-employed, whilst the rest were affected by the massive retrenchment scheme.” As a result, most women have become innovative to meet the financial needs of the family. There are cases in Zimbabwe where the wife is formally employed and the husband is not. Some women engage in cross-border trading leaving their husbands behind at home. This changing of roles serves as a seedbed for different gender abuses in matrimonial homes.

Men are accustomed to social relations of gender that dominate and control women. Some women have testified to surrendering their entire salary to their husband and simply let him determine how the money should be spent. If the woman is fortunate, she will be given money

to commute back to work the next month. Women that engage in cross-border trading sometimes find other women in their matrimonial homes upon their return. A woman by the name of Martha (not her real name), "...bears scars on her thighs, arms and lips from the night her husband held active electric cables to her body. She had questioned him about bringing other women into their matrimonial home" (Masiyiwa, 2017). Chitando (2004:152) elucidates that,

notions of masculinity, where the man is a sexual predator, have compromised married women in particular. Fidelity in marriage is defined almost exclusively as relating to women, with society looking the other way when married men pursue multiple sexual partners.

Conversely, these women have been accused by their husbands of engaging in extramarital affairs in their travel. Some husbands would use this as a means to justify their actions of abusing their wives. In this situation, activities in the house have been changed by the economic collapse. The roles that traditionally belong to men now belong to women. Rewards and honour that were supposed to be ascribed to men are shifted to the women. The result is most men would assert their authority using indirect and abusive ways against the wife as a means to retain the authority they feel they are losing.

In a traditional home environment, a woman may not question the decisions taken by her husband. The economic crunch has resulted in some women being abandoned by husbands and they are left to tend to all the needs of the children. Women have become beasts of burden because of the economic decline (Sibanda & Maphosa, 2013:133-144). Some men push for girls as young as 12 years to get married to old men because the parents need money. In other words, the young girls have become 'currency' in the ailing economy of the country. Their rights as children and protection enshrined in the national constitution are trampled upon. The economic decline can be linked to politics of the country as another key driver of GBV.

3.4.9. Politics and gender-based violence

GBV is predominantly researched and studied within the confines of

...domestic circumstances citing its pervasiveness and embeddedness within the social spheres (i.e. domestic circumstances and society) or crisis situations, including civil wars. To date, a comprehensive exploration of GBV as political violence outside of domestic circumstances, yet within the public political sphere, and outside of the specific context of wartime, is missing (Kishi, 2017).

When closely examined, GBV exists even where countries claim to be living in peace without any external threat. The Zimbabwean political arena is one such example where GBV exists without an external enemy threatening the nation. It has been noted in chapter 2 of this research that where political tensions or unrest exist in any country, women suffer a wide range of abuses, especially in Africa. Zimbabwe has been experiencing internal political tensions for a long period and women are the majority victims of national politics.

Women have been forced to participate in political activities against their will. Some women endured psychological, physical and sexual violence in the politically unstable environment. Particularly, since February 2000, a number of women have been subjected to political violence during elections (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:95). During this period, the political affiliation of the husband or of a family member invited political violence and torment from the other political party.

The presidential re-run in 2008 is replete with examples of women being targeted in their homes because of their families support to the different political parties being assaulted, tortured, their possessions stolen and their homes burnt. Whilst there has been considerable anecdotal reports about rape and sexual torture, the data contained in human rights reports has been scanty” (Mashiri & Mawire, 2013:95).

The major reason data regarding the abuses on women is scarce is that GBV cases are underreported due to fear and lack of credible support structures in favour of the victim. In the same vein, Kishi (2017) states, “Political violence against women—or gendered repression—is a denial of specific forms of security for women within unstable settings, and it remains poorly documented.” For instance, if a woman reports to the police that she has been abused by a prominent political figure or by a person of favoured political affiliation; the case docket disappears overnight. Someone in a privileged position decides on the action to take in order to silence and bury the woman’s case. Though she is a victim, her role remains subservient and she may not be allowed to challenge men. What she may wish to claim is at the mercy and discretion of the male person in the hierarchy. Hence, she remains powerless because of the dire lack of responsible and credible support structures.

The following extract from Masarira (2017), cites her politically motivated abuse and that of another woman at the hands of those who were supposed to give them protection.

In the political spheres, women have not been spared of violence tendencies either. As a victim of state sponsored violence, police brutality, rape, discrimination, torture and

domestic violence, I strongly advocate for the elimination of any form of violence against women. On the 25th of February this year (2017), I was brutally assaulted by ZRP in riot gear at Parirenyatwa Hospital for protesting against former President Mugabe's \$4m birthday bash whilst the biggest referral hospital in Zimbabwe had no medication. Earlier this year Thokozani Khupe, MDCT Vice President was assaulted by party youths at their party offices. The violence I experienced made me more resolute in advocating for the promotion and protection of human rights, helping women to think positively about the future as well as moving away from self-pity. As a leader, one of my obligatory duties is to inspire change in an effort to have a violent free Zimbabwe (Masarira, 2017).

Political repression aimed at barring or preventing women from participating in politics is cited as unusual in Zimbabwe; as illustrated above it is not an exception to this gendered abuse (Kishi, 2017). Therefore, to go against the political grain seems to invoke violence in any form.

An environment that fosters active participation and contribution of women in the political arena still needs to be established. Kambarami (2006:7) states that politics portrays a patriarchal attitude that views women as subordinate and weak citizens not fit for public office. He further reinforces his statement by arguing that women are easily accepted as singers, dancers, cooks and guest entertainers in politics (Kambarami 2006:7). The idea of who does what and what is done in politics continues to shove women to the bottom of the hierarchy in social relations so that they remain subdued. Women are discriminated against and if they are positioned in any political structure the truth is that, they are not in complete control. A low and despised view of women is portrayed. As mentioned earlier on, this further reinforces that social relations between women and men remain unbalanced even in politics. Men decide where, when, how and in what capacity women participate in the political spheres (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:106). This perpetuates GBV. The last driver of GBV that rarely comes to the fore is media.

3.4.10. Media and gender-based violence

Mass media has both the propensity to curb GBV and promote it as well. According to Russo and Pirlott (2006: 188), “mass media influence our perceptions, cognitions and behaviours related to gender as well as violence through many channels including radio, television, movies, magazines and the internet.” Russo and Pirlott (2006:189) quoting Pardun, L’Engle and Brown (2005) document that, “...recent analysis of six types of media found that music contained substantially more sexual content (40%) than movies (12%), television (11%), magazines (8%),

internet web sites (6%), or newspapers (1%).” Even video games have become sources that portray assault of women, rape, murder and prostitution (Montiel, 2008:19). The study would like to focus on audio and visual technology as an upcoming contribution in fanning GBV. Women have been beaten, verbally abused, emotionally tormented and some marriages ended in divorce because of visual and audio media. Its impact on the young and the old should not be underestimated.

The mushrooming piracy of music and digital videos in Zimbabwe has contributed to a massive spread of content that worsens GBV and portrayal of women as existing to serve the needs of men. A general walk by and glance at the displays along the streets of Harare reveal digital discs of pornographic and violent content. In spite of the age restrictions inscribed on some material, the underage youngsters buy the material and no one stops them. There is a derogatory view of women expressed in different music and video content (Russo & Pirlott, 2006:189). That means from an early age, the young generation is exposed to certain views about women and would treat them accordingly when they grow up.

Media in general expresses a male dominance attitude to the detriment of women. Through media, men express their social norms towards women. The predominant impression displayed in media is that women remain subservient to men and should serve the sexual needs of men. Thus, women as a particular group are constantly positioned in such a way that the distinction between male and female remains evident. When closely examined the views expressed regarding women in media content are steeped in culture and patriarchal practices emanating from the societies of the producers. More so, the audio-visual market determines and commands a marketable content at the impairment of women’s image. Thus, the market as an institution determines who should act where and in what manner to attract customers. “Institutions rules ensure that there is a routinized pattern of practice for carrying out tasks. As a consequence, certain tasks get attached to certain social groups, so that it seems that these groups are only capable of doing that particular task” (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999: 106-107). In so doing women lose control of their rights because other people decide for them.

Russo and Pirlott (2006:189) note that, “hip hop and rap heavy metal have been the target of most discussions due to their extremely violent and sexual nature.” Such content is promoting antisocial behaviour in Zimbabwe as evidenced by rape, abuse, forms of degradation of women. Women are also portrayed as sex objects such that the youth and married men practise what

they hear and watch on women. Some wives have questioned where the husbands learn what they do and the result would be punishment inflicted against the wife for questioning. It is argued, "...participants who are exposed to misogynous music were significantly more likely to act aggressively toward female confederates..." (Russo & Pirlott, 2006:190).

In January 2018, the Harare city council put an advert on a billboard with the intention to encourage people to pay their bills. The advert displayed a man carrying a woman on his back with the words, "Do not be a free rider. Pay your Municipal bills." The municipality's motive was pure, but the readers interpreted the advert as conveying a sexist message. The interpretation was the woman in the advert avoided paying her bills, hence being a free rider and indirectly labelling women as irresponsible members of society. Stakeholders complained about the advert by labelling it as chauvinist. Unintentionally, the advert portrayed the structural position for women in society (dependent) and a hierarchy (subordinate) of society. Eventually the council pulled down the advert. One wonders what the readers would have said if a woman carried a man in that advert.

Some local music videos broadcast on national television show women dancing in body revealing attire while the male dancers dress decently. The male dominance aspect is apparent in the music and video industry in deciding what women should wear and how they should act. Simple adverts like advertising a car begin with a skimpily dressed woman and one questions the connection between the car and the woman in revealing clothing. In the end, media influences in Zimbabwe perpetuate, "...perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that link power, sexuality and violence against women" (Russo & Pirlott, 2006:190). It is crucial that a sensitive and culturally-based approach to the media industry in Zimbabwe is used to uphold and honour the dignity of women in view of the increasing cases of GBV. Gender inequality and unequal social relations between men and women lie at the core of what is portrayed in the media industry.

The above discussion focused on some key drivers of GBV affecting the Zimbabwean context. The discussed drivers reveal that gender inequalities exist between women and men at the following ecological levels: individual, relationship, community and society (Heise 1998). GBV factors interact with each other at different levels and inform how women and men should relate. The interplay and normalisation of such factors continue to empower men and subject women to GBV in various ways. How could the existing gender inequalities be addressed in a

manner that mitigates against mutual social relationships for women and men? A suitable gender analysis framework needs to be selected and utilised towards promoting better social relations between women and men in various domains. The following framework has been chosen to analyse why gender inequalities exist between women and men. First, the following section establishes a conceptualisation of the SRA framework. Second, it will analyse GBV factors using the SRA framework.

3.5. Gender-based violence factors and the Social Relations Approach framework

3.5.1. Conceptualising the Social Relations Approach framework

Choosing a gender theoretical framework in gender studies should be done with great care and understanding of the implications of the chosen guide to the study (Simon & Goes, 2011: n.p). The chosen framework should not be unfriendly to women because it, “fail to recognize and reward their contributions ... and therefore recreate and produce the gender hierarchies and inequalities dominant in the world” (March, Smith & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:9).

While choosing a framework is crucial, Warren (2007:187-198) states that it is important to note the following:

- There are many models and frameworks and no framework is exhaustive to address all the challenges.
- Each model reflects a set of assumptions about what gender means and how it is relevant to development objectives.
- Each model was developed at a particular point in time and not all have been modified to reflect changes in perspectives on gender analysis framework.

Concisely this means (though not exhaustive), a chosen gender analysis framework gets people to begin to understand gender issues and try to work towards crafting better solutions to their GBV issues.

This research is going to choose and utilise the SRA framework. Different types of framework that are used in gender studies have already been mentioned in chapter 1 of this research. We would rather devote this section to understand further the SRA and motivate its relevance for this research.

Naila Kaber developed the SRA framework and it focuses on three elements as outlined by March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999:102). First, the goal of development as human well-being. The development of human well-being is not simply or strictly on economic grounds. It also means improvement of survival, security and autonomy. Women experiencing GBV at home, workplaces, churches and other institutions of society need to have their security and autonomy stepped up within their contexts. The idea of autonomy has to do with the ability to be actively involved in making decisions that transform one's life at an individual and group/community level. Human dignity is also part of the SRA, but the dignity of women is trampled upon and despised through gender differences that society construct about women and men. For instance, IVP has generated scholarly debate in the four decades (Kruttschnitt *et al.*, 2018:477-478). IVP increases due to unequal social relations between women and men. The SRA views human well-being as encompassing anything that contributes to the emancipation of people. In other words, it sees the importance in valuing a human being from a holistic approach.

Second, the SRA addresses the idea of social relations found in structural relationships that create organised differences among people (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:103). March, Smith & Mukhopadhyay, (1999:103) further assert that,

Such relationships determine who we are, what our roles and responsibilities are, and what claims we can make, they determine our rights, and the control that we have over our own lives and those of others. Social relations produce cross cutting inequalities, which ascribe each individual a position in the structure and hierarchy of relationships.

Such relationships are sometimes known as social relations of gender.

Whatever structures and hierarchies, roles and responsibilities or control over our own lives and those of others, social relations between women and men continue to disadvantage and marginalise women in society. The SRA framework examines the social inequalities between gender relations to establish equality in a given context. Thus, the context determines how the SRA could be utilised and this makes SRA adaptable in various settings.

Third, the SRA also focuses on institutional analysis. This means a variety of gender inequalities are not confined to the household (family) environment, but they are also found in different institutions like the state, the market and the community (March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay, 1999:104). Institutions create a set of rules and practices to achieve their goals. Such set of rules may not take into consideration the infringement of women's contribution and

participation in the institution. For example, in religious circles, women are seriously limited on what they can do and cannot do and this inhibits them reaching their full potential. A further example is a situation whereby a woman is appointed as the national army general among predominantly men. In such an environment, the woman serves the interests of those (men) who appointed her and may not be able to bow down to the concerns of the minority women. In so doing, “they perpetuate social differences and social inequality” (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999:104). This means in gender relations institutions replicate inequalities that negatively affect women because the set of rules and practices upholds a particular gender over the other.

March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999:105) outline five aspects of social relations shared by institutions though they differ from culture to culture. The five aspects are rules, resources, people, activities and power. The dimensions of the listed social relationships are distinct but interrelated. For easy reference, I have summarised the five aspects in a Table (below).

The five aspects of Social Relations Approach shared by institutions

Aspect	Description of the aspect	Questions related to the aspect
Rules	The institution is governed by rules that are official or written down. Rules may also be unofficial and expressed through norms, values, traditions, laws and customs. Such rules entrench ways of doing things and seem unalterable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is done? • How is it done? • By whom will it be done? • Who will benefit?
Resources	Resources may be human resources (labour, education and skills), intangible ones (information, time, political, goodwill), material (food, assets, money, land). In different societies, men have privileged access to resources within the household, community, state and market institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is used? • What is produced?

People	This aspect has a reflection of class, gender and other social responsibilities. Institutions deal with people and are selective about them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is in? (deal with who they allow in and excluded) • Who is out? (deal with assigning people various responsibilities) • Who does what? (deal with positioning people hierarchically)
Activities	Certain activities are attached to a particular social group. For example, women are associated with the caring of the sick, young, elderly in households, states and institutions (natural predisposition). People who continue to do certain tasks become good in them. As a result, a particular gender is more fulfilled and preferred than the other. This calls for change of institutional practices, if unequal, to level the plain field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who does what? • Who gets what? • Who claims what?
Power	Institutions are run on relations of authority and control. “They are sometimes characterized by official and unofficial rules which promote and legitimize control over others”. This encourages individuals to nurse their practices which entrench their privileged position and they are likely to resist change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who decides? • Whose interests are served?

Source: Adapted from March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999: 105-108)

March *et al*, (1999: 109) state that Kabeer classified institutional gender policies into the following types: gender-blind policies and gender-aware policies. Gender-blind policies acknowledge the differences between sexes. The existing gender relations dictate and influence

policies and tend to isolate women. Second, gender-aware policies acknowledge that women similar to their male counterparts are also players in development issues. Both men and women face different constraints in the development process. Such constraints are influenced by “differing and sometimes conflicting needs, interests and priorities” (March *et al.*, 1999:108).

The gender-aware policies are further sub-divided into three policy types. First, gender-neutral policy approaches acknowledge the gender differences in a society to deal with gender biases (March *et al.*, 1999: 108). The goal is to ensure that both sexes benefit and have their needs met. Second, gender-specific policies also use contextual gender differences “to respond to the practical needs of either women or men...” (March *et al.*, 1999: 108). The third and last subdivision of gender-aware policies is gender-redistributive policies. It seeks to create balanced relationships between women and men. It focuses on strategic gender interests like women’s needs but in a way that empowers women without causing conflict in a given context (March *et al.*, 1999: 109). Being context sensitive is very important for it guards against causing a backlash thereby worsening the social relations.

Given the above description of the SRA, GBV against women continues due to imbalances in social relations between women and men. Such inequalities exist in the following institutions: state, market, community and household (March *et al.*, 1999:109). Men in these institutions make decisions that can negatively affect women. Among the four institutions of SRA, the home environment is the hub where gender social relations emanate then feed into and interact with the other environments namely market, community and household.

3.5.2. *Relevance of SRA framework to this research*

The African traditional context honours women as anchors that unify and run the home. Underpinned in that honour are multiple responsibilities that perpetuate inequalities between women and men. For instance, women are confined to household chores such as cooking food for the family, farming, tidying huts/houses – some husbands are immigrant labourers and women shoulder family responsibilities as beasts of burden (Sibanda & Maposa, 2013:142). Instead of understanding this in a negative perspective, we could say here men are generally protective and providers of the family in an ideal home situation. Hence, women see it as their role to care for and look after the home environment. The problem arises when excessive

responsibilities are heaped on women compounded with emotional and physical ill- treatment by their male counterparts.

An institution like the church perpetuates GBV and eclipses its role as salt and light (Mt.5:13-14). Church contexts are places of persistent oppression and subordination of women induced by unequal social relations (Sibanda & Maposa, 2013:143). There is an interplay between home (cultural) practices and church practices influenced by patriarchy. Gender relations in these institutions could be examined using SRA with a view to establish gender equality.

The SRA in this study helps an institution like the family, church, community and state identify and deal with gender inequalities. The SRA framework therefore entails assessing how institutions create and produce inequalities between women and men. It also analyses immediate underlying and structural causes of specific gender issues in the institutions mentioned above. The SRA advocates for equality in gender relations by analysing the human situations in their contexts and in this case Zimbabwe. We might pose the following question at this point: What is the connection between the SRA in public practical theology and Osmer's methodology utilised in this study?

The SRA reinforces and integrates well with the public practical theological framework utilising the pastoral care nexus of Osmer's methodology to practical theology discussed in chapter 1. The SRA, the public practical theological framework and Osmer's methodology to practical theology all have the concern for human situation and context as a starting point. In addition, they begin with the people involved in the situation as the agents that cause or are better able to transform their situation leading to the desired result(s). This is so because people at grassroots level have better solutions to their problems, as they understand better than outsiders how their society and culture work for them. Since most of the issues involved with GBV have to do with societal and cultural issues, it makes a lot of sense to begin with the human situations and contexts. This makes SRA a more suitable and relevant framework to address issues related to GBV in this study.

3.5.3. Gender-based violence factors and Social Relations Approach framework

Using the gender SRA, male leadership at the state level determines who occupies what position, what role would the person play, to what extent and for whose interest? Women could

be appointed to lead certain spheres of the public sector, but greater chances are that they may receive instructions from men. Though they may feel honoured, it is readily apparent that they are strategically positioned to serve the interests of men. One of the five aspects of social relations shared by institutions is power. In this aspect, power embodies “who decides and whose interests are served?” (March *et al.*, 1999: 108). Under this aspect there are official rules (those that are written) and unofficial rules (those not written). This allows some actors (men) to continue to gain authority and control over others (women) such that their privileged position is served and this would make change at a snail’s pace or a nightmare. If women are to experience autonomy, they need to have the ability to be actively involved in making decisions that transform their lives at an individual or group level (March *et al.*, 1999: 108). Unequal social relations between women and men continue to segregate and negatively affect women in government sectors. The government (Zimbabwe) through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MWAGCD) expressed a serious concern over the increase of GBV cases caused by inequalities (Mutonhoru & Sibanda, 2017).

In addition, women still do not get maximum opportunities to serve in other capacities as men would. This keeps them subservient and not able to improve their skills to serve in other capacities. The result is that a particular gender becomes more preferred and proficient over the other, because it is constantly exposed to higher and more challenging opportunities. The distribution of power and responsibilities still favours more men than women; hence, women remain hampered to become emancipators of their lives (March *et al.*, 1999:108). Women in Zimbabwe have access to opportunities and benefits in the public arena, “but they still face the challenges in getting full access to opportunities” (ZIMSTAT, 2016). It is as if a part of the body is allowed into a room but the rest is left outside. This is so because the one who opens the door (men) determines to what extent the body (women) should be allowed into the room. Those who open the door determine the power and rules for the opportunity created.

Unequal social relations in Zimbabwe still play a major role by negatively enhancing gender inequality. Various institutions like the home, state, church and communities continue to nurse unequal playing fields between women and men. The current gender relations in Zimbabwe seem to prescribe and stimulate policies that are more inclined to isolate women. “Gender based violence is rooted in a social construct of gender that is inculcated at a very early stage, and is often built upon unequal power relations and unjust attitudes, leading to violent behaviour” (UNDP, 2017). Therefore, “the intended result of prohibiting all forms of GBV is however, far

from being achieved as the cases continue to be on the increase” (NGP, 2013-2017:6; ZDHS, 2010-2011). Stereotyped differences in sex form the basis of increased GBV cases. Some people equate sexual difference with male dominance leading to reproduction and maintenance of oppressive gendered relations. This allows for an over- emphasis of male dominance that eclipses and ignores women’s “power and active roles within particular systems of social organization” (Chogugudza, 2004: 19). Male dominance and its prevalence are particularly seen in the Zimbabwean family relations and resurface at state level. One of the main goals of SRA is the development and improvement of human well-being (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999: 103). March, Smyth and Mukhopadhyay (1999:103 further advise that,

Human well-being is seen as concerning survival, security, and autonomy, where autonomy means the ability to participate fully in those decisions that shape one's choices and one's life chances, at both the personal and the collective level.

The current religious, cultural and political situation in the country requires further probing so that women become more empowered to make decisions at individual and community level.

GBV remains a concern across the country as evidenced by the drivers discussed above and the unequal social relations between women and men. While collaborative efforts to arrest GBV in the country are evident, social relations need to change as well. Social relations have a strong capacity to produce distinctions between women and men. It is because of social relations that women are ascribed to certain positions in the structure and hierarchy of their society (March *et al.*, 1999:103). Gender relations as seen in the above factors are seen as such social relations. There is a positive and encouraging side of social relations in that they are fluid. March *et al.*, (1999:103) state, “Social relations change; they are not fixed or immutable. Changes at the macro level can bring about change in social relations”. For instance, this means change of social relations at a family or community level could have the potential to bring change at state level. Social relations also determine what kind of resources are allocated to women. For instance, in marriage assets belong to the husband and the wife has limited authority over them. This explains why women remain dependent on men and endure abusive relationships. Thus, the SRA advocates for reciprocity in social relations that builds autonomy (March *et al.*, 1999:103). Autonomy in this case does not connote arrogance, but mutual reciprocity in social relations. This means the SRA implementation needs to be contextually relevant to avoid conflict in implementation.

GBV factors are not only limited to inequalities in social relations, but they also extend to institutions. In line with this research, such institutions are family (marriage), church, community and state. Institutions have a tendency to reproduce, "...social relations and thereby create and perpetuate social difference and social inequality" (March *et al.*, 1999:104). The position of women in households, extended families, lineage groupings (March *et al.*, 1999:104) remains unchanged. Women serve under and at the instruction of male leadership. For instance, women cannot override the decision of men in *roora* negotiations. In religious institutions, men are more visible and independent to make decisions, which women should adopt. At state level more men hold influential and controlling positions as opposed to women.

Where women occupy higher positions than men they are likely to serve the interests of men because men set the rules. This proves that institutions according to SRA tend to reproduce unequal social relations between genders. March *et al.* (1999:105) assert that, "...institutions produce, reinforce, and reproduce social difference and inequalities". The social relations in institutions determine what activities (who does what, who gets what and who can claim what) are suitable and how much power/control (who decides and whose interests are served) should be accorded in any given sphere of operation. In addition, institutions determine who is positioned where hierarchically (March *et al.*, 1999:107). This means in institutions like family, church, community and state the underlying structural hierarchies are the cause for the social relations that exist between women and men (March *et al.*, 1999:109). Also, "institutions contribute to women's oppression and subordination by failing to question the system of gender inequality in society" (Muzvidzwa, 2001:151).

Questioning the system of gender inequality means redefining power and rules that favour men in a culturally and contextually relevant manner to promote equal social relations. Usually the better agents of this transformation are the males and females in this culture. The following chapter focuses on efforts to curb GBV in Zimbabwe.

3.6. Summary and conclusion

This chapter discussed the prevalence of GBV in Zimbabwe and some contextual drivers. The aim was to establish the prevalence of GBV. The number of women experiencing GBV keeps on increasing. The figures of abuse documented by the government serve as a working framework though they are not an ultimate reflection of the exact number of victims. This is

caused by the fact women refrain from reporting abuses due to socio-cultural stigma associated with reporting. Efforts by the state to reduce GBV are evident though a lot still needs to be done to make gender relations friendlier. Statutory instruments that mitigate against GBV are in place but gaps still remain in the implementation process. The research found that what is documented in the statutory instruments is not properly translated into gender transforming relations. The government still lacks an effective multi-sectorial approach in its implementation phases. The church is one of the sectors that needs to be fully engaged to assist in alleviating GBV. From a public practical theological approach, a model needs to be designed that ropes in the church as one of the sectors. The study also concluded that social and cultural norms that are normalised from grassroots level continue to fan GBV.

Second, the chapter also discussed GBV factors and their interplay. The chapter found that many factors are interrelated in sustaining GBV. This means no isolated factor(s) could actually be pinned down as the sole cause of GBV. The gender inequalities have an interplay with the social, cultural, economic issues (Bisika, 2008:1885). Thus, the ecological framework was able to show that the interplay of GBV factors operate in four key areas such as individual, relationship, community and state. It emerged that the ability of these four key areas to be able to interact in sustaining GBV serves as a guide to identify area(s) that need to be transformed through a practical theological approach by the church. This will help to improve gender social relations between women and men.

Third, the chapter also discussed ten drivers of GBV and paid attention to the underlying causes. A common understanding identified in each driver is that male dominance and female subordination is prevalent. The chapter identified that this arises from the cultural belief that women are not allowed to challenge men primarily in the home setting. It emerged this belief radiates from the home setting and is reflected in community, church and even state. Thus, the family has been identified as the brewery of cultural beliefs that determines the position of women in the home and society at large. The chapter also found that patriarchal practices from culture find fertile ground to thrive in the church through invalid interpretation of scriptures that favour men. This reveals an interplay between patriarchy in the home and church setting. Conclusively, the drivers revealed that men continue to exploit women and women are subjected to the needs of men as could be learned from structural relationships.

Therefore, the church needs to redefine what it means to be male and female and to live in a manner that fosters mutual gender relations at all levels of society. The church has been blamed for lighting the lamp and putting it under a table. We found out that the clergy are also complicit and certain teachings fan GBV. The light and salt (Matthew 5:13-14) aspect of the church is not readily discernible. This calls for the church to be more public and act as a bridge in its approaches to alleviate the underlying causes of GBV factors. As such, there must be a proposed public theological model that serves as a launch pad for the church to start playing its public role.

Finally, the chapter selected and discussed a suitable gender theoretical framework that can assist in addressing gender inequalities between women and men. The SRA framework was selected as suitable to address the social inequalities that exist between women and men. It was concluded that the SRA has human well-being, survival, autonomy, security and communal well-being as its premise. This blends well with the public practical theological approach since it also has its point of departure as human well-being leading to communal transformation. The chapter found that by utilising the SRA and Osmer's method of doing practical theology one is able to develop a model that could challenge the underlying inequalities in gender relations that continue to sustain GBV at different levels.

GBV is real in Zimbabwe and is on the rise in various institutions of the country. There are various responses and efforts put in place to reduce the prevalence of GBV.

Chapter 4: Responses and efforts to address gender-based violence in Zimbabwe

4.1. Introduction

GBV remains a reality and is manifesting in various forms in Zimbabwe. What responses and efforts have GBV evoked in the country to alleviate the situation? The goal of this chapter is to discuss the responses and efforts by various sectors in Zimbabwe in addressing GBV. The chapter sets out to achieve this by discussing the following responses and efforts as detected from the national policy on GBV, the government programmes, CSOs, NGOs, the media and the church. The chapter also lastly utilises the SRA as a gender theoretical framework lens to understand the interventions and successes on GBV. The chapter ends with a conclusion and summary.

4.2. Responses and efforts to curb gender-based violence through national policies

Similar to other nations across the globe, Zimbabwe has drafted and implemented policies that seek to mitigate against GBV. Policies are important as they raise awareness about the phenomenon and encourage advocacy from community to national level if well understood. Many women do not know where to turn when experiencing GBV and would continue to suffer in silence. They end up accepting GBV because family and society norms seem to endorse the abusive practices. To alleviate the plight of women and remove the veil of ignorance, policies are important in providing “survivors legal recourse when they have experienced GBV” (Population Services International (PSI), 2015: 6). Currently, with policies in place, most women are able to understand GBV and some are able to take the necessary measures to ensure their own safety. Before discussing the available national policies, it is important to briefly understand the constitutional framework of the country about gender issues.

4.2.1. The legal framework on gender issues

The constitution of Zimbabwe upholds and respects the dignity and freedom of women as equal citizens. The Home Office (2018:41) states that,

The Constitution provides for the full participation and equal representation of women in all spheres of society, as well as equal access to resources. It also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy or culture.

The following are other provisions enshrined in the constitution regarding the country's perspective on women. The extracts are from the Red Cross Society of Zimbabwe (2017: 15); Section 80(1) provides that, "every woman has full and equal dignity of the person with men." Section 56 stipulates that everyone has the right to equal protection of the law and women have the right not to be discriminated against because of their gender. Section 17 provides as a national objective that, "the State must take positive measures to rectify gender discrimination and imbalances resulting from past practices." Section 80(3) outlaws the "laws, customs, traditions and cultural practices that infringe upon the rights and personal safety of women". The country has also made commendable efforts in making amendments and implementing legislation on gender issues. Such strides are notable in the following additions based on the constitution namely:

Matrimonial Causes Act (1987); Maintenance Act (1999); Administration of Estate Act (1997); Sexual Offences Act (2001), Education Act (2004), Labour Act, [Chapter 28:01]; Criminal Law Act (2006); Domestic Violence Act (2007) (Red Cross Society of Zimbabwe, 2017: 17).

This is evidence of the country's commitment and efforts to address gender inequality and equity issues associated with many factors. The national policy on GBV rests on constitutional provisions and other legislative laws of the country including the NGP.

4.2.2. The National Gender Policy on gender-based violence

The NGP is the first policy implemented as a response to GBV that has (and continues to) spread its roots across the nation. The first NGP was implemented in 2004. The policy had broad initiatives that seek to curb gender inequalities (NGP, 2013-2017: iv). The 2004 NGP initially addressed four key areas, "...thematic areas namely-women in politics and decision making, women and the economy, education and training of women and institution mechanisms for the advancement of women" (NGP, 2013-2017: iv). These were the gaps initially identified that seem to sustain gender inequality between women and men nationwide. Some positives²⁴ about

²⁴ Successes of the 2004 Nation Gender Policy, "(i) the passing of a series of legislation to operationalise the policy, (ii) institutional and structural reforms that saw the national gender machinery being streamlined and strengthened i.e. through the creation of a separate Ministry responsible for gender and women affairs; (iii) institutionalisation of processes for gender mainstreaming including gender budgeting; (iv) the development and launch of the framework for broad based women's economic empowerment; and (v) far-reaching constitutional

the 2004 policy were recorded with gender equity as the underpinning theme (NGP, 2013-2017: iv). Violence against women in general was the driving force in the 2004 NGP.

After eight years of implementation and evaluation, the 2004 NGP served its purpose but not satisfactorily. The NGP (2013-2017) preamble acknowledges that,

...despite these achievements, representation of women remains below the gender parity ideal as shown by the skewed statistics from education, employment, commerce and political and economic decision making and the increasing cases of gender based violence (NGP, 2013-2017: iv).

This gave way to the current NGP 2013-2017 with its national vision as, “A gender just society in which men and women enjoy equity, contribute and benefit as equal partners in the development of the country” (NGP, 2013-2017: ii). The second NGP is an improvement on the first (2004) NGP with notable additions. One such an addition is GBV getting a special section. This is proof of government’s considerate intentions on the plight of GBV victims. In addition, another significant stride in the addition to the 2004 NGP is the creation of a separate ministry the MWAGCD. The NGP submits and operates under this ministry.

The NGP of 2013-2017 has made commendable strides to establish various initiatives to curb gender inequalities in Zimbabwe. The main goal of the new NGP is stated as, “to eradicate gender discrimination and inequalities in all spheres of life and development” (NGP 2013-2017: v). Under this umbrella goal, the NGP identified the following thematic areas of priority namely:

Gender, constitutional and Legal Rights; Gender, Politics and Decision Making; Gender and Health; Gender, Education and Training; Gender based violence; Gender and Environment; and Gender, Media and ICTS (NGP, 2013-2017: v).

The thematic areas are comprehensive and align very well with the gender situations prevalent in Zimbabwe. More so, the NGP as the arm of the government no doubt points to the desire and commitment by government to address GBV. It raises a great awareness and action-oriented plans by documenting issues causing disparity between women and men.

More so, as a further measure to conform to global commitments in curbing GBV, the government has put in place more legislative laws and policies.

provisions for gender equality and equity” (NGP, 2013-2017:iv). Though the first policy of this nature came very late twenty years after independence, the good aspect is that a start has been made as evidence of the government’s effort to curb gender inequalities.

These include - the enactment of the Criminal law Act (2006); Domestic Violence Act (2007) and the setting up of the Anti-Domestic Violence Council to enforce this law; the putting in place of mechanisms to effectively implement the Sexual Offences Act of 2001 (NGP, 2013-2017:16).

Further, the government also set up the ZGC. The commission draws its provisions from Section 245 of the new constitution and was implemented in September 2015 (Home Office 2018: 15). The role of ZGC is to ensure that anything that has to do with gender equality and equity in the constitutional provisions is implemented. In other words, the ZGC is acting like a big brother to ensure implementation. To ensure gender equality and equity in its operation the ZGC has the following clearly stipulated functions.

- To monitor issues concerning gender equality to ensure gender equality as provided in this Constitution;
- To investigate possible violations of rights relating to gender;
- To receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate
- To conduct research into issues relating to gender and social justice, and to recommend changes to laws and practices which lead to discrimination based on gender;
- To advise public and private institutions on steps to be taken to ensure gender equality;
- To recommend affirmative action programmes to achieve gender equality;
- To recommend prosecution for criminal violations of rights relating to gender;
- To secure appropriate redress where rights relating to gender have been violated; and
- To do everything necessary to promote gender equality (Home Office 2018: 15-16).

On 17 May 2017, the chairperson of the ZGC stated that,

In terms of women participation in decision making, the Constitution provides for a reserved quota for women in the lower house and proportional representation in the senate. Our national laws also promote the equal participation of women and men in public life; entitle them to vote in all elections, and are eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies established by national law (Home Office, 2018: 16).

This implies the impact of GBV as displayed through gender inequalities and lack of equity has been felt.

In the previous chapter, the study amplified migration of people as one of the key drivers of GBV. It was discussed that women have been sexually harassed, raped, verbally abused and even murdered during migration. The government's concerned ministries together with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) drafted a National Migration Management and

Diaspora Policy (NMMDP). Quoting the Republic of Zimbabwe (2009a: 7) Zanamwe and Devillard (2010: 54) state that, “The goal of the National Migration Management and Diaspora Policy is to ensure the exploitation of the development potential of migration through a coordinated and informed response to migration challenges”. Though designed for a plethora of migration issues, the policy could also assist in reducing challenges affecting women as they migrate from one area to another. After all, they are the majority of the victims. This once again serves as an indicator to prove that government is concerned about issues that continue to disadvantage women in society.

While the above policies by the government to curb GBV remain highly commendable, the phenomenon remains a threat. The NGP 2013-2017 confirms that,

More women (and young girls), than men (and young boys), suffer more from various forms of violence as shown by the following statistics from the Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS, 2010: 11): In 60% of the cases, the victims are women and girls. About 43.4% of the women population experienced physical and/or sexual violence. 51.3% of girls aged 19 years and below have their first sexual experience forced against their will (NGP, 2013-2017: 6).

Furthermore, the chairperson of the ZGC noted (17 May 2017) with concern that, “whilst the legal and policy framework is in place, structural barriers to gender equality and gender-based discrimination still persist in the country” (Home Office, 2018:17). The NGP advances that, “Workplace sexual harassment, economic disempowerment, unemployment, orphan hood, cultural practices and the code of silence are factors that continue to hinder efforts to eliminate GBV in Zimbabwe” (NGP, 2013-2017: 6). There are many programmes enacted by the government, the chosen ones illustrate the efforts to alleviate GBV.

4.3. Government programmes

To move away from just theorising about mitigating against GBV, the government put in place programmes to ensure that the policies are translated into action. The MWGCD drafted the ZNGBVS (2012- 2015). It is important to understand the ZNGBVS’s nature in this section before mentioning actual programmes rolled out by the government.

The ZNGBVS seeks to improve the implementation of various programmes by, “Government, Civil Society and development partners to prevent and respond to GBV through a multi-

sectoral, effective and coordinated response” (ZNGBVS, 2013-2015: 9). In other words, the ZNGBVS acts as a launch pad for how any sector should implement its programme(s). The ZNGBVS was drafted for implementing partners with four key result areas in focus namely: “(a) Prevention; (b) Service Provision; (c) Research, Documentation, Monitoring & Evaluation (d) Coordination” (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015: iii). The translation of what is conceived in policies through programmes is confronted with challenges. The ZNGBVS states, “...the needs of many survivors remain unmet and prevention efforts are diminished due to limited resources and coordination among the various actors” (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015: iii). Nevertheless, the ZNGBVS provides a framework for various likeminded sectors to address GBV systematically. Therefore, the ZNGBVS stands between government policies on GBV and the implementing partners.

The ZNGBVS acknowledges the nation should have an environment that does not tolerate GBV. Women must be empowered to protect themselves and be able to deal with GBV consequences (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015:13). Among the aims of ZNGBVS is the quest to eradicate GBV at grassroots level by involving leaders of the community and men in matters relating to GBV. The eradication will be possible if the community leaders and men in society are educated to change their social, cultural, and religious relations towards women. They need to migrate from a perspective of deciding for women, controlling them and determining what their roles should be in society. Acknowledgement of women as free and capable beings in society must take precedence in a mutual manner. The ZNGBVS is met with some of the following challenges as outlined in ZNGBVS (2012-2015) and these challenges are likely to be encountered by other programmes:

- Resistant attitudes for legal reform resulting in impunity for perpetrators and lack of implementation of protective laws.
- Multiple forms of gender-based violence coupled with tolerance of abuse.
- Stigma and discrimination against saviours reporting gender-based violence by their families, service providers and communities.
- Lack of knowledge and awareness by women and children of their rights.
- Poverty, including lack of economic empowerment.
- Low male involvement.

The ZNGBVS has five important guiding principles, which sectors must tap into and pay attention to. Out of the five outlined principles, three are documented in this research. The three

selected principles dovetail appropriately with the aspects of this research. First, cultural sensitivity is strongly encouraged when various sectors are implementing programmes in communities. Underpinning this principle is respect and sensitivity for other people's culture (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015:9). This is crucial, since cultural insensitivity hinders all the efforts to assist people and amend oppressive cultural mores. The second guiding principle is community engagement and participation (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015:9). This instils in participants a sense of ownership and seeking to make collective efforts to change inappropriate gender social relations. It also allows new information to come to the fore regarding why people treat women in the manner they do. The third guiding principle is a rights-based approach. This approach is utilised within the framework of, "human rights and justice to challenge prevailing norms and to empower individuals and communities to promote social change" (ZNGBVS, 2012-2015:9).

The major shortfall for the government surfaces at the implementation stage. Therefore, the government is working hard to improve coordination towards implementation of programmes. To achieve this, it has increased involvement of stakeholders in its national GBV prevention response (ZNGBVS, 2013-2015: 24). With this in mind, the following platforms have been created to cater for different aspects of GBV as listed below according to the ZNGBVS (2013-2015: 24).

- The *Anti-Domestic Violence Council (ADVC)*, which was appointed with a mandate to oversee the operationalisation of the Domestic Violence Act.
- MWAGCD GBV Coordination Committees at Provincial and District levels
- *The Gender Forum* which coordinates multi-sectoral stakeholders around broader gender issues including the 16 days of activism against GBV. The GBV Cluster is mainly focused on coordinating the humanitarian response and hence mainly linked to humanitarian coordination structures such as the Protection cluster. It is mainly national with no linkages with lower level structures such as provinces and districts.
- *The Victim Friendly Initiative (VFI)* which is an initiative led by the Ministry of Justice and focuses on providing a safe environment for survivors of child abuse and witnesses. This initiative is reported to be working very well and is almost spread countrywide.

4.3.1. 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence

With the support and endorsement of the government under the MWGCD 16 Days of Activism against GBV has assisted in raising awareness about GBV. Its launch every year include government sectors, NGOs, faith-based organisations and other likeminded partners. This wide

net of sectors allows for effective awareness and spreading of the message. Most cases of GBV are under-reported due to lack of confidence in the judiciary system compounded with societal norms. Hence, the 16 Days of Activism against GBV has been instrumental in challenging loopholes that keep women silent about their abuses. During the 2019 16 Days of Activism against GBV, the Herald (7 November 2019) noted the following from the Msasa project,

Due to the multi-sectoral approach which is survivor centred many stakeholders have become more responsive to the situation being faced by women and girls, some gaps still remain, particularly when it comes to service provision. Sexual and rape abuse is mostly caused by harmful cultural practices especially in rural areas (The Herald, 2019).

The UN Country Team (UNCT) presented a positive speech about the country's commitment to end GBV through a multi-sectoral approach. A national theme during the 16 Days of Activism against GBV such as, "From peace in the home to peace in our community" (UNCT, 2019) raises awareness in private and public spheres. The home environment is regarded as the hatchery of gender norms that continue to disadvantage women. Thus, transformation in the home environment leads to transformed public attitudes towards women. The 16 Days of Activism against GBV each year acknowledges that GBV remains a threat. More services such as shelters, counselling, sign language for the deaf and mute victims, trained personnel to attend to victims of GBV *et cetera* remain in short supply. Hence, there is a call for unified, "...efforts and giving direction to the provision of a multi-sectoral, effective and coordinated response towards ending gender based violence" (UNCT, 2019). While the 16 Days of Activism against GBV by government and many sectors is commendable, the vibe and force of the message only lasts for 16 days and then it goes into limbo until the following year. The message needs to be kept forceful and ringing in people's minds and this means, more synergies are necessary to expand the network of message bearers.

4.3.2. *Victim Friendly Unit*

Many survivors of GBV have places to report their cases of abuse. The government of Zimbabwe has established more programmes to ensure that GBV survivors find access to justice. A programme like the Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) helps to ease social and cultural stigma experienced by those who report their cases. The VFU is a unit of the government, which falls under the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). It was established in 1995 and, "is concerned about cases of violence against women and children, sexual and domestic violence offense...the ZRP reports that every police station in the country has VFU" (Home Office,

2018: 25). The Judicial Service Commission (2012) outlined some guidelines for the smooth running of the VFU. According to the IFRC (2017:2), “Some of the guidelines include maintaining privacy, confidentiality and safety of the victim at all times, and treating each case of domestic violence or abuse a priority”. The VFU exists to ensure that the environment for victims is supportive, private and friendly (ZRP, n.d). The VFU also utilises a multi-sectorial approach in dispensing its services to victims. This means NGOs and faith-based organisations could come alongside the VFU to assist survivors of GBV. The ZRP VFU advances that, “the VFU is a source of hope for vulnerable victims who for decades have been prohibited by social attitudes, insensitivity and lack of professional handling on the part of the police” (ZRP, n.d).

The programme has helped members of the public to become aware of and identify GBV. To ensure effectiveness of this programme, investigators from the police department have been assigned to arrest offenders and compile dockets. The framework of the programme has also proven to be very important in dealing with cases of abuse and ensuring justice for victims (Home Office, 2018:25).

The VFU programme has made important strides towards raising awareness, bringing back confidence in victims to report abuses and making arrests. However, some weaknesses in the programme have been noted. According to the IFRC (2017:21) also cited in Home Office (2018: 25), a key informant revealed that a victim and a perpetrator are sometimes interviewed together in the VFU programme. This has led to some victims being afraid of further abuse and they therefore refrain from speaking freely (Home Office, 2018:26). A concern was also cited that the process of VFU could start very well, but when the case goes to court some dockets are reported to be lost or cases simply withdrawn (IFRC, 2017:21). The IFRC (2017) further conducted some interviews through focus group discussion and the interviewees noted the following about the VFU namely:

- ...a lack of will by the police to fully implement laws relating to violence against women.
- ...police choosing instead to administer mediatory efforts, which at times lead to worse outcomes...,saying cases should be settled within family circles.
- That police have sometimes have an attitude that did not encourage victims to follow through their cases. For example, being told that the victim provoked the perpetrator (IFRC, 2017:21; Home Office, 2018).

The weaknesses and concerns raised are indicators to gaps that need to be tightened in the VFU processes until a perpetrator is prosecuted and the victim’s dignity and rights restored.

Nevertheless, the programme remains a very important arm of the government in fighting GBV. GBV remains a concern in Zimbabwe. Therefore, “Zimbabwe is still ranking lowly in gender equality...*there is still*²⁵...low status of women with respect to reproductive health empowerment; access, control and ownership of economic resources; and participation in decision making” (NGP, 2013-2017:3).

The increase in GBV could also be fanned by lack of maximum mutual cooperation among public and private sectors. The following suggestions account for some of the reasons why the phenomenon remains a threat. First, the problem emerges at the implementation stage as the policies cascade down to different stakeholders. Some implementing partners may not be able to implement the vision of the government on GBV issues due to lack of awareness. For example, most churches may not be aware of the policies put in place by the government to fight GBV let alone the contextual drivers. The church and other sectors should talk about and conceptualise the gravity of the phenomenon. Second, most sectors in Zimbabwe are male-led and this makes GBV attended to and addressed through patriarchal lenses. Structural relationships that differentiate between women and men influence and impact implementation phases. Third, until the government policies are understood and cascade down to individual, relationship, communal and state levels it remains difficult to achieve better results. Fourth, similar structural practices that are practised in the home environment are reflected in private and public sectors. There is need to relook and examine such practices primarily by owners of the culture through facilitation by people knowledgeable on GBV issues.

This begs the question: What is the role of the church in fighting against GBV? The research insists that there remain gaps between the government and the church on working together towards eradication of GBV. How can the church frame a public pastoral ministry that conceptualises and complements government efforts to fight GBV? The following section details efforts by some civil society sectors in mitigating against GBV in Zimbabwe.

4.4. Efforts by civil society

The Zimbabwean government uses a, “multi sectorial, multi-layered, interlinked community-centered approach to the implementation” (Spotlight Initiative, 2018:19) of programmes that

²⁵ Not found in the original words.

are aimed at reducing GBV. As such, civic society programmes are responsible for cascading government programmes to communities and institutions to address GBV issues. The CSOs have a role to, “...identify the relevant skills, knowledge and support the implementation of GBV programmes” (UNAIDS, 2009:3). The following are examples of some civil society efforts focused on consolidating common advocacy and dealing with GBV.

4.4.1. The Plan 18+ campaign

The Plan 18+ campaign is a programme that is aimed at advocating against and ending early child marriages in Zimbabwe (broadly Southern Africa). The Plan 18+ campaign is run by Plan International (PI) in Zimbabwe. Prevalence of child marriages in Zimbabwe continue to infringe on young girls as citizens of the country. They are not able to make independent decisions regarding their lives. According to the Plan 18+ campaign (PI 2009:1), “...child marriage is regarded as a form of forced marriage given that one or both parties have not expressed their full, free and informed consent”. The initiatives of the Plan 18+ campaign are outlined in its policy brief as follows.

- international frameworks that address child marriage; and treaty body reporting;
- legal and policy initiatives on gender equality and child rights; and
- coordination and leadership including campaigns to end child marriage supported by traditional leaders (PI, 2009:2).

In addition, the programme also aims at, “...strengthening the existing structures and organisations to handle the issues, including women’s and men’s development groups, community policing groups, women associations and faith-based organisations” (PI, 2019:26). It is clear that the Plan 18+ campaign adopts a key approach in dealing with the phenomenon. The communal approach to address women’s abuse issues by including traditional chiefs is key among other structures mentioned. Among the chiefs, this is where some strong cultural beliefs and attitudes regarding women need to be challenged. As noted earlier, respect and sensitivity when dealing with cultural beliefs should underpin all the efforts utilised to address women’s abuse. Once the chiefs embrace an understanding of the phenomenon, they have the power and authority to be instruments of change in their communities. Therefore, the approach by the Plan 18+ campaign acknowledges that attitudes, customs and beliefs about women are not only individualistic but are communal as well. This understanding assists in advocating for the well-being of individuals and community when people make collective efforts to fight GBV. This leads us to the next civic society effort to address GBV in Zimbabwe.

4.4.2. The “Give us books, not husbands” campaign

This campaign is similar to the preceding one in that it fights against early child marriages in Zimbabwe and everything that sustains child marriages. The major difference between the two is that the “Give us books, not husbands” campaign is revolutionary in nature. It is a bottom-up approach to address the injustices facing young girls in the country. Second, it is home-grown and originates with two young girls that were forced to leave school and forced into marriage. It is stated that,

In 2014, two former child brides Loveness Mudzuru and Ruvimbo Tso podzi filed an application asking the Constitutional Court to declare the Marriage Act and the Customary Marriage Act unconstitutional and in January 2016, the Constitutional Court ruled that the Marriage Act was unconstitutional and recognised 18 years as the legal minimum age of marriage for both genders (Zocchi, 2017; Theirworld, 2016; Home Office, 2018).

The major goal of the campaign is to fight against child marriages in favour of education. It is stated that one in three girls in Zimbabwe get married before their 18th birthday (Zocchi, 2017) and this makes the efforts by this organisation extremely relevant to the context.

The legislation to address child marriages is taking significant steps, but the practice remains rooted in tribal culture and also in gender-based discrimination (Zocchi, 2017). By giving preference to boys in education and forcing young girls to be married lays bare how rooted GBV is in the country. This goes against the constitution where women are “protected from discrimination under constitution, discriminatory customary laws...” (Zocchi, 2017). The 2015 Human Rights Watch report titled, “Zimbabwe Scourge of Child Marriage” cited that church²⁶ beliefs allow girls between 12 and 16 to marry to curb sex outside marriage (Human Rights Watch, 2015; cited in Zocchi, 2017).

²⁶ The following excerpt comes from the Human Rights Watch 2015 as proof that church beliefs and practices continue to discriminate against women in Zimbabwe. “Archbishop Johannes Ndanga, president of the Apostolic Churches Council of Zimbabwe, a coalition of over 1,000 indigenous apostolic churches, told Human Rights Watch that “virginity testing” – which includes the insertion of fingers into the vagina – of girls as young as 12, was widely practiced in the apostolic churches. “If found to be virgins they would get marks on their foreheads,” he said. “Older men in the church will then choose these ‘fresh girls’ to become their wives, often joining polygamous unions. If a man marries a woman who is not a virgin, she is required to find a virgin girl for her husband to marry as compensation.” The World Health Organization has determined that virginity testing is a discredited and abusive practice with no scientific basis” (Human Right Watch, 2015)

The “Give us books, not husbands” campaign by ‘Kastwe Sista Hood’ focuses on the epicentre of the problem, “encouraging traditional leaders, to promote the spirit of responsibility in society, making them realize the value of educated and liberated women for the community” (Zocchi, 2017). The campaign is supported by the MWAGCD to help transform the mindset of society to promote rights and gender parity (Zocchi, 2017). The revolutionary approach utilised by the child brides serves as one good example that awareness and access to relevant legal arms of the nation transforms lives of girls and women. While the nation celebrated the great achievement of the two sisters, the practise of child marriage calls for many sectors to unite and end it. It means the church as a sub-system of society has two roles to play. First, the church must move away and shun practices that discriminate and oppress women for it is complicit in the phenomenon. Second, the church should frame ministries that advocate against and transform the GBV situations in Zimbabwe.

4.4.3. The “Not Ripe for Marriage” programme

The “Not Ripe for Marriage” programme was launched by Real Open Opportunities for Transformation Support (ROOTS). The aim of ROOTS is to “protect and raising awareness on the disadvantages of early and forced marriages” (The Zimbabwean, 2014). In implementing its programmes, it engages legislators, traditional leaders, religious groups, parents and young girls (The Zimbabwean, 2014). The approach used by this campaign is broad in that it operates from grassroots level to national level through engaging concerned structures. In connection with the church, it is important that the church also designs ministries that are able to collaborate with these organisations in society and advocate for a biblical approach to marriage. The church is at greater advantage because scripture has many guiding principles for marriage that discourage abuse of women.

“Girls not Brides” is another civic society programme that shares some similarities with the Not Ripe for Marriage programme. The reason for mentioning Girls not Brides at this point is that it best summarises the drivers for child marriages in Zimbabwe. The mention of such drivers alerts us to the issues they are seeking to address. Not only this, but being aware of the contextual drivers informs how the government, civic society, NGOs and faith-based organisations should channel their services or ministries. Even questions that one frames are mostly informed by the context to achieve better results. Thus, the following contextual drivers

by Girls not Brides reveal such an understanding of the context underpinned by the understanding that girls are inferior to boys (Girls not Brides, n.d)

Poverty: Daughters are sometimes married off to reduce their perceived economic burden, with their bride price (lobola) used by families as a means of survival.

Level of education: Girls from Zimbabwe's poorest households are more likely to marry before the age of 18 than girls living in the richest households.

Religion: Members of the indigenous apostolic church reportedly encourage girls as young as ten to marry much older men for "spiritual guidance." Men in the church are reportedly entitled to marry girls to shield them for pre-marital sex.

Traditional customs: Virginity testing is still practiced in parts of Zimbabwe by the apostolic church. Girls who are found to no longer be virgins are shamed into wearing a mark on their forehead and are required to find another virgin for their husband to marry as compensation.

Family honour: If a girl engages in pre-marital sex, is seen with a boyfriend or returns home late, she is sometimes forced to marry to mitigate the shame. Some girls who fall pregnant choose to enter customary marriages because they are afraid their family will abuse them for dishonourable behaviour (Girls not Brides, n.d).

The above efforts by the government and other organisations remain valid and appreciated in fighting against GBV. Apart from civil society mitigating against GBV, NGOs have also come alongside as implementing partners of government policies on GBV. The NGOs seek opportunities to work with the government, CSOs and faith-based organisations in Zimbabwe to fight GBV.

4.5. Efforts by non-governmental organisations

The state alone cannot address and curb GBV. The coming in of NGOs to address GBV complements the efforts made by the state. NGOs have managed to access rural areas the government failed to reach due to lack of funding. Advocacy and educating people on GBV issues now reach the most remote places in the country because of NGOs. Most NGOs in the country prefer to work through the church and local community leaders in dealing with women's abuse.

Three reasons are immediately apparent why NGOs rope in the church in implementing their programmes on violence against women. First, the church is spread across the nation and can continue with advocacy and educating people once the NGOs leave the area. Second, the

population in Zimbabwe is 84.5% Christian (ZIMSTAT, 2012:29) and the majority of the members are women. Hence, the NGOs do not have to struggle to access women and men when launching and running their programmes. Third, the church already has the literature (the Bible) which it can use to mitigate against women abuses in its contexts in conjunction with the training it receives from the NGOs. Foreign organisations like UNIFEM, USAID, UNFPA, PSI, UNICEF *et cetera*, are helping to curb violence against women in the country.

A foreign NGO like UNFPA works with the MWGCD. It also works with agencies associated with UN agencies and likeminded civil society to increase, “availability and utilization of GBV services by survivors as well as reducing tolerance for GBV in communities” (Home Office, 2018:30). The main upshot of the UNFPA is to increase advocacy and awareness of,

gender responsive laws and services; the provision of health care, psychosocial support and legal aid to survivors of GBV mobilizing men and young people to support gender equality; GBV prevention through community mobilization; and supporting GBV referral and coordination mechanisms at district and community level (Home Office, 2018:30).

Some NGOs have assisted in providing protective services to victims, which include, counselling, medical care, educational needs and shelter to those displaced because of GBV (Home Office, 2018:39). Furthermore, a hotline was put in place by an NGO so that abused women are able to report their ordeals and get assistance. The hotline has assisted as could be noted that, many who reported abuse were subjected to sexual, physical, and verbal abuse by their employers (Home Office, 2018: 39). The efforts of the NGO are sometimes curtailed due to insufficient funding where the government is expected to assist financially. The Home Office report noted the following about funding problems,

The joint government-NGO Anti-Domestic Violence Council as a whole was ineffective due to lack of funding and the unavailability of information on prevailing trends of domestic violence, although its members were active in raising domestic violence awareness...The adult rape clinics in public hospitals in Harare and Mutare were run as NGOs and did not receive a substantial amount of financial support from the Ministry of Health (Home Office, 2018:23, 25).

Despite funding challenges, NGOs continue to advocate against GBV in areas where government alone could not reach. Also, through working with urban and rural communities, traditional chiefs and religious groups, NGOs have assisted in challenging social and cultural mores that fan GBV. The remainder of this section covers some local NGOs that operate in Zimbabwe.

The Musasa project is one of the indigenous NGOs found in Zimbabwe that strongly advocates against GBV. It was established in 1988 as a response to the soaring levels of GBV. It has managed to bridge the gap in implementing the government's programmes on GBV. The Musasa project targets the entire society by interrogating beliefs, attitudes, laws and policies that fuel GBV. The organisation is currently running the following key programmes to assist women: Public Education and Training; Counselling, shelter and Legal services; Research and Information; Gender violence and HIV and AIDS; Musasa Shelter Home; and Networking, Collaboration and Advocacy (Musasa Peace Insight, n.d). The Home Office report documents that, "The counselling, shelters and legal services department is the heart of the direct services that Musasa offers to survivors of gender based violence. The department is made up of skilled personnel who interact with women and girls from all walks of life" (Home Office, 2018:29) to provide the services mentioned above. Utilising some trained survivors of GBV to provide services to other survivors ensures close compassionate care and accurate response to survivors' emotional, psychological and physical needs.

The organisation also provides services across the country in its established centres by continuing to assist women experiencing abuse. The Musasa project is very instrumental in educating the nation about GBV. The organisation does not work independently, but is also a member of the Peace Building Network in Zimbabwe, which also addresses issues of women that are negatively affected. The Musasa project has the UN resolution 1325 underpinned in its activities to end GBV (Musasa Peace Insight, n.d).

The Zimbabwe Women's Resources Centre and Network (ZWRCN) is another NGO. It aims at encouraging, "women's social and economic justice in Zimbabwe...through power of information, networking and strategic advocacy" (ZWRCN, n.d). This organisation is motivated by and aligns itself with the following organs in dispensing its services to the nation: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The ZWRCN advocates for the rights of women in the country since women in Zimbabwe still have their rights infringed and lack empowerment (ZWRCN, n.d).

The Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) arose as a result of the violence suffered by women in the 2008 elections. Some women were beaten, threatened, tortured, raped and some even got murdered in that frigid political atmosphere. The WCoZ's major objective is to

encourage activism for women and girls' rights. Women are educated to advocate and lobby for peace in their communities. The organisation also addresses women's needs and aims at reducing violence against women by advocating for women's participation in decision-making. WCoZ works with organisations of the same ethos like Peacebuilding Network of Zimbabwe, NANGO, NAZIM and Gender Links. It is guided by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in its operations (WCoZ, n.d). There are many home-grown NGOs in the country. These mentioned serve to illustrate and represent efforts by NGOs to end GBV in the country. To disseminate messages on advocacy and raise awareness about GBV the media has played a key role in Zimbabwe.

4.6. The role of media²⁷ in curbing gender-based violence

According to the Spotlight Initiative (2018:35), “the media is among the institutions in society that can either perpetuate gender norms and stereotypes or the media can be an agent of change”. There is a bright and effective side about media in fighting against GBV. An organisation called Federation of Media Women Zimbabwe (FAMWZ) emphasises the importance of media as an agent of social transformation. Media is assisting in providing, “frameworks for interpretation, mobilise citizens with regard to various issues, reproduce predominant culture in society and entertain” (Llanos and Nina, 2011). The public is now aware of more stories about women's abuses with some solutions being suggested through the media. Unlike in the past, women used to be ‘seen’ but not ‘heard’ before the dawn of mass media. What this means is that women were not accorded the space to voice their abusive experiences though women constitute the larger part of the society. That obscured an array of abuses, but media has helped to lay bare some of the struggles that women experience (Ndlovu and Sibalo 2011).

The newsrooms in Zimbabwe have adopted a, “new gender policy writing in light of women and this has seen The Herald newspaper opening a gender section ... since things that we know

²⁷ By media reference is being made to the following communication tools

- Multimedia: videography and photography
- Regular bulletin, brochures and fact sheets for nationwide advocacy campaign
- Billboards and posters with messaging in different local languages
- Media engagement– dedicated columns in public and private newspapers; primetime radio and
- TV messages, interviews, panel discussions; community radio; live streaming of social media

are based on images, text or audio visuals we consume in the media” (Muroyi, 2016:4,7). With media, some stereotypes and social constructions about women are being addressed and interrogated. The Spotlight Initiative (2018:35) advances that,

Strengthening the representation and the voices and perspectives of women and girls, especially those who face intersecting forms of discrimination in and through the media is important to give visibility to the issue through the voices of those most affected and marginalized.

Women have been portrayed as weak, not rational, always after money, homemakers *et cetera* while their male counterparts represent the opposite. Media is helping women to challenge such negative perspectives. Media is able to give a voice to the marginalised and the voiceless for the transformation of societal gender relations. In Zimbabwe “to ensure that services are accessible to all women and girls, including those with disabilities, measures have been introduced such as access ramps at service centres, sign language, braille and audio versions of information materials” (Home Office, 2018:31) Thus multimedia communication is being utilised to address violence in public spaces (Spotlight Initiative, 2018:50).

The positive role of media in assisting to curb GBV is a developing field and some concerns are still being raised regarding how it is being used. There is appreciation in that more GBV issues are covered in media and that is commendable. However, there is need to consider human ethics when presenting such issues via the media. Instead of helping, the victim is sometimes left open to increased abuse culminating in dire consequences. Newspapers should not just focus on articles about women to lure customers to buy the papers, but should also focus on the social constructions and beliefs the story makes (Muroyi, 2016: 59). Also, “themes in media coverage during both the 16 Days campaign and the periods after the campaign (in 2011²⁸) suggest a need for the media to step up in their coverage of gender equality and women’s rights” (Ndlovu and Sibalo, 2011). There is also a concern not only to portray the physical and sexual abuses towards women. Their success stories must be covered in the media as well. Gender imbalances in the newsrooms must improve to cater for gender balance in reporting GBV issues (Muroyi, 2016: 59). Women still feel that domination of male reporters in media obscures and eclipses some gender issues in reporting. Nevertheless, advocacy and awareness about GBV are bearing positive results through media.

²⁸ Not in the original words, added by the researcher.

The church is a subsystem of society and as such, it has a role to play to address public challenges faced by society. Therefore, the next section details efforts by the church to address GBV in Zimbabwe.

4.7. Efforts by the church to address gender-based violence

Citing Jenkins (2002), Le Roux (2014:62) states that the church is fast growing in Africa. Zimbabwe is among the countries where the church is experiencing growth. The general understanding of ‘church’ in this section is taken simply to refer to a group of believers that confess Jesus as their Saviour and Lord of their lives. The tremendous growth of the church in Zimbabwe strengthens its position as a subsystem of society with great influence. Is the church intentionally allowing its influence to take place in confronting and interrogating GBV?

For too long the church has been blamed for its silence and complicity on GBV. Chisale (2020:1) states that, “The church is a fertile ground for nurturing and protecting patriarchy.” It has been commended for speaking against and making concerted efforts to address HIV and AIDS; but remained barely responsive to GBV. One of the reasons cited for the blame is invalid interpretation of scriptures to sustain GBV. The other reason put across is that the church environment is conducive to nurture cultural practices that encourage unequal social gender relations between women and men. The high prevalence of Christianity in Zimbabwe creates an inconsistency with the prevalence of GBV in the country (Berman, 2015:122). Given the very high prevalence of Christianity in Zimbabwe documented in chapter 1, GBV remains high and this means Christian men are among the perpetrators (WCC, 2018). There is now a call for Christian leaders and congregants to be acutely sensitive to GBV and respond correctly (Clark, 2016:19). The church in Zimbabwe is making some strides to respond and make public efforts to assist in curbing GBV.

GBV is coming to the fore in Zimbabwean churches as an issue that needs urgent attention. Religious leaders in the country are being encouraged to identify issues in the context of their ministries and address them (Monakali, 1997:98). As microcosm of society, the church in Zimbabwe is starting to raise its voice against women’s abuse. Notable is the effort by a church leader,

Archbishop Johannes Ndanga, the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) executive president, concurred that congregants have the responsibility to fight against

all forms of gender-based violence and eliminating problems associated with gender stereotyping (Madzikatidze, 2013).

Against this background, Christian men and women are researching and writing about GBV. Most of the researches aim at interrogating how the church has been doing things that promote abuse of women and finding transforming solutions from the Bible. Chief among issues analysed in the researches are religious beliefs, patriarchy, religious practices and invalid interpretation of scriptures to the detriment of women (Kambarami, 2006:5). Patriarchy remains a key topic among those that have been researched. Most Christian women experience patriarchy twice; at home and at church.

The church is making its voice heard in the country through spreading messages against GBV. Holistic messages that speak about the sanctity of the human body (women in particular as victims) are being preached. The church has come to the realisation that faith is not about the human heart and mind only. Instead, faith has to do with our bodies too and is practical. Jesus's approach to ministry was holistic, not just the heart and mind (ELCA, 2015:3). Messages like these are teaching Christians to value women's bodies and treat them as having been created in the image of God as well (Berman, 2015:122-137).

'Transforming masculinity' is a method being promoted by Christian writers in Zimbabwe as a way to curb GBV. A manual edited by Chitando and Njoroge (2013:6-53) entitled: *Contextual Bible Study Manual on Transformative Masculinity*, serves to challenge men in the church to treat women in ways that do not fan GBV. Positive masculinity is encouraged through interrogating some of the terror passages in the Bible, like Judges 19:1-30 and Genesis 34:1-34 and encourage men to do things differently. The outcome of studying these and other passages is to have boys and men who:

- Are caring and sensitive
- Respect women, children and other men
- Are faithful in relationships
- Grant their partners space to be independent and to grow
- Use dialogue, not violence, to resolve conflict
- Use respectful language towards women, children and other men
- Avail their time to children
- Avail equal opportunities to women and men
- Are willing to share responsibilities and chores in the home

- Accept the leadership of women and young people
- Actively promote the leadership of women and young people
- Challenge sexual and gender-based violence whenever they encounter it (Chitando, 2004:8).

Religious leaders also play a key role in Zimbabwe to promote transformed masculinity. Chitando (2004:8) notes that some perpetrators use biblical texts to justify their GBV practices. He also suggests ways in which religious leaders can promote GBV awareness and desist from being perpetrators. On the other hand, “different church groups compliment government efforts by preaching about peace from within the family up to society at large. Peace, unity and justice tend to be important elements in the society” (Musodza, Mapuranga & Dumba, 2015:126). The church in Zimbabwe is at a greater advantage to address GBV because of its longstanding history of political persecution and using scripture to find solutions. The church is also offering guidance and counselling using Christian principles in communities and high schools in Zimbabwe to curb GBV. Musodza *et al.* (2015:127) advise that, “...supportive counselling is especially beneficial for those experiencing symptoms of anxiety, post traumatic symptoms, insomnia or depression.” Some churches in the country are offering shelter to victims of GBV and establishing advocacy centres.

The church, similar to other institutions in the country is also very instrumental through other sectors in supporting the national pillars underpinning the National Gender Based Violence Strategy (2012-2015) (NGBVS). According to Spotlight Initiative (2018:53),

Religious leaders from various denominations and umbrella organizations of various churches in Zimbabwe also are among the implementing partners to be identified at national and community level.

The multi-sectorial approach by other sectors, which includes the church as a partner; assist in raising awareness and advocacy against GBV in the church. Churches (among other institutions) are also members of the Anti-Domestic Violence Council (ADVC) which was, “...established in terms of section 16 of the Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 5:16) of 2007” (Home Office, 2018: 23). Among its functions, the ADVC exists to disseminate and raise awareness on public domestic violence (Home Office, 2018: 23). It is important for the church to be part of the council because GBV is a topic that is rarely mentioned in churches. The reason it is not mentioned is that most pastors lack awareness and do not know what to do when it occurs among members. With awareness and advocacy against GBV introduced in the church,

the church is starting to play a better role in disseminating corrective messages about GBV. Its transformative role is beginning to be felt though, much still needs to be done to achieve its maximum potential as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-14) in its ministerial contexts. The church is starting to be a community where women can be viewed for who they are in God (Dorff, 2015:133). Instead of just focusing on the salvation of souls, efforts are being made to begin to fight against GBV. While being taken on board by other sectors is good for churches, they also need to be in a position to frame their own ministries that provide solutions to GBV issues.

The church is an important resource in communities that has the potential to link with the poor, the marginalised and give supportive structures to people in society (Le Roux, 2014:63). However, churches need to collaborate and share ideas about how they are going to address GBV as one community. An initiative like the *Tamar Campaign* (2007) by the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches brings churches together and assists in mitigating against GBV. It encourages a contextual Bible study with an application of biblical texts related to GBV as the Bible study focuses on passages like Genesis 34:1-34; 2 Samuel 13:1-22; 2 Samuel 11:1-27; Judges 19:1-30; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 18:1-8; *et cetera* (Tamar Campaign, 2007: 3-4). The nature of the Bible study follows the following pattern to ensure that the reader sees the violence and discerns what God is communicating through the text. The procedure utilised helps churches to move away from invalid interpretation of Scripture resulting in a distorted view of God towards women (Tamar Campaign, 2007:11). The method utilised in the Bible study ensures transformation of lives through the analysis of cultural background of the text, context of the text and life experience (Tamar Campaign, 2007:5). I have quoted the procedure in full to capture accurately the entire process used in the Bible study.

When the text is examined for the construction of a Bible study, generally these three dimensions are used in a specific way:

1. Begin with an **in front of the text** mode of reading, asking participants what they think the text is about. Here, they are asked to draw on their own understanding of what the text projects towards them, or is telling them directly;
2. Then the focus moves **on to the text** itself, allowing it to 'have its own voice' among the voices of the participants. Questions that draw the readers into a close, careful and slow reading of the text are used here;

3. Next, allowing for questions from the participants probes the world **behind the text**. They draw on the resources of biblical scholarship to look at the detail of the socio-historical context of and background to the text; and
4. Finally, we again examine what the text now projects to us as participants, only to discover that this is deeper, fuller, more meaningful or even quite different to our first reading of it!" (Tamar Campaign, 2017: 11).

The approach of this Bible study by the churches is aimed at assisting GBV survivors to find healing in themselves and their communities (Tamar Campaign, 2007:5). The Tamar Campaign also help survivors to understand that God does not condone GBV. The nature of this Bible study also transforms the social relations between women and men, especially when they study and analyse biblical passages together.

While the above efforts by and through the church are commendable, the church still needs to work harder in dealing with GBV. Some denominations and church leaders are complicit in perpetrating GBV. This inhibits the role of the church to be salt and light in its ministerial spaces. On the other hand, some pastors still need to be educated to understand what GBV includes and how it affects women. There is need to desist from simply quoting scripture and praying for the victim without discerning the real issues underlying GBV. This accounts for GBV cases that continue to be nurtured in the church hoping to pray them away. Some clergy are denying that women's abuse cannot be named among Christians. The major drawback for the church comes when the laity and clergy are implicated in murky issues regarding GBV, arraigned before the courts and jailed. If the church in Zimbabwe can live as God intends in His Word, it could achieve great strides and credibility in addressing GBV. God's Word is also complete and is able to encourage gender parity without conflict between women and men. This means public pastoral care models need to be developed with the aim of advocating for operative ecclesiology in relation to addressing GBV in homes, church, communities and state.

4.8. Successes of the interventions from a Social Relations Approach

This section discusses successful interventions on GBV by utilising the lens of SRA as a gender theoretical framework. It is true that the government policies, government programmes, civil societies, NGOs, the church and media (discussed above) did not use the SRA in their efforts to curb GBV. However, the achievements or efforts made can still be analysed using the SRA framework. Thus, the SRA helps us to analyse which gender relations have improved through the above efforts towards reducing GBV. It also allows us to discern how institutional analysis

about how gender inequality (Miles, 2014:1) has improved. In discussing the successful interventions by SRA, the research adopts the four institutions in SRA namely state, market, community and family/kinship. This is important since no institution operates as a separate entity, but institutions inform and reinforce each other (Miles, 2014: 2; March *et al.*, 1999). In addition, the following key elements are going to underpin the successes of SRA at each institution namely: human well-being as a goal, the idea of social relations, and institutional analysis (March, *et al.*, 1999:102).

4.8.1. Interventions at state level

The key successful interventions at state level that lay the foundations of growing social relations are the constitutional framework and the national gender policy on women in the country. First, the constitution of the state upholds and respects the dignity of women and their freedom in the nation as equal citizens. This is a move away from gender relations by the state that continue to discriminate against women. Further, the constitution clearly allows free participation and equal representation of women in all spheres of society. This sets the tone towards the concepts of human well-being by the constitution. Human well-being in this instance should not only be viewed in terms of economic improvement or having influential positions in the government sector. Human well-being begins with the freedom of women to be able to express themselves and be heard, to achieve their utmost desires. This means freedom of persons as provided in the constitution remains fundamental. For example, the successful story of Loveness Mudzuru and Ruvimbo Tsopodzi (Zocchi, 2017) filing an application asking the Constitutional Court to declare the Marriage Act and Customary Marriage Act unconstitutional, is a clear example of striving towards human well-being. The fact that the ruling was in favour of these young girls is a key factor to show a change in gender relations. The constitutional provisions show that at state level women cannot be kept subordinate to men, but are able to relate in a manner that mutually enhances gender relations. The state as an institution shows the will to improve the situation of GBV women and conditions enacting and enforcing legislation (Miles, 2014: 10).

Dovetailed with the constitutional provisions, the NGP of Zimbabwe serves as another example of institutional transformation at state level. The policy is informed and operates by the provisions of the state constitution. Apart from the constitution, the policy allows women to feel their worth, acceptance and recognition in society. Policies allow the state to, “move

beyond the official ideology of bureaucratic neutrality, and scrutinise the actual rules and practices of institutions to uncover their core values and assumptions” (March et al., 1999:105) about women. The ability to uncover the key values and assumptions regarding women aims at changing how men should relate to women to ensure better social relations. Informed by the constitution, policies empower women in many ways. Kabeer (1999) alludes to the necessity to empower the disempowered. This success has been noted in Zimbabwe having the first female minister of defence since independence and women parliamentarians; though there is potential for improvement. This changes social relations because women do not only have to listen to men alone, but women also now have a voice at state level. This change in gender relations also allows for development and well-being of women as rules, resources, activities and power (March *et al.*, 1999: 106) do not remain vested in men and impinge on women’s well-being (Miles, 2014:10).

4.8.2. Interventions at market level

The market is the second major institution of the SRA framework. The constitutional view of women and the NGP are framed in a way that embrace and acknowledge women in the marketplace. There are positive changes in that women are able to initiate and lead in the marketplace, though with challenges. Some women have become company owners with men serving under them in a way that does not exploit a particular gender. This means the constitutional provisions of the country treat women as equal development partners in a way that fosters development and human well-being. According to Miles (2014:10), “...industry regulators might also encourage firms to provide training so that more women in low-skilled and low-waged industries can enhance their skills”. A handful of women have perfected skills and this has allowed them to move to higher wage positions in the country. For example, a good number of women are becoming class one drivers and some are drivers of haulage trucks. These positions were strictly designated for men in the past.

However, the market institution remains dominated by men and the majority of women who would like to excel in the market remain suppressed by structural relationships. Being women limits them on what they could participate in, though the constitution and NGP provisions are clear. For example, the *The Guardian* newspaper of 8 February 2020 records that,

Zimbabwe has recorded an unprecedented number of women reporting being forced to exchange sex for employment or business favours. More than 57% of women surveyed

by Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ) said they had been forced to offer sexual favours in exchange for jobs, medical care and even when seeking placements at schools for their children (The Guardian, 2020).

This shows that gender relations, the market institution and human well-being according to the SRA is failing to achieve better success.

According to the survey conducted by Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ) (2019), women are discriminated against in business, such that it is difficult for them to win contracts or tenders unless they offer themselves for sextortion (TIZ, 2019). The dominance of men in this institution perpetuates GBV and leaves many women disempowered. Sexual extortion is a form of GBV that violates women's well-being by hampering "women's access to land and markets and reinforces social and economic marginalisation" (The Guardian, 2020). The constitutional, legal and policy frameworks of the nation fail to translate accurately in a manner that enhances and transforms gender relations between men and women in the marketplace. The market institution still ranks low in promoting women's well-being, better social relations and institutional transformation. The practices and culture of the market institution promote powerlessness, poverty and subordination of women (March *et al.*, 1999:7). Just like any institution, the market shows little successful interventions through SRA because it is still protective of its interests against women (Miles, 2014:11).

4.8.3. Interventions at community level

The third key institution in SRA is the community. The community is one of the institutions where, "social structures, processes and relations which give rise to women disadvantaged position *need to*²⁹ be transformed" (Miles, 2014:3). From the above efforts by various sectors, there are discernible interventions that come to the fore by utilising the SRA as theoretical lens. The predominant traditional leadership hierarchies of the vast rural communities are led by (ranking from lowest to highest) chief, headman, kraal head. This leadership structure systematically and coherently holds to certain traditional beliefs about women that have been handed down to them from past generations. This means men expect women to show certain, "community norms and social hierarchies, cultural practices, and religious beliefs" (March *et al.*, 1999: 35). Migration and participation of women and men in various spheres of the market

²⁹ Italicised words not found in the original quotation.

and state institutions is mainly informed by traditional ideologies. Such ideologies cherished by the community impinge, reinforce, reproduce social differences and inequalities between men and women (March *et al.*, 1999: 105).

The following successful interventions could be identified in the community as an institution. First, the NGOs and CSOs have played very important roles. They have respectfully and carefully engaged the local chiefs, private and public institutions to challenge cultural norms regarding women in communities. This has significantly led to some cultural perceptions about women being transformed in a manner that enhances mutual gender relations. For example, many people are now aware that, forcing young girls to get married, wife battering, undesirable contact with women calls for accountability and prosecution. In addition, NGOs and CSOs are at the forefront in assisting the government to advocate against GBV. This has led young children in schools to understand what rape and abuse means. Second, another community that is beginning to see signs of change is the church. It is beginning to wake from its slumber and is challenging some religious beliefs emanating from invalid interpretation of scriptures. Churches are engaging biblical teachings that are focused on challenging masculinity and other oppressive practices towards women in the church. Such interventions at community level have contributed to human well-being and improvement of gender relations between women and men. Being aware of what GBV means has opened opportunities for women to report their cases though some cases are not followed through. Having the knowledge and awareness marks the path towards transformation leading to transformed communities. Third, interventions at community level have given women a voice and being able to form powerful allies among themselves to challenge structural relationships that infringe their rights to achieve human well-being. Miles asserts that,

...women's allies and grassroots organisations play a crucial role in spurring women's collective action. They can help women challenge the way institutions relate to each other...and exert pressure on public institutions to be more responsive to women's needs..." (Miles, 2014:4; Kabeer, 1994).

Structures that oppress women have been and are being challenged and change is discernible, though much remains to be done.

The community has the capacity to perpetuate myths that women should remain subservient to men (Miles, 2014: 6). In workplaces the perceptions on the roles, responsibilities and achievements about women are slowly changing. The perceptions come from the cultural

norms that women are regarded as the weaker sex hence, they cannot participate in certain positions of employment or they must be confined to the home environment. Communities are beginning to move away from this thinking and to acknowledge that women deserve equal opportunities to men. However, there are still more conservative views that continue to mitigate against women. For example, some still hold that a woman cannot win a tender in the government alone; she must collaborate with a man. In addition, certain machines in work places cannot be operated by women. This points to the fact that communities need to empower women so that they become proficient in all spheres of the community.

4.8.4. *Interventions at family level*

The last and fourth institution is the family/kinship. Most views of men about women are formed, promoted and perpetuated at family level (Miles, 2014: 9). Women are expected to take care of the children, the sick, the elderly and stay at home (March *et al.*, 1999: 104 ; Kabeer, 1994). Even if a woman is formally employed, she must balance work and family responsibilities. The husband might be minimally involved or decide not to take part at all in helping with household responsibilities. Such attitudes are common in families that sustain patriarchal practices (Miles, 2014:10). The family serves as the grass roots level of GBV. The attitudes natured about women in the home are later on reflected at community, market and state level. Transformed gender relations at any level lead to transformation in the other institutions. The NGOs and CSOs have helped significantly by working at grassroots level such as family institutions and community to raise GBV awareness. Appropriate programmes have been implemented that challenge social structures within families and teaching that a boy can sweep and wash plates. These duties are normally left for women. The interventions made are assisting the family relations to be cooperative and move away from conflicts arising from gender roles and attitudes. The church with valid interpretation of scripture is also intervening in this area by teachings on redeemed and transformed relationships in the family (marriages). For example, passages such as Ephesians 5:22-6:4 are being utilised to challenge ungodly and oppressive structural relationships in the family. The result of this is that some Christian men are able to assist their wives in responsibilities (changing nappies, sweeping, cooking, bathing kids, washing clothes) that are socially sanctioned as feminine responsibilities.

Therefore, “as institutions change, so will the ways they relate to each other, ultimately impacting gender inequality” (Miles, 2014: 10). March *et al.* (1999:105) note that institutions

have different cultures, but can also have common aspects. They further discern that “Institutional change is brought about through the practices of different institutional actors and through processes of bargaining and negotiation” (March *et al.*, 1999: 106). Fundamental aspects in each institution deal with rules, activities, resources and people. These need further probing to be able to discern the core values and assumptions that cause gender inequalities that sustain GBV (March *et al.*, 1999).

4.9. Summary and conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to establish the responses and efforts to address GBV in Zimbabwe by different sectors. The chapter also went on to analyse the successful interventions implemented utilising the SRA as a gender theoretical framework.

First, it emerged that the government of Zimbabwe (state) has responded positively to alleviate GBV. The state has made an effort to revise and update its constitutional framework on gender sections. The revised sections were clearly understood as discriminating against women because of their gender. Women are now treated as equal citizens with full rights just as their male counterparts. This response is applauded nationally, regionally and internationally. Based on the constitutional provisions regarding gender issues, the state also drafted and availed the NGP 2013-2017 as a further response and effort to curb GBV. To ensure that that the NGP operates effectively, the state drafted and launched ZNGBVS. The ZNGBVS ensures that civil society and development partners help “prevent and respond to GBV through a multi-sectoral, effective and coordinated response” (ZNGBVS, 2013-2015). The state further appointed the ZGC. The role of the ZGC is to ensure that issues to do with gender equality and equity in the constitutional provisions are implemented. A programme like the Gender Forum has been implemented to coordinate multi-sectorial stakeholders and overseas programmes such as 16 Days of Activism against GBV. We also saw the implementation of the VFU under the Ministry of Justice. The VFU ensures a safe environment for survivors and witnesses of GBV. The programme is spread across the nation in police stations. The chapter found that efforts by the government to curb GBV seem to fail at the implementation stage. Though efforts to have a multi-sectorial approach are evident, gaps still exist. The government has not fully utilised the church as a major subsystem of society that could assist in reducing GBV. Neither has the church availed itself and shown much interest in the government programmes to curb GBV. It

could be that the church is not conversant with the policies and strategies by the state to curb GBV. The state and the church need to find each other.

Second, the chapter also discussed responses and efforts by CSOs in mitigating GBV. The intervention of CSOs is important because the state alone cannot fully implement and run its programmes on GBV. Therefore, government allows a, "...multi-sectorial, multi-layered, interlinked community centred approach to the implementation" (Spotlight Initiative 2018:19). Thus, the CSOs are responsible for further cascading of GBV programmes to communities, private and public institutions. We noted the Plan 18+ Campaign, which advocates against child marriages in Zimbabwe (though it is broadly a Southern African programme). The campaign targets women and men's development groups, community-policing groups, women's associations and faith-based organisations (PI, 2019:26). The other CSO we discussed is the, "Give us books, not husbands" programme that focuses on the importance of educating the girl child instead of forcing them to engage in early marriage. In the same vein, the other programme called "Not ripe for marriage" engages legislators, traditional leaders, religious groups, parents and young girls. Their campaigns target grassroots level to national level engaging national structures.

Third, the chapter discussed the operations of NGOs in increasing advocacy and awareness even in the most remote parts of the country. It emerged that NGOs have collaborated with churches in running their GBV programmes. An indigenous NGO like the Msasa project offers shelter, counselling, legal and other services to survivors of GBV. The study found that major problems encountered by NGOs is lack of funding and this curtails their programmes; sometimes prematurely. This means root causes of GBV are sustained in communities, private and public sectors. In addition, some very remote places will remain unreached and not receive enough awareness to curb the phenomenon. Fourth, the media is taking on a positive role by raising awareness on GBV. It emerged that media is helping to challenge wrong perceptions about women in society and helping the nation understand what constitutes GBV. However, negative aspects of publicity from the media that continue to portray women in negative ways still undermine the efforts of other sectors.

It emerged that the church is beginning to make some efforts to address the phenomenon. Teachings about transforming masculinity by the church are designed to change men's perceptions about women. In addition, some churches are working at improving invalid

interpretations of scripture, which is a major cause of GBV among Christians. Though the church's efforts are beginning to be seen, it remains hampered by the fact that members and clergy are complicit in perpetrating GBV. The church has not fully realised and embraced its role as light and salt in its ministerial communities. A suggestion emerged that there is need for the church to frame a ministry that fosters public operational ecclesiology. More so, the church is only active when it is roped into programmes by NGOs instead of creating its own ministries and partnering with other organisations.

The chapter finally utilised the SRA gender framework to understand the responses and interventions made by different sectors. The SRA revealed that four key institutions are central in understanding GBV namely state, market, community, and family/kinship. I also found that these institutions sustain certain structural relations that hinder gender equality and parity emanating from entrenched beliefs about women. In addition, none of the institutions operates independently but relate to each other. Which means a change in one institution affects the others. The SRA gives insight into root cause structures, marginalisation, powerlessness, subordination of women and how these have evolved (Smyth, March & Mukhopadhyay, 1999). The study found that SRA is underpinned by human well-being as one of its goals to ensure gender equality and this resonates well with public pastoral theology. It further emerged that most of the beliefs and attitudes about women are taught and lived at family level as an institution. This is later reflected in different institutions of society. This means the church needs to understand its role in society and instigate teachings that transform families and communities to alleviate GBV. Collaborative efforts to mitigate GBV in the country are evident but more effort is needed especially by the church. With this in mind, the church is challenged to design a model that addresses GBV issues within and outside the church. This will help the church actualise its salt and light roles in ministerial contexts. While the above efforts and responses remain valid, it is important to also understand responses from the church about the phenomenon.

Chapter 5: Understanding and responses of GBV within the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe – empirical responses

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is an empirical study that seeks to establish how the UBCZ understands and responds to GBV. This aim of the chapter is to present, analyse and discuss data collected from 10 KIIs and from nine FGDs comprised of 12 participants in each focus group. The total number of participants across KIIs and FGDs was 108 participants. The KIIs and FGDs were assigned numbers to make them anonymous. As such, the 10 KIIs were assigned numbers from KII 1 to KII 10 while FGDs were assigned numbers FGD 1 to FGD 9. The collected data was analysed using a qualitative thematic analysis approach. This means data was coded into main themes and sub-themes that best summarise information gathered across KIIs and FGDs. The chapter unfolds utilising the following six major sections. First, it presents discussion numbers and description of participants. Second, it briefly explains how data was collected and briefly explains the importance of the approach used to gather data. Third, the chapter presents themes that emerged from the coding process. Fourth, the chapter identifies the key themes and discusses them utilising material gathered from participants. The fifth section integrates presentation and discussion of the themes. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

5.2. Discussion numbers and description of participants

The following tables provide brief information about the participants. In addition, an explanation regarding the purpose of each Table is provided.

Table 1: KIIs interviewed

Discussion number	Description of participants
KII 1	A former national church leader (male) with vast experience of the denomination for more than 35 years.
KII 2	Women’s national fellowship leader for more than 30 years
KII 3	Served as national leader (male) of the denomination for 8 years

KII 4	Served as national chairlady of women's national fellowship
KII 5	Served as vice chairlady of the women's national fellowship leadership
KII 6	Served as secretary of the women's national fellowship leadership
KII 7	Served as a committee member of the women's national fellowship leadership
KII 8	Existing leader of the women's national fellowship
KII 9	Serves in the executive of the current women's national fellowship leadership
KII 10	Existing committee member in the women's national fellowship leadership

Purpose of Table 1: To determine discussion numbers of KIIs and their positions of service in the UBCZ. The Table also shows that two of the KIIs are male and eight are female. All the KIIs have held or are holding key positions of leadership within the church.

Table 2: Composition of FGDs

Discussion Number	Description of participants
FGD 1	12 married women aged 45 years and above
FGD 2	12 married women aged 45 years and above
FGD 3	12 married women aged 45 years and above
FGD 4	12 married women aged 30-45 years
FGD 5	12 married women aged 20-30 years
FGD 6	Unmarried youths: six females and six males
FGD 7	12 UBCZ Pastors with five years' experience
FGD 8	12 men with 20 years' experience in UBCZ
FGD 9	Six widows and six single parents 30 years and above

Purpose of Table 2: To determine discussion numbers of FDGs, age categories and experience in the church. The Table also shows that each group category was composed of 12 participants.

5.3. Data collection

First, data from the KIIs was collected using one-on-one interviews. The researcher transcribed all the responses from the participants emanating from the designed interview questions. Second, data from the FGDs was collected as group members participated and the contributions made represent each group and will be labelled as such. The approach utilised during the KIIs and FGDs was guided interviews with open-ended questions that encouraged discussions. McIntosh (2018) states the importance of this approach. He advises that,

A guided interview encourages the participants to take an active role in the interview process while still allowing the researcher to explore predetermined questions and concepts. This type of interview takes greater advantage of open-ended questions in order to give participants the opportunity to respond in more depth (McIntosh, 2018:44).

Through the coding process, themes were generated from data corpus.

5.4. Themes emerging from data

Themes emerged during data corpus coding from both KIIs and FGDs. The identified key themes were able to generate sub-themes and sub-sub-themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:92), “Sub themes are essentially themes-within-a-theme. They can be useful for giving structure to a particular large and complex theme and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data”. Thus, the following table (Table 3) presents the categorisation of the themes that emerged from data analysis.

Table 3: Presenting themes

Main theme/code	Sub-theme (s)	Sub-sub-theme (s)
Ability to identify and define GBV	Gender inequality	Submission and conflict
	Unequal power relations	Control by men
	GBV as physical and psychological abuse	Beating, silenced, denial of resources, silence
	Awareness across KIIs and FGDs	Low level of awareness of GBV- old age High level of awareness of GBV- young generation

GBV associated with male dominance	Suppression of women	Wife beating
	Treating women as possession	Men decide for women
	Silencing women	Marginalised and unheard
Invalid understanding of scriptures that encourage GBV	Women perceived as primary sinners (Genesis 3).	Women are gullible
	Male headship at home and church	Submission and silence of women
	Leadership is male	Women are weaker vessels
Experiences in church by women that sustain GBV	Subordination of women	Treated as servants
	Patriarchy	Male-led and dominated structures
	Culture of silence	
	Limitations of what they can do	Occupy less influential positions
	Experiences of widows and single women	Marginalisation, suspects, vulnerable and not understood
Clergy not equipped to address GBV	Lack proper conceptualisation of GBV	Members withhold seeking help on GBV issues
	Limits pastoral care of victims	Scripture and prayer
	GBV flourishes at church and home	
	GBV awareness needed	
Limited platforms to speak and share GBV experiences	Social structures	Male control
	Silencing of women	
	Lack of advocacy by the church	Ambivalence

	Need for public platforms	
Approaches used by the church to address GBV	Church discipline	When it is worse and expulsion
	Subtle separation of home and church GBV issues	
	Selective about who and how discipline is applied	
	Utilising older women as counsellors of younger women	Generational gap
	Some workers are transferred if implicated	Women stigmatised

5.5. Identification of themes

The preceding coding process across KIIs and FGDs helped to generate and identify similar codes that can build themes as shown above in Table 3. By definition, “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:10). The research is going to discuss themes that stood out during the study and analysis of data corpus. The themes emerging from data captured something important in relation to the main research question and represent, “some level of patterned responses or meanings within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:82). During the presentation of the themes below, there is going to be constant reference to data from participants to pull out supporting evidence to each theme. Braun and Clarke (2006:92) state, “...write-up must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data, that is enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme.” This helps the researcher to stay close to data and let the data speak for itself. More so, analysis of data aims to go beyond just description of the data but seeks to make a case that addresses the main research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 93). Thus, Table 4 below lists seven key identified themes from both KIIs and FGDs. Subordinate themes for each key theme are indicated in Table 3 above.

Table 4: Showing identified themes

Key themes extracted from KIIs and FGDs
1. Participants' ability to define and identify GBV
2. GBV associated with male dominance
3. Invalid interpretations of Scriptures that encourage GBV
4. Church practices that sustain GBV
5. Clergy not equipped to address GBV issues
6. Approaches used by the church to deal with GBV
7. Limited spaces/platforms to speak and share about GBV

5.5.1. Participants' awareness of GBV demonstrated through defining and identifying

In this theme, some participants discussed and expressed their understanding of the notion of GBV. They understood and described GBV as conflict between men and women that sometimes involves wife beating. Participants expressed that women relate to men in an inferior manner and this is caused by gender inequality. For example, the following extracts from data substantiate such awareness of GBV, “Gender based violence primarily involves a husband and a wife and is caused by differing opinions between the two. It would result with the husband beating the wife” (KII 1, FGD 9, KII 6). “It is a display of unequal power relations between husband and wife. The wife is a weaker vessel and cannot prevail over men” (FGD 2). This may be understood as simple and shallow, but the deeper meaning is that it involves two people of different gender (female and male) with one gender overpowered. The awareness also reveals that GBV is mainly understood as taking place in the home environment because participants mentioned husband and wife. This notion further appeared in KIIs and FGDs. For example, it was mainly expressed by the older generation as follows, “*Kunetsana kwaBaba naMai mumba. Mudzimai anenge akanyara nguva dzimwe hake kuitira kuti mumba mugare mune runyararo*” (A conflict between the husband and wife in a home. Sometimes the wife prefers to be quiet for the sake of maintaining peace in the home) (FGD 1, FGD 2, KII 2, KII 9). It emerged that what the participants saw or experienced formed their understanding and articulation of the GBV notion. Almost all the participants in FGDs and KIIs mentioned women as victims and always taking a subservient role within the home for the sake of peace to prevail.

The notion of GBV was escalated to a second level by adding that it is both physical and psychological. Participants reported that, “It is a physical and psychological abuse of women that is expressed in unequal opportunities and rights” (FGD 4, KII 4, FGD 5). This understanding predominantly came from the younger age groups. Differences in definition of the notion presumably emanated from generational gaps. Nevertheless, the understanding by participants still maintained that women are the major victims of GBV. It is very interesting that the FGD 6 included young men cheating, spending a long time in a relationship with a girl and later ending the relationship as GBV. For instance, the following extract supports the participants’ notion.

As youths in church, we have noted something unfair whereby a lady’s time is wasted in a relationship only to be dumped after sometimes eight years. Time gone! This affects the lady in a very bad way. The young man can quickly get someone and it’s hard for the lady. The church does nothing about the erring brother causing the hurt simply because the relationship is not legally solemnized. It’s not binding. We see this a serious abuse because this is happening many times (FGD 6).

Participants said the reason the church is silent about this could be that it does not acknowledge this as GBV. The key theme further cascaded into the following responsive levels of GBV as sub-theme across FGDs and KIIs participants and further sub-divided to more specific age groups namely: the elderly and younger generation as sub-sub-themes.

5.5.1.1. *Women responsive levels of gender-based violence across FGDs and KIIs*

This sub-theme aims at extracting, presenting and discussing the participants’ awareness levels of GBV. Participants expressed that some women are not able to recognise that they are experiencing GBV and this makes them fail to respond to it. Instead, they treat their situation as normal and seem to be content with it because they have normalised their GBV situations. Participants reported, “Yes *tinavo varikundorarama vechiti zvakandonaka zvakadaro havaoni chakashata, ngekuti varume avachinji*” (Yes, we have them who are taking their situation as normal they don’t see anything wrong because men do not change) (FGD 2). Participants further stated that they were convinced there are many women living in ignorance of GBV. They expressed that sometimes it is very difficult to differentiate between normalcy and abuse. For example, participants reported, “*Takakura techindoona kuti varume vanotonga vakadzi pese pevari vakadzi ngekundoterera pese kana kuchurch. Saka kamuitiro aka kanotinesa asizve ndomararamire acho*” (We grew up seeing men ruling over women all the times and our role

is reduced to obeying even at church. So that is the way things are done and this troubles us but that's the way of life) (KII 8, FGD 3). The ability to identify GBV issues is apparent among some, though they are powerless to change the way things are done. The reason this is sustained is fear of deviation from cultural expectations. For example, most women suffer loss when the husband dies, "When the husband dies, the widow's property is all taken, money is taken, you lose everything and become worthless. This is where we need our pastors (the church) to stand with us because we are completely on our own" (FGD 1; FGD 2). Further participants stated that some women in the church are still ignorant of GBV, "It is true we have them, their eyes and mind are not open to this, but they are in the minority group and could be *vana Mbuya veneme/real grannies*" (KII 2, KII 7). Even in cases of infidelity they cannot question the husband because, "...*zvinozwi murume ibhuru arigari mudanga pamwe pachu rinombo pwanya danga/They say a man is like a bull that sometimes breaks the kraal or enclosure to hunt for other females*" (FGD 3, KII 4). This is normalised behaviour by culture and society. The same kind of behaviour is regarded anathema for a woman and it warrants being beaten or immediate divorce.

Both KIIs and FGDs roped in the church in their discussions and responses to interviews at this stage. There is a sincere longing by participants for the church's involvement. The church's response to women's experiences of GBV remains ambivalent and not publicly involved in a distinct manner. From the above responses, two sub-sub-themes were generated on awareness levels.

5.5.1.2. *Low awareness level associated with elderly women in the church*

Participants mentioned that there is a generation of older women in the church (now the minority) not aware of GBV. They were brought up in a culture of silence, domination, and control. They do not actually call this GBV, but the way women and men live at home and church. The following extracts from participants support this, "Yes especially the old age, they treat male dominance as normal especially the grannies and they instruct us that is how men behave as way of counselling" (FGD 5, FGD 8, KII 5). "There are women living as if in the fire. They submit because *musha ngewaBaba/the home belongs to the father*" (KII 1). "They want to pass the teaching and treatment they received from their mother-in-laws...like for example *mukadzi haapuwi mari/a woman should not be given money, shamwari shoma/ few friends/, mukadzi unogara pamba/a woman stays at home*" (FGD 4). "Our old grandmothers in

the church teach us that men have rights to anything within the home and you must not argue with them because *mukadzi muuya mumusha mwevanhu iiii...* women are strangers where they are married” (FGD 5.KII 5). The elderly women are content with silence in the presence of men, “*Mumadzimba mudzimai haana chironzo, nguva imweni zvinondarowo nemuchurch...tiri vekunyararaa teiindoashira takanyara semadzimai*” (A woman is regarded as incapable of speaking even at church. As women, we are known for being quiet) (FGD 1).

Women at this level of awareness simply accept the situation because they feel defeated and cannot do anything to influence change at home or at church. Because of that, they feel they should advise the young generation of women to follow suit if they want their homes to be stable. The reason for doing this is because experience has taught them that kind of gender relations. They also view their role as women at home and church as seamless. The cultural treatment they receive in the home environment finds a further fertile ground at church.

5.5.1.3. *Higher awareness levels associated with younger generation in the church*

The second sub-sub-theme generated proved that many younger women in the church are able to recognise GBV at home and at church as shown in the following data extracts. Participants stated that, “*Tinoziya kuti apa ndaa kushungrudzwa asi kwekuchemera akuna ndodambudziko redu...* We are able to recognise it when we are abused but have nowhere to report...that’s our problem” (FGD 1, KII 1). Participants further state, “*Pane varume vanotaura nekuita zvavanoda nesu muchechi but hatigoni kuzvitura kuvafundisi...* there are men who speak and do as they wish with us in church but we cannot divulge these things to pastors” (FGD 3). They noted they keep silent because they fear being stigmatised and viewed as loose women at church and in the communities where they live. Second, they lack confidence in the competence of the pastor to handle such matters based on other past similar experiences in the church. Participants cited that they are getting more awareness on GBV from the media and NGOs that are playing a key role for the younger generation of women. Participants advanced that, “through media and NGOs many of us are able to understand GBV and we are vouching for our liberation” (KII 2). They are able to advise other new couples on abuses in marriage, “The newlyweds ask us if what is happening to them in their marriages is normal, like being harassed, treated like you don’t know anything as a woman, forced to do things you don’t really like and others” (FGD4, KII 7). Though this generation is quick to identify GBV, speaking out remains a problem, “With our generation *uumh pane musiyano/uumh* there is a difference because we

[are] able to see that we are being treated unfairly and understand that as abuse though we may fail to speak out at church” (FGD 5). Participants expressed that they end up getting used to the way things are done, “Some ended up saying that’s the way our church does things and we must accept” (FGD 9).

The examples cited from the data excerpts above show high levels of awareness through interacting with media and NGOs and not necessarily learning much from the church. However, it emerged that though these women are able to recognise GBV they seem to have no platforms conducive to sharing their experiences. The church is challenged on how it conducts its ministry and responds to GBV among members. Almost all the participants in FGDs and KIIs mentioned the woman as a victim and always taking a subservient role within the home and church for the sake of peace to prevail.

5.5.2. *Gender-based violence associated with male dominance*

In this theme, participants from KIIs and FGDs expressed male dominance as one of the causes of GBV. For example, KII 10, FGD 7, FGD 3 and KII 5 commented that women are major victims of male dominance because men want to show their power and control over women. The following direct extract from the FGD 3 demonstrates male dominance as a source of GBV. “The bible says the home belongs to the husband and wife but the majority of men say that the home belongs to them. As married women we just end up persevering since we cannot go back to our parent’s home because *takatengwa/* we were bought” (FG 3). Participants commented that men understand dominance to be protection of their home and family, not as abuse. A woman that seeks to escape the husband’s dominance (protection) risks being divorced or gains a reputation of being a rebellious wife. So male dominance could sometimes be understood as love expressed through control and may not necessarily be GBV (FGD 8). Interestingly some participants in the group reported that, “Not all dominance is gender-based violence. Sometimes we need that male dominance both at home and church. Certain things and decisions call for that. Imagine a home with a very porous father? The problem is male control needs to be defined well at church” (FGD 4). A man is expected by society to be tough as the head of the family as opposed to being weak. Therefore, at times this is ‘normal’ behaviour. The theme on male dominance generated three sub-themes that further express that male dominance sustains GBV.

The first sub-theme is the suppression of women, as women do not have access to money and other resources. The suppression generates a sub-sub-theme as men resort to beating their wives as proof of dominance. Though being beaten is understood as one of the extreme forms of GBV some women still accept this as normal behaviour by men. For example, the FGD 3, KII 1, FGD 9 and KII 6 said the following about burning food in support of being beaten, “If you burn the food the husband will ask if you know your reason for being married. He would ask where you were. In a situation like this the wife sometimes deserves to be beaten”. Some men confessed that a wife could be beaten for refusing to have sex with the husband. This was expressed in the following words, “*Wakabvirei kumba kwake kana asingadi kurara neni. Ehe anorohwa. Kana zvaoma ndoenda kusmall house*”. Literally means, “Why did she left her parents’ home if she doesn’t want to sleep with me. She could be beaten or I opt for a ‘small house’ - colloquial for extramarital affair” (FGD 3). The implication is that a good wife must never refuse the husband’s demands. She would risk her position being taken by another woman. Surprisingly, a woman might also wonder if she is a genuine wife if certain demands and dominance are not required from her by the husband. For example, if the husband withdraws from the wife washing his clothes and cooking, this raises suspicion on ownership of the husband culturally or even in a church environment. This makes male dominance sometimes endorsed as normal behaviour sustained in homes and at church.

The second sub-theme under male dominance is treating women as possessions. The FGD 1, KII 4, FDG 2 and FDG 3 reported that, “We all had Christian wedding at church but our relationships to our husbands make us feel like we are their property”. They further advanced that, “*Kuroorwa kunoita kuti unge wakasungurirwa and church yedu hainyanyiwo kudzidzisa magarire emumba...vamwe vana baba iii tazwa.*” Literally, “being married makes us feel like slaves and our church does not teach much about Christian home...we have had enough from some husbands”. Payment of lobola was largely blamed for this kind of treatment of women. When men pay lobola they feel they have bought the woman and this entails such treatment of women as property or possession(s). This sentiment was further expressed by KII 1, KII 2, KII 4 and KII 8. While treatment of women as possessions is understood as sustaining GBV, people within the context have some reasons for this behaviour. For example, the practice of treating women as possessions was commented on by some men (FGD 7 and FGD 8) as good for instilling discipline in women and ensuring that the home remains stable. A participant (KII 10) equally commented that too much freedom left to women can be dangerous and makes the home unstable. It appears society and cultural norms retain the ability to discern when a certain

behaviour related to GBV is good or bad. Thus, instead of blunt blame regarding certain behaviours by men towards women, people in the context have good and bad reasons for certain behaviours.

The third sub-theme is the silencing of women. Women resort to silence to avoid conflict especially in situations where conflict is likely to occur. This was mainly expressed by the older generation: “*Kunetsana kwaBaba naMai mumba. Mudzimai anenge akanyara nguva dzimwe hake kuiitira kuti mumba mugare mune runyararo*” (A conflict between the husband and wife in a home. Sometimes the wife prefers to be quiet for the sake of maintaining peace in the home) (FGD 1, FGD 2, KII 2, KII 9). Second, silence as a theme generates a further theme on being marginalised and unheard in the end. Women remain disempowered by cultural norms from making influential decisions. The FGD 4, FGD 5, KII 8, FGD 9 and KII 3 reiterated that, “women will remain women in UBC” which means women remain invisible, side-lined and men decide what is suitable for women. The underlying reason for this is that a wise wife stands behind her husband so that if there is ridicule the husband takes responsibility. This is done with the intention of protecting the wife. The motive to protect sounds appealing but when does one distinguish between protection and marginalisation of women? This calls for the church to examine gender relations between men and women.

5.5.3. Invalid interpretations of scripture associated with gender-based violence

Under this theme, participants commended the church for teaching and preaching faithfully from the pulpit. They commented that there is no outright or glaring public teaching that comes from the pulpit encouraging abuse and ill-treatment of women. However, gaps were discovered particularly with wrong understandings of scriptures by church members. There is a tendency by members to misinterpret scripture to advance certain attitudes that sustain GBV.

In the first sub-theme women reported that they are viewed as primary sinners. Participants referred to Genesis 3 as the source of ill-treatment of women in homes and at church. “*Rekutiro mukadzi ndiwe wakatanga kushaisha*”. Literally the one (the verse) that says woman was the first to sin... in Genesis encourages *kusabatwa kwakanaka kwemadzimai mumba nekuchechi*/encourages mistreatment of women at home and church... we feel that men in the church continue to treat us as gullible as seen in their sermons where they most of the times use women as illustrations in a negative way” (KII 1, KII 4, FGD 8). “We are labelled as sharing

in Eve's sin and it appears like there is no hope of salvation for women through Christ" (KII 5). The reason this thinking is sustained by men against women is that there is a point of reference in scripture. Proper teaching on hermeneutics and teaching on such passages are required from the clergy.

The second sub-theme generated from the key theme is male headship and women's submission. Participants stated that, "There is a Scripture that says *baba musoro, mukadzi uripasi pemurume rinoita kuti titsikirirwe muchurch/* the husband is the head and the wife is under the husband, that verse causes oppression of women...but men forget that they also sinned" (FGD 3). Submission in this case is linked to the fall of man in Genesis 3. It also means the participants are able to interpret the verses using the lenses of their situations. Some participants found nothing wrong with submission as long as men take the responsibility to show women respect. For example, "Submission is not entirely wrong. We are always in submission at home and church. The husband or men must only treat us [as] equal humans" (FGD 5). This means gender relations between men and women must be characterised with mutual respect. The group (FGD 5) further advanced that, "we also wish to see women taking headship in some church positions. The reason being that women feel free to share certain issues if a woman is taking the lead or facilitating...now *pese pese varume kutungamira iii* (all the positions are male-led)". Participants suggested the need for valid interpretation of certain portions of scripture by the church so that men may desist from using Genesis 3 as a primary weapon against women. Participants further noted that, "Because of Genesis 3 men now take us as people that cannot stand on their own and come up with meaning or contribution to life" (FGD 3, KII 9). This attitude is condoned in the church because that is the way things have been done over the years. This attitude has become like a tradition of the church and members act it out unconsciously sometimes. They also cited verses like Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 that are misunderstood for encouraging GBV at both church and home. Participants discussed and responded to invalid interpretation of scripture by wishing for better teaching and interpretation of such scriptures by members.

5.5.4. Church experiences that sustain gender-based violence

In this theme, participants discussed experiences in the church that continue to sustain GBV. Experiences in this case refer to lived occurrences, knowledge and witnessed issues that could be interpreted as GBV by the participants. Based on analysis of data corpus from participants,

the following sub-themes about members' experiences emerged from the main theme: experiences of women's subordination, experiences of male domination/patriarchy, experiences of culture of silence, experiences of women's limitations and experiences of single mothers and widows.

5.5.4.1. *Experiences of women's submission*

Participant KII 1 expressed a misconception by members of the church on submission as follows:

Wife submission is part of our culture and the same concept is found in the Bible and taught at Church. My understanding is that what the Bible teaches about submission must transform incorrect perceptions of submission from culture. A higher percentage of men and women too in the church have a misunderstanding on what submission means.

The participant's contribution is revealing two things. First, there is a strong influence of cultural stereotypes on submission (which have oppressive connotations) of women in the church. That kind of submission controls how things are done in the church in relation to women. Second, there is an impression that the church needs to do more through teaching and preaching in the church to establish better biblical understanding of submission among most members.

More so, data extracted from the following participants reveals that the church has played a marginal role in giving ministerial approaches that mitigate GBV. Participants reported, "*Kuroorwa kunoita kuti ungewakasungirirwa and church yedu hainyanyiwo kudzidzisa magariro emumba...vamwe vana baba hai iii tazwa/Being married appears like you are a slave and our church does not often teach about homes issues...we are suffering under some men*" (FGD 1). There is a sense of regret and wishing if the church could engage in teaching members about the meaning of submission. Other participants attributed wife submission to payment of *Roora*/bride price, which the church does not seem to have much control over. "Payment of *Roora* warrants abusive submission of women in the church...we understand *Roora* is our custom and has good things in it...we wish the church should address this issue from Scripture" (FGD 4, KII 4). Some participants revealed that their experiences on submission at home and church remain almost the same as expressed in the following words, "The major problem is on the position of women at home and at church. We are always told to submit at home and at church. If submission at church is not properly understood our problem remains unsolved" (KII

6). Participants in FGD 7 also expressed concern on submission. They said, “Submission of women is still not properly understood by some men in the church. Some take it as oppression of women instead of understanding it as Christ loved the Church” (FGD 7). Emanating from this is a sense of hope and confidence in the Bible to transform women’s submission through valid hermeneutics. Consequently, this challenges the church to examine women’s experiences on submission and frame ministries through which women’s experiences could be transformed.

5.5.4.2. *Experiences of male domination/patriarchy*

Participants expressed unhappy feelings about male-led and male dominated church activities. Key among the responses is the non-existence of women in the National Committee (NC) of the denomination, which has been and continues to be for well over half century dominated by men. The NC is a key meeting that precedes the NA and is where critical decisions about the running of the church are made. The NC convenes three times every year. The NA (which is considered final and ratifies NC decisions) is held once every year-end and has few female representatives. Participants remarked that the NA appears to them as less influential as the NC because of gender imbalance. KII 2 strongly reported that,

There are completely no women, no women, zero ...you know and I struggle with this...that sit in the National Committee meetings held only three times per year. I personally don’t see anything wrong with having them join and participate in these meetings. I really think that it’s about time we change (K11 2).

More participants reported on some pastors’ attitude towards women,

Pastors cannot help us very much because of their attitude towards women in the church. We hear pastors saying to us, *madzimai muchatiisa kure* (literally women shall misguide us) and *hatidi kutongwa nemadzimai* (we do not want to be ruled by women)” (FGD 3, FGD 4).

This could probably explain the reason participation and impact of women in the NC is zero. In the NA, women’s representation is close to minimum since less than 50 delegates are female out of 250 every year. Participants feel their contributions remain drowned and intimidated by male representation in these important meetings.

In the same vein FGD 3 participants concurred with KII 2 when they openly said,

Chibaba baba chirimwo muchechi yedu/Male dominance is there in our church because men are always superior to women as seen in our NC, no women at all, why...*tinotodawo*

kutopinda muNC mwacho ngekuti vakadzi takawandisa kudairka varume/we also want to join the NC because UBC has more women than men.

FGD 4 further reported that, “*Baba vanondogara vari padera* as it is so *muutungamiri hwechechi*/The father always holds a top leadership position as it is in church leadership.” Participants expressed a sense of frustration and marginalisation in decision-making processes of the church. In addition, they felt manipulated as suggested in the following extract, “We feel like our Church needs us when it reaches out to us as women for financial contributions...but when we go through rough times, we are alone” (FGD 1). Participants in FGD 4 also advanced that, “our Church has a long history of male dominance and we still see the practices today.” Participants also reported the need for women to represent themselves,

We have our own executive national committee as women for women issues. Some of our critical issues are discussed in the NC in our absence. We are not there to represent ourselves. Are we not able to represent ourselves? (KII 3).

According to the participants, the reason for the male dominance is attributed to church tradition that gives male preference to leadership and key decision-making. In this case, women maintain subservient positions and have no influence in the church.

The other respondents reported that,

Patriarchy is dominant in UBC and is imported from culture, women do not seat in the highest committee of the church, women are not ordained like men, women are not elders...the domination by men is way too high” (KII 4, KII 7).

Respondents remarked regarding the atonement of Christ on the cross “Did a male saviour saved women too? Maybe we needed a female saviour as well if a male saviour could not redeem women” (FGD 2). While this sounds overstated, the inherent meaning is, Jesus died for women too, why are they treated unfairly?

Therefore, given the above analysis, male dominance remains one of the ways UBC is fanning and sustaining GBV. Scripture does not teach male dominance over women but mutual gender relations, as each fulfils their God-given role. The influence of cultural constructs on gender relations seems to influence how gender roles play out in church. There is need to re-examine how things are done from scripture by the church and transform the way things are done.

5.5.4.3. Experiences of culture of silence

Participants appreciated that women are allowed to preach on particular dates and occasions, but the church still nurses a culture of silence against women. “Though it’s not taught directly from the pulpit, male members often say to us *madzimai nyararai*/women be silent” (FGD 1). The extract is suggestive of the position of women in the church when it comes to their verbal participation. This encourages a culture of silence among women.

GBV is not an issue often spoken about in the church, hence the silence. Participants in FGD 9 commented, “*Aaaah!* We are very surprised that a pastor (the researcher) could speak to women about this topic. We wonder where you came from. Now allow us to pour our hearts because you gave us the opportunity to speak.” They noted that the church nurses a culture of silence and GBV prevails in the church. The participants further said,

Hatitorwi sevanhu muchurch/we are not treated as humans, even *kunamatiswa kunyanya vasina varume neshirikadzi*/not asked to pray when one is a single parent or widowed is very rare...we are speaking only now otherwise we would rather be quiet because we think that’s how our church operates (FGD 9).

The reason for this is that there is little attention given to the category of participants. They have adapted to the notion that the church operates in silence over women’s issues and that is the way things should be in the church.

The following extracts further prove that participants have issues affecting them but they would rather be quiet.

Pastors do not care about us and some do not even visit and pray with us and it seems their wives block them from visiting us. A certain male member offered me a lift to church and asked me to drop outside the gate for fear of what people would say when they see us arriving in one car. We nurse these hurts in our hearts as church members (FGD 9, KII 4).

These are issues one would rarely hear about in a church context because silencing of women seems to be the nature of the church. Concealment (silencing) of abuses in the name of maintaining face by women is dominant even when it really hurts, “You hear some women in the church saying they fell or rammed against a wall...but we can tell that they were beaten...they look depressed and isolated at church, they don’t open up” (FGD 7, FGD 8). Participants stated the reason women behave like this is because of culture that does not allow them to expose abuses happening at home. The other reason stated is fear of being sent back to

their parents and losing custody of their children. Therefore, to remain silent is to ‘protect’ the husband from shame and secure their place in the marriage.

Sometimes subtle fear of spiritual attacks drives women into a downward spiral of silence at church. A participant stated,

I have heard and presided over issues of a man who sexually abused women. No one among the women and elders confronted the man because people fear witchcraft. Also just being women meant that they could not fully express themselves over such issues. They feel embarrassed (KII 2).

This suggests other issues that sustain the silence of women as GBV in the church. Participants revealed lack of confidentiality and being a closely related pack of members in the denomination as promoting the silence of women. They reported, “But we are a closely-knit church and some people would be aware of the issues...even pastors’ wives would not speak” (KII 8). Participants from FGD 1 also expressed that the church is predominantly composed of one tribe (Ndau). The tribe is known for strong approaches to the silence of women and being very secretive on sensitive matters. Participants reported that, “*Chiara chedu ngechechiNdau*/our church belongs to Ndau culture and *auzosununguki kutaura zveunosangana nazvo*/you won’t be free to share what you are experiencing” (FGD 3). The implied expression is that participants need the church to gravitate from a closed atmosphere towards an open atmosphere, which encourages people to speak. However, the question is: How can this be done? If there are sensitive issues to talk about, what structures are put in place that encourage confidence and a friendly atmosphere to speak in?

Some of the clergy are implicated in silencing their wives as revealed in the extract by the following participant, “I know of pastors who do not allow their wives to speak in public for two reasons: First, I am the pastor and you are not and second you are not able to speak well” (KII 4). Concisely, it occurs that such pastors would use one brush to paint all the women in the church. Participants expressed a sense of oppression, fear, powerlessness and marginalisation that drives women into silence in the church.

5.5.4.4. *Experiences of women’s limitations*

Participants in this sub-theme mentioned the limitations women face in exercising their leadership abilities and potential in the church. A participant noted that, “I have seen strong

(able), capable and zealous women suppressed and their leadership abilities clipped by men in the Church” (KII 2). Inherent in this extract is the idea that men decide where, when, how and in what capacity women should exercise their abilities in the church. With a sense of frustration and not endorsing the limitations women face the participant added, “Men have this idea that women are always women and are not allowed to lead men” (KII 2). The participant also added that there is a problem of “recycling the same brains” at all church levels through side-lining able women and it has affected how women respond in church.

One participant shared feelings of anger and deprivation for being told to stop a ministry she loved and felt called to do. She said,

I was working for the church (*sphere of ministry cut out*) and I was summarily ordered to stop by a pastor in the national executive because I am a woman. I have a strong feeling that pastors in my church are not even able to represent us better as women. I was hurt (KII 4).

The treatment she got infringes the rights and freedom of a particular gender to serve the Lord in the church. She said women belong to and should remain confined to the pews.

Other participants questioned why women that train at Bible College get limited in their service unlike their male counterparts. The following was reported, “Some women are trained at Bible College but are not fully utilised like men. Why? Does this mean that men are better called to serve God than women?” (KII 6 was also expressed in KII 7, FGD 8). A feeling of being looked down upon and labelled as having a limited thinking ability emerged from participants (KII 9, FGD 2),

Do you mean we only function in our department (Women fellowship) not at NC level of the entire denomination? No. Is it because we are simply women and can't think better than men? We have bright ideas that can help the Church grow but they are not utilised.

The perception that being male means superiority and being better in every way influenced the following data extract, “*Pamwe dai takaitwawo varume*/Maybe we should have been created male too” (FGD 3). Participants further said that, “There are issues that women express better if women are not limited...but our problem is that it's all men in leadership...though some are not able to lead well” (FGD 5, KII 7). They feel limited in what they can do in the church. They feel better results and impact could be achieved if women speak freely in the church for women. The reason for this is that most men are limited in understanding what women go through at

home and at church. Church structures and operations put limitations on where, how and what women could do.

5.5.4.5. *Experiences of single mothers and widows*

The participants in this sub-theme stated that more than half of the women in the denomination are single parents and widows. The fact is that they are the majority in the church. The writer even feels that this sub-theme does not do justice on their experiences. A separate study on this group of women on GBV is possible. However, for the purposes of this research I am going to extract data I gathered from them to support the theme. The reason for sharing their experiences independently is that there was a question during interviews unique to them because of their situation. Also, as representatives of the majority of women in church, their experiences cannot be overlooked, because they paint a broader picture of GBV.

Participants revealed a feeling of marginalisation by the church and failing to integrate well with other church members because they are widows and single mothers. They stated, “After your husband is dead or just being a single mom, no one really comes to visit you. We feel less important and church is failing to bridge the gap so that we also find our place and feel welcome” (FGD 9). They cited one of the major reasons is not receiving visits especially from male leadership of church departments. They are open and receptive to pastoral care but it is barely reaching them. They wonder if the church leadership is able to notice their isolation. They further advanced that,

Those with husbands treat us with suspicion and do not want us to draw near or talk to their husbands...we wonder if the church is noticing this... Pastors seem not to care about us also and do not even visit and pray with us...we get the suspicion that their wives could be influencing them to do ministry that way... we are not free to approach most of the wives of our pastors...the men’s fellowship group should know that we have sons too who need to learn from them (FGD 9).

The main reason such attitude exists is that they are wrongly understood to be potential husband snatchers such that pastors’ interaction with them has some limitations. Second, few people understand what they go through at home and at church. Third, society in general also treats them with an attitude of marginalisation and suspicion. The question is: How could the church identify, solve their issues and bridge the gap so that they feel welcome in the larger community of believers? What does scripture say about the situations of these people?

Respondents also cited the desire to see the pastors bridging the gap on family issues that infringe their freedom. They feel that the church is not doing enough through its ministries. Instead, it is leaving them vulnerable to unbelieving relatives. They stated,

We are dragged to traditional healers and end up forced to eat herbs/concoctions just to prove that we did not kill their son! Even if we share with our pastors most of them say, *ngezvemumusha mwenyu atiokoni kupindira*/its family issues we cannot intervene. We are treated like a soccer ball; we did not choose this life (FGD 9).

Some church members were physically assaulted by in-laws because they refused to concede to be inherited as wives and when their daughters want to get married, the in-laws do not respond. “*Vamwe takarohwa ndivana babamunini ngekuti takarambe kugarwa nhaka*/Some of us were beaten for refusing to be inherited as wives...when our daughters want to get married they (in-laws) do not respond or even when children need birth certificates” (FGD 9). They feel they are being punished for refusing to be inherited as wives. The participants proposed a solution to moderate their seemingly unique unfair treatment. They said, “The leadership of our church is all male in all spheres. Yes, we have women fellowship but still do not share our issues fully. We wish if there was a female theologian appointed to work with our group fulltime” (FGD 9). They feel if a woman is engaged, she would be able to understand them better and have time to listen to their experiences. This assumes a model is needed that not only restricts such ministry to women but that integrates the church as a community.

5.5.5. Clergy not equipped to address gender-based violence issues

Participants mentioned lack of in-depth conceptualisation on GBV issues by the clergy. The perceived lack of understanding on GBV by the clergy could be related to the culture of silence in the church. When people are not clear about something it is difficult to interface with members and communities. The following responses reveal the clergy’s low awareness level. Participant KII 6, “Our pastors seem to focus (where they do) on the visible side of gender-based violence yet hundreds of women are hurting and struggling internally. Their smiles only appear as a veneer to hide the atrocities in their hearts.” This means in practising pastoral care the understanding of the phenomenon helps in addressing complicated issues affecting individuals and communities.

Some participants expressed the level of competence by the clergy to handle their GBV experiences.

As women, we feel that most of our pastors are not able to handle our experiences and some of them are still young to understand what we go through...we can share with the elderly pastors but the help we often get from them are verses only and prayers without dealing with our real issues (FGD 1).

Participants lack confidence in people who are supposed to assist them. While using scripture and prayer remains vital, the approach is failing to conceptualise and interrogate the phenomenon well enough to offer relevant assistance to GBV victims.

To ensure the clergy and other men have a better awareness of GBV, some participants proposed what should be done namely:

- We need workshops on gender-based violence starting with pastors and their wives.
- Create a forum for women to speak their concerns in the presence of men and encourage dialogue.
- Pastors in church must create space for women to speak and write as a measure to express what they feel.
- Pastors should encourage bible studies that include men and women on passages that are misunderstood by men regarding women.
- At national gatherings we need public debate between men and women on the topic as a way of creating awareness and educating people (FGD 2, FGD 6).

5.5.6. Limited spaces/platforms to speak and share about gender-based violence

Participants mentioned their desperation for lack of space to speak and respond to GBV in the church. They reported,

Our church does not give women the opportunity to share freely on things that trouble women. We have a lot of women issues and sometimes we feel like we are suffocating.

We are the majority in the church but it appears like we do not exist at all... (FGD 1).

They also expressed concern about the patriarchal influences of the church as a contributing factor to not having space to speak and respond to GBV, "...the patriarchal influences of the church cannot allow for space to let women speak about their experiences. What should be done?" (FGD 2). Apart from the patriarchal influence, participants blamed the grip of a culture of silence too on most women, which is further sustained in the church. "A few are free to share privately, but we see that people don't always share private issues and they suffer in silence. Culturally people don't reveal home issues because it diminishes one's home and husband/*kufumura musha nekurerusa murume*" (KII 1, KII 2, FGD1).

They revealed that church programmes and activities rarely speak about GBV; hence, it becomes very difficult for members to open up about the phenomenon. Unfair and biased judgement of issues that involve women and men were cited as further cause for limiting space for speaking about and responding to GBV issues in the church. They reported,

We are not free to share because those who preside over issues are men only and they always seem to take their side...we don't feel free as women...even the entire panel it's all men and that puts a woman involved in an awkward situation. One would feel the atmosphere of male dominance before speaking...*saka iii panoda kugadziriswa*/there is need for correction (FGD 3).

This recalls the above sub-theme on male dominance, which even affects how women would relate to men in a male dominated space. KII 6 pointed out,

I know fellow women that are being abused by their husbands but they cannot tell anyone in the church because the platform is not available and we have never heard our church openly condemning GBV or participate in national GBV events like some churches...it is silent. We read in newspapers statements on condemning GBV by some churches not ours.

The Christian community is not exempt from GBV. It is real and platforms to talk about it remain limited.

KII 8 added that, “the church has no awareness campaigns on GBV and this keep women in a cocoon...until the church takes it public.” This means women keep the suffering to themselves because the position of the church is implicit on the phenomenon. If the church could publicly speak out and address GBV issues, members would know the position of the church and begin to share their experiences. Other participants appreciated the space they have during weekly women's fellowship and sometimes at national women's gatherings. They have an opportunity to speak as women but not in detail and those who speak about abuse use indirect methods. As mentioned earlier, the platforms are not conducive to participation. There is need for open teachings that will slowly translate into open spaces and deal with the stigma. Participants in FGD 5 reported, “We cannot speak openly about GBV...would prefer to suffer in silence because of stigma...unless our church teach these things openly this would help many and build the Church.” Fear of further abuse and humiliation by the husband is another hindrance for lack of space and response. “Some do not report or speak about it because they fear more violence or humiliating the husband” (KII 7). This begs the following question: What should the church

do to ensure that there are clear, credible and confidential structures that encourage women to speak and respond freely to GBV issues within the church?

5.5.7. Approaches used by the church to deal with gender-based violence

The approaches used by the church in dealing with GBV evoked responses that revealed a sense of desperation for better approaches. Participants expressed that church discipline is the approach used by the church in cases where GBV causes a stir or “reach fever levels” (FGD 2) in the church. Some commented that once the person is on discipline, in most cases, they do not see a close follow-up to assist the offender. Participants advanced, “Church discipline is what we only know and see happening, but *atizozii kuti vanhu vacho vanobatsirwa kusvika papi/* we do not know to what extent do people get help” (FGD 1). This implies that more clearly laid out approaches are needed to assist people apart from discipline as an initial stage. Participants further suggested that they need to see more being done to help especially the women in cases of discipline. “We need official private committees that assist in particular women that are facing gender-based violence” (FGD 2).

A lack of public teaching and well-structured approaches in dealing with GBV creates ambivalence in the church. This is substantiated by the following response, “The leaders delay to handle gender-based violence issues because they are treated as domestic affairs...the majority of cases are not confronted and will eventually get shoved under the carpet” (KII 2). Emanating from the preceding data extract is the idea that the church is torn between separating home issues from church issues. Are the two issues independent of each other anyway or do they overlap? Dichotomisation of home and church issues complicates procedures and limits the assistance that the church could possibly offer to its members.

The other response that echoed unclear procedures is, “Some members end up leaving the church because they are not getting help on the matter” (KII 9). Couched in this is a sense of frustration by the leaving members caused by the unclear procedures to help victims. Participants added that,

We only see discipline *pakuti munhu arova mukadzi kana kudzingwa basa or kushinha nemudzimai/* when some beats a wife or sexual infidelity or is expelled, for those who work in the church...there are people we know that were expelled and there are some we

know that are still working but they committed the same offense. We don't know how the church handles such matters (FGD 3).

Furthermore, a lack of dovetailed procedures keep women shrouded in the background and perceived subservient as the church appears to be more concerned with the men. This is detected in the following data extract,

We have seen discipline *eya/yes* though *zvisingazoenzani/unfairness*...some women are abused by male church members...the man continue coming to church but the woman sometimes stop coming or change the denomination” (FGD 4, KII 10, KII 9).

One of reasons for changing churches is being overburdened with the stigma of abuse and shame. Second, the victim could not secure much help from the church.

Another implicit process (mentioned briefly above) used in the church is the separation of domestic issues from church issues where GBV arises. A participant noted that, “...some issues are dealt with privately and treated as domestic affairs. Other GBV issues are dealt with at church level either at local church or national level depending with the issues” (KII 1). The other process utilised is the referral of younger women to old women in the church to be taught how to run their homes. In line with this, participants reported,

We are taught as women in our meetings to be humble and persevere so that we save our marriages as young women...the older women sometimes fail to realise that their times and our times are different and telling us *kuti timbute mvura* (to keep quiet like somebody has water in the mouth) is good but it's hard (KII 8, KII 4).

The approach is used because older women draw from their experiences and have gone through much of the issues that younger women are facing. Sometimes advice from older women is met with resistance due to changes in culture (or GBV issues) and approach to solving issues. For instance, where the older generation of women were content with staying at home, the younger women would like to be competitive in the job market and leave their homes to house cleaners. So, advising a young woman to stay at home and take care of the family could be met with resistance. A participant also mentioned women's conferences as opportunities to share their experiences, “We appreciate that the church allows women to meet and hold their own annual revival meetings...opportunities to share and learn from each other are available...” (KII 2). The representation by men at women's annual revival meetings is minimal. The GBV experiences shared remain known to women and men remain in ignorance.

The other responses cited that sometimes clergy embroiled in GBV related issues are transferred to another church due to lack of evidence or the issue dies naturally. “If the person concerned is a pastor, he is transferred to another local church because there is no evidence *asi mumabhenji vanhu tinonge techivhuruvhuta* (but people in the pews will be murmuring” (FGD 2). Another data extract cites the same issue, “*Church inokuranga kana kuchinja nzvimbo kana urimufundisi*/The church disciplines you or transfer you if you are a pastor” (KII 6, KII 4, FGD 8). This is not an official procedure but participants saw it as a procedure used by the church. Participants expressed with deep concern that changing of the environment does not change or deal with the problem. It is transferring the problem. One of the key procedures highlighted is Matthew 18:15-20, though the participant mentioned this without much confidence on the praxis side of the reference made. The participant related, “*Yaaa eeeh* we use Matthew 18 as our procedure...we also visit those affected and try to counsel them and God’s Word guide us to resolve conflicts” (KII 1). The idea about the centrality of Scripture is noble, but how it interrogates and addresses GBV remains a major issue among men and women.

5.6. Integrating presentation and discussion

My aim in the above process was to extract statements and discern the meanings of what the participants were saying about how the church responds to GBV in its ministerial spaces. As stated earlier, all the FGDs were conducted during a national church event and that means participants represented diverse ministerial pockets of the church and communities across the country. The following section discusses how the processes undertaken in this chapter answer the main research question: “What is the public pastoral care of the UBCZ in responding to GBV within its community ministerial spaces in Zimbabwe?”

5.6.1. Participants’ ability to define and identify gender-based violence

The extracted responses from the participants suggested that they had some understanding of GBV. Their basic understanding quickly portrayed the home environment – involving husband and wife in conflict – as the source of GBV. My assessment was that participants who confined the notion to a home environment were much older and understood it to be only physical; whereas the younger generation of participants cited both the physical and psychological aspects of GBV and understood it to be prevalent in many spheres. The younger generation attributed their better understanding of the phenomenon to media. Generally, responses from

participants constantly echoed male power and women's subservient position in GBV. None of the participants mentioned the church at this stage. Inherent in their understanding of the notion of GBV proved to me that the phenomenon was a reality in the church. How does this answer the question? Their understanding of the notion as shown in two age groups served to plumb the depth of UBCZ's teaching and response to GBV. Answers from the participants reflected the effectiveness of the church's public pastoral care on the issue. The impression I got, is the church has not equipped its members to understand GBV better.

5.6.1.1. Participants' awareness levels of gender-based violence

Under this theme, participants associated low levels of awareness with very old grandmothers. They treat GBV as normal and even accept abusive behaviour from men as normal. This was mainly attributed to great influence of cultural oppressive treatment towards women. This theme generated two more sub-sub-themes. The first theme is: *Treating GBV at home and church as normal*. Participants cited that the cultural treatment of women is sustained in the church. The result of this is some members treat home and church experiences in a similar manner, because they notice some elements of what they are used to at home replayed at church. The second sub-sub-theme was: *Higher awareness levels of GBV*. Participants in this sub-theme indicated that younger women and youth in the church display higher levels of awareness on GBV. Such awareness levels arise from the members' interface with media as mentioned earlier. Participants pointed out attitudes and practices by men that promote GBV in the church with disappointment. Their fingering of such attitudes and practices (not as learnt from the church) in varied forms emerged to me as further evidence of better awareness of the phenomenon. Treating GBV as normal by some members and not getting awareness, challenges the church in its public ministry to address GBV. To answer the question, the active and intentional responsibility to instil GBV awareness by the UBCZ in its public pastoral care in responding to GBV is barely noticeable.

5.6.2. Gender-based violence associated with male dominance

Male dominance was cited as one of the main factors associated with GBV at home and in church environments. Male dominance means control over how women should speak and behave at home and church. Some participants attributed this behaviour to cultural societies in which men and women are raised. Women are groomed to assume a subservient role while their

male counterparts adopt a more controlling and dominating role. What could be termed negatively as dominance in a cultural context is actually interpreted as love and being responsible within a family. Such dominance and responsibility for family sometimes translates into wife beating as an expression of control. Culture allows for such behaviour and some women cited that there are times a woman deserves to be beaten. If male dominance is not exercised, some women wonder if they really belong to the husband in marriage. Male dominance is transferable to the church environment. Participants noted that their participation at church is limited, silenced and they have minimal contribution due to male structural relationships existing at church. This means the church is unconsciously nursing an attitude towards women, which warrants re-examination to improve gender relations. Participants expressed a sense of hope towards change from the scriptures.

5.6.3. Invalid interpretations of Scripture that encourage gender-based violence

Participants appreciated the church for a long history of faithful preaching of the Word. They raised a concern that among the recipients of the Word there are members that live and speak in a way that contradicts the scriptural view of women. Issues like submission, silence, interpretation of original sin in a feminine way, headship and leadership are twisted by some church members to suit their own ends. This should serve as a pointer to areas where the church needs to invest in when it comes to interrogating invalid understanding of Scripture. Interpretations that people hold to certainly translate into speech and behaviour that affects a particular gender. This suggested to me a multi-layered misconception of certain passages of Scripture. Therefore, more teaching and clarity on such passages could remove the curtain of misunderstanding that seems to encourage certain treatment of women in the church. The public pastoral care of UBCZ in responding to GBV across the nation is reflected in the participants' responses. The church is challenged to be more operational in exercising its light and salt effect on GBV issues.

5.6.4. Experiences of church practices in fanning and tolerating gender-based violence

This theme generated feelings of pain and despondency as participants shared their experiences related to practices that fan and tolerate GBV in the church. Five sub-themes emerged from this theme. First, participants shared their experiences with *submission* in the church. According to them, the teaching on submission as a practice is not yielding better results. This is caused by

cultural aspects of submission that remain dominant in the church and seemingly eclipsing or casting a shadow on the true meaning of submission from the Bible. Across data, participants cited men with wrong understanding on the practice of submission. Predominantly some men nurse cultural stereotypes of oppressive submission as the cause of misunderstanding. Now the same element is evident in church structures and things are done as a reiteration of cultural aspects of submission. Participants also mentioned the payment of bride price, which the church acknowledges as a good custom. The misplaced essence of bride price creates heavy handedness that translates into other abuses on women. The church could transform the meaning of the bride price through its public teaching. I noticed that participants expressed a sense of hope and confidence in Scriptures to transform the perceptions and meanings of misunderstood practices. The UBCZ could do well to revisit the above practices and address them from scripture; but this is not being done. As a result, there is sustenance of GBV in the church through experiences of these practices.

Second, participants revealed experiences of male *dominance*, which is reflected in the structures of the church from local to NC level. Without mincing their words, they stated that UBC is male-led and controlled. An aspiration to see women included in church structures was clear. They feel undervalued and excluded from taking decisions in the church yet they are overwhelmingly the majority. In cases of meetings where they are included, they feel that they are less engaged and not empowered due to the high ratio of men in such meetings. These responses generated here show that UBCZ's public pastoral care and response to GBV does not enthusiastically accept female leadership and fans and tolerates GBV in the Church.

Third, experiences of a *culture of silence* led the participants to express that the church nurses a culture of silence. Statements and expressions on silence of women presumably from the Bible by men (whether intentionally or unintentionally) were cited as pushing women into a cycle of silence. Their experience with silence evokes feelings of fear, powerlessness and uncertainty. This answered the question by expressing how they felt in relation to their experiences with a culture of silence.

Fourth, participants expressed experience of *limitations on women* by not tapping into abilities and potential in women. Participants expressed that men think that women's performance is always substandard as compared to men. As an answer to the question, they expressed disappointment at the church for recycling the same brains in local to NCs and citing the

incompetence of some men. The implication is women can only serve in the church in specifically known and demarcated spheres. Any operation by women beyond known spheres raises questions.

Fifth, *single mothers and widows* feel uninvolved, vulnerable, ignored and treated with suspicion in the church. Their number in the church is very high and they suggested that a ministry led by a female theologian would help them get help and feel loved. They remarked that the death of a husband opens room for vulnerability and struggling to fit in the church. Incidences of clergy not visiting this group of women were cited and this further creates the impression that they are being isolated and ignored. Participants cited occasions where traditional chiefs and in-laws forced them to do things against their will and Christian beliefs. To abate this, they implored the church to stand with them and stop leaving them vulnerable. Specific responses drawn from participants served as answer to the way UBCZ is doing ministry and responding to GBV in communities.

5.6.5. Clergy not equipped to handle gender-based violence

Lack of conceptualisation of the GBV phenomenon by the clergy has an effect in the following areas. First, pastoral care to GBV survivors cannot be effective if the pastor is not conversant with what he is dealing with. This explains why participants said the pastor just reads verses and prays with them. Participants felt that pastors fail to plumb the depth of their experiences and frame better solutions to their problems. Use of scripture and prayer remains important but relevance to issues is also important. Second, church members lose confidence in the pastor for they feel that he may not be competent to assist them. Third, the home and church could continue to be breeding environments for GBV because the phenomenon is not understood. To substantiate such lack of understanding by clergy, participants referred to certain speeches by clergy who continue to silence and marginalise women in the church. To ensure effective pastoral care by clergy the church should create platforms that encourage GBV awareness. Consequently, it will be possible to frame pastoral care ministries that address GBV among members and surrounding communities. The church as a community has inherent ability to transform human situations if it understands what is going on around it.

5.6.6. Approaches used by the church to deal with gender-based violence

Participants did not condemn church discipline as an approach used to deal with GBV. They cited that this approach is only used where GBV is visible to all and causing a stir in the church. Apart from this, they commented that other issues remain concealed in a manner that continues to encourage abuse against women. They poked holes in this approach citing issues such as inconsistency, favouritism and lack of credible follow-up procedures for victims. Participants feel that the approach taken by the church should seek to understand women better by having women represented when presiding over such issues. Across the KIIs and FGDs there is a sentiment that men get some follow-up and attention if they are implicated in GBV as perpetrators. Women receive no assistance as victims and some end up leaving the denomination due to stigma. Participants viewed a separation between home and church GBV experiences as contributing to ambivalence by the church. The approach in Matthew 18 was cited with less motivation indicating that it is less adhered to and established by the church. The idea for citing this passage was also to indicate Scripture as the final authority in all matters affecting Christians. Though it is not laid out as an approach, participants across KIIs and FGDs noted with anger the transfer of implicated clergy to another local church. They stated that the church could change its environment without dealing with the problem and the focus is usually on the man if he is a pastor. The responses given by the participants erode and query UBCZ's ministry and response to GBV.

5.6.7. Unavailability of spaces/platforms to speak and respond to gender-based violence

A longing for space to speak and respond to GBV experiences and issues arising from within the church emerged from participants across data. The precise statement was “we feel like we are suffocating”. The expression indicates suppression without hope for recourse. Part of this was blamed on the patriarchal elements sustained in the church where men lead and speak on behalf of women in most issues. They wish the church to purposefully create platforms and activities that encourage people to speak on GBV. Structures of the church were blamed for not accommodating women or even having female representatives. Participants commented on hoping to see the church taking the lead in condemning and interrogating GBV in a public manner as a way of beginning to create space. There was a comparison with other churches that openly condemn and issue press statements against the phenomenon. The lack of space to speak and respond to GBV limits and shuts platforms. They appreciated the weekly women's

meetings and women's annual meetings, but cited that more credible and public spaces must be created for women to share without fear or limitations. There was a sentiment on the clergy's zero level of understanding of GBV. This necessitates the need to educate the clergy on GBV to take precedence before spaces are created. This is important because the clergy are central and resourceful people that are constantly sought out for help. Lack of knowledge leads to wrong prescription. Responses generated under this answered the question in a way that highlights the shortcomings of the church.

5.6.8. Processes used by the church to address gender-based violence

Processes mentioned by participants under this theme are implicit. What they revealed are not established processes but simply what they see being practised in the church. The first implicit process is teaching on humility and communication in Sunday school and sermons. Participants understood this to be a process towards establishing better relations between husbands and wives or other women and males in relating to each other. However, they expressed that GBV is never fully engaged with as a topic in the teachings they receive from the church. Rather, members channel their experiences in an indirect way and get indirect answers. Private separation by clergy of home and church GBV experiences was understood as a process to address GBV. Some GBV experiences are labelled "domestic" and the church cannot intervene or interfere. This separation has a major weakness of increasing the chances of vulnerability of women leading to various forms of abuse. Participants mentioned the role played by older women as a process aimed at dealing with GBV. While some good advice is obtained from them, participants revealed that a gap remains. This barrier is caused by age difference and awareness levels between age groups. It occurred to me that the older generation may fail to comprehend the context of the younger generation of women. Hence, the prevailing GBV issues remain inadequately addressed. Another perceived process used by the church is the assigning of senior pastors to counsel those affected by GBV. There are only two issues that get such attention: sexual abuse (where it is discovered) and wife beating. Other forms of GBV remain unnoticed and sustained in the church. Participants appreciated the process but expressed frustration about the lack of clear comprehension of GBV by those assigned to help. In light of the above, the underlying component that runs through the assumed processes as an answer to the question is that, the church lacks credible and established processes that properly interrogate and address GBV.

5.7. Summary and conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to establish answers for the main research question. This was achieved through the utilisation of the KIIs and FGDs. Participants explicated the public pastoral care of the UBCZ on how it responds to GBV in its ministerial spaces.

The thematic qualitative analysis method enabled me to ascertain some beliefs and motivations as to why GBV occurs in the manner it does in the UBCZ (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018:8070). Such beliefs and motivations came to the fore through the KIIs and FGDs experiences and observations of the phenomenon in the UBCZ. Through the thematic qualitative analysis method, the research also managed to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) within the data (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018: 8070; Braun and Clarke, 2006:5).

The transcription and coding analytic process generated several codes, which eventually graduated to themes based on issues repeated in data. The seven themes that emerged remain related to data and seek to answer the main research question. Key findings from the themes can be summarised as follows:

First, participants' comprehension of the GBV notion reflected or mirrored the UBCZ's public pastoral care and its response to the phenomenon. The research found that the GBV notion is mostly understood in a physical sense involving a male and female in a home. Some forms, in particular psychological forms of GBV were mentioned by the younger generation of participants and credit was given to the influence of media. This created a gap in understanding the notion, in that some members remain limited in their awareness due to lack of access to media. Therefore, this creates an opportunity for the church to respond by framing awareness in its places of ministry among members.

Second, the chapter also discussed some approaches utilised by UBCZ in dealing with GBV. The research revealed that among other approaches, participants repeatedly mentioned church discipline of offenders as the main approach in UBCZ. Participants commented on the shortcomings of this approach in failing to respond better to GBV in the church's ministerial spaces. Though the primary goal of discipline is pastoral care, it is perceived more as punishment with less assistance of the victims. Only GBV issues noticeable by the public

warrant discipline and other forms remain sustained in the church. Based on this UBCZ's awareness and response to GBV is challenged to be more practical and public in its approach.

Third, the chapter also discussed experiences of church practices that fan and tolerate GBV. It emerged that participants' experiences of church practices prove that UBCZ's public pastoral care and response to GBV negatively affects members. Participants struggle with the practice of male dominance in church structures with no female representatives. The church needs to interrogate its practices with a view to redress practices that fan GBV. The research also found that participants mentioned invalid interpretations of Scripture by members in the church, that sustain GBV. Such invalid interpretations are couched in the members' own deficient understanding of Scriptures. It emerged that the church in its public pastoral care and response to GBV must identify and establish correct interpretations on such verses among its members. The pulpit alone is not enough to correct such wrong understandings. The question is: What methods and platforms must be utilised by the church?

Fourth, it also emerged that the church does not have space or platforms to speak and respond to GBV. It emerged that participants in UBCZ need credible spaces for speaking and responding to GBV issues within the church. Participants were not even sure if the topic is relevant in UBCZ as compared to other denominations that openly speak about it and issue press statements. How could the church fulfil its public pastoral role by creating space and freedom for people to speak about issues that trouble them at home, community and church?

Fifth, the role of the clergy's awareness of the phenomenon was questioned by the participants. The research found that participants lose confidence in the clergy and may not be encouraged to share their GBV experiences. While prayer and scripture remain valuable in assisting survivors, clergy need to ensure that their use intersects with people's experiences. It emerged that such a task is possible if clergy understand GBV better. This suggests framing of opportunities that improve such understanding of GBV. This would in turn improve their response to public pastoral care.

The UBCZ should aim at having a public pastoral care model that addresses GBV. The desire to change its approaches would help it to understand the phenomenon better, leading to better public pastoral care and responses that help congregants. Such change begins with the church's ability to engage in transforming biblical analysis for better public pastoral care.

Chapter 6: A biblical analysis of gender-based violence

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a biblical analysis of GBV. First, the chapter establishes the biblical framework that is going to be used to analyse biblical passages. Second, it argues for God's plan for gender relations between men and women in Genesis 1 and 2. Third, the chapter engages in a literary reading on the notion of GBV to discern the social position of women in both the OT and NT in different sections. Fourth, the process utilised to interpret the biblical passages is explained and justification for choosing biblical passages is stated. Finally, the study analyses selected passages from the OT and NT and a conclusion is supplied. The term GBV is a social construct that is not found in the Bible. Therefore, to understand what the Bible teaches on GBV, the study will identify concepts of the phenomenon.

6.2. Biblical framework utilised to interpret selected passages

The grammatical historical method is utilised to understand and draw meaning from the selected biblical passages. The grammatical historical method aims at "determining the intended meaning by the human author through an examination of language of the text and historical circumstances" (Poythress, 2007:87; Silva, 2007; Gorman, 2009; Conzelman & Lindemann, 1988). Simply put the grammatical historical method asks the question, "What did the author mean? The only evidence we have to answer that question is the text itself" (Sexton, 2011:167). In utilising the grammatical historical method, it allows for the analysis of the socio-historical context of the text. The biblical authors wrote from particular social historical contexts and understanding such contexts is part of the grammatical historical method. Vorster and Van der Walt (2017:19) citing Janse Van Rensburg, Van der Walt and Jordan (2004), state that, "The social historical context has always been an integral part of the grammatical historical method as practiced in the reformed exegesis." Thus, not only does the grammatical historical method challenge the reader of the text to analyse the language aspects of the text but also the historical social circumstances of the author, his purpose and the intended meaning of the text to the audience of the biblical context (Goede & Van Rensburg, 2009:601).

The grammatical historical method further enables the reader to understand the social structures that existed and discern how they influenced interaction with various groups in society. The

method allows the biblical passage to lead in determining the meaning of the passage. This deters the reader from imposing modern norms and reading of the passage. In other words, the interpretive community depends on the grammatical historical analysis of the text to arrive at transforming meaning of the biblical passage (Sexton, 2011: 168).

In utilising the grammatical historical method, it is important to note that scripture is God's revelation to humankind and it requires a certain response from humankind. This means God's revelation of scripture is not private or confined to the biblical context. Instead, his revelation is public and progressive (Sexton, 2011:170). This further means there is need to discern what scripture seeks to address in church ministerial contexts in relation to GBV. God spoke and he continues to speak to human situations and contexts. After using the grammatical historical method and arriving at the historical meaning of the text, the questions that remain to be answered are namely: What difference does it make to us? or What is God saying to us now? These questions beg transformation and meaning of the text in the context of the existing human situation. To this end, the grammatical historical method acclimatises well with the topic of this research in that GBV is a contextual human situation. Transformation of the GBV situation should be informed and controlled by the biblical passage.

6.3. Towards discerning gender relations between man and woman from Genesis 1 and 2

The following question is pertinent to guide the discussion: Does scripture assume hierarchical differences between men and women as the basis of gender relations? (Sproul, 2011:143). If there are differences, how could we understand them in a manner that promotes constructive gender relations? A biblical analysis of Genesis 1 and 2 is foundational to discern gender relations between Adam and Eve (Foh, 1974: 376; Maisiri, 2016). It is important to examine God's ideal design on gender relations between men and women. The discussion below is divided into three sections regarding gender relations between men and women in Genesis 1 and 2.

6.3.1. Man and woman created in the image of God

Genesis 1:26-27 states that Adam and Eve were created in the image³⁰ of God. Genesis 1:26 states,

³⁰ For more rigorous and detailed engagement on the views about the image of God I refer the reader to

Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over all the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (ESV, 2015:13).

It is important at this point to establish the meaning of what it means to be created in the image of God. The understanding that emerges from this brief section is going to serve as the primary basis for viewing men and women in relation to GBV in this research. There are divergent views in biblical interpretation regarding the image of God in human beings.

First, scholars have postulated a physical view of the image of God in human beings. Zimmerli (1978:35) and Atkinson (1990:36) argue that some scholars view the physical appearance of man as representing the image of God. Some have argued that incarnation of Christ could be attributed to God manifesting himself in physical form. This view is not convincing, since scripture teaches that God is Spirit (John 4:24) (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:4). Man cannot resemble God in his total uniqueness as Psalm 8:1-9 states and God is incorporeal (Zimmerli, 1978:36; Kidner, 1967; De La Torre, 2011; Simango, 2006 & 2016, Magezi & Magezi, 2018). Concisely, “This means that although people are created in the image of God, it follows that there is a robust distinction between humankind and God” (Magezi and Magezi, 2018:4). Grudem (1994:284) further states that, “...to picture God as *existing* in a form or *mode of being* that is like anything else in creation is to think of God in a horribly misleading and dishonouring way”. This view fails to give a convincing understanding of the image of God.

Second, the image of God in human beings is understood as moral, rational and spiritual emanating from Genesis 1:26-27 (Magezi & Magezi, 2018: 4; Simango, 2006:4). Citing Atkinson (1990), Magezi and Magezi (2018: 5) posit that the moral, rational and spiritual aspects reflect something in man about the image of God. This could mean that human beings, created by God, have the moral ability to relate to God and to one another in faith, love, compassionate care and obedience (Magezi & Magezi, 2018 cf De La Torre, 2011; Atkinson, 1990; Hamilton, 1990; Eveson, 2001). This viewpoint suggests a better understanding of the

Magezi, V. & Magezi, C., 2018, ‘Migration Crisis and Christian Response: From Daniel De Groody’s Image of God Theological Prism in Migration Theology to a Migration Practical Theology Ministerial Approach and Operative Ecclesiology’, *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 74(1), 4876. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4876>. I also refer the reader to Simango, D., 2016, ‘The Imago Dei (Gen 1:26–27): A history of interpretation from Philo to the present’, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 42(1), 172–190.

image of God in humans in that humans have the same conscious moral, rational and spiritual capacity as their maker. This helps humanity to live for God and for others on earth (De La Torre, 2011:24).

Third, the relational view of the image of God states that human beings have the ability to have a relationship with God and man-to-man (Barth, 1960 cited in Simango, 2006:16; Atkinson, 1990; Westermann, 1987). The idea of man being able to relate to God in the absence of sin and also to his fellow men seems to express better the image of God in Genesis 1:26-27 (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:6). Magezi and Magezi (2018: 6) further refer to Atkinson who advances that this view allows for, "...relationship in which God places himself with human beings, a relationship in which we become God's counterpart, his representative and his glory on the earth" (Atkinson, 1990:37). This is suggestive of what true humanity should be like on earth in the context of human situations that seek to marginalise and oppress other human beings.

The fourth and last view of the image of God in humanity is the functional view. This view holds that man exists on earth to represent the incorporeal God by ruling over the earth (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:6 c.f. Clines, 1968; Moltmann, 1991; Hart, 1995; Simango, 2006; Arnold, 2009). Magezi and Magezi (2018: 6) advance that proponents of this view may have been influenced by Genesis 1:28 which refers to being fruitful, multiplying and subduing the earth. Both Adam and Eve were able to be fruitful, multiply and rule over the earth as equal bearers of the image of God. According to Magezi and Magezi (2018:6) to view the functional view as being able to procreate and fill the earth has its own weakness, which some scholars overlook. The reason advanced is that the human race can no longer exercise dominion over the earth and others as God intended, because of the fall in Genesis 3 (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:6; Wenham, 1987). Through the fall humanity transitioned from its high estate to a degeneration that seeks to oppose and grossly misrepresent its creator. Consequently, citing De La Torre (2011), Magezi and Magezi further state that,

There is a tendency for those who are in positions of influence in various spheres of human society to forget that they are part and parcel of God's creation. This is because the human understanding of having dominion and rule over the world is corrupted by sin to the extent that those who are in power have a tendency of misunderstanding 'to rule' as to place themselves 'over and above' creation, and consequently overlook that they are to rule for the well-being of the creation that includes other humans (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:6).

While it remains valid that God mandated man (Adam and Eve) to have dominion over the earth as a reflection of God's image, how should dominion be exercised by sinful humanity? This now calls for godly justice, love, and compassion and servant-hood in reflecting the dominion as part of the image of God in humanity (Magezi & Magezi, 2018: 6 c.f. Atkinson, 1990:41; Simango, 2006).

What the study could conclude from the above discussion is that the image of God in human beings is understood as moral (rational and spiritual), relational and functional. Though the body serves to physically express how we relate to God and to one another, the physical view of the image of God lacks sound and convincing biblical basis since God is incorporeal. Thus, in the context of GBV these three views underpin the understanding of the image of God in men and women. Now, given that men and women equally possess the image of God, this should transform the way men and women view and relate to each other as creatures of God.

6.3.2. Man and woman created equal

From the above discussion, if human beings are equally created in the image of God, it follows that men and women are equal in God's eyes. What does male and female equality mean? Ortlund defines it as, "Man and woman are equal in the sense that they bear God's image equally" (Ortlund, 1991: 95). When God caused the woman to come to Adam, Adam expressed his excitement and amazement at the sight of Eve. We read Adam's exuberant expression upon beholding Eve in Genesis 2:23, "This at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." In Adam's eyes, Eve is part of him as expressed in the words, "bone one my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Hamilton, 1990: 179). Eve is equal to him and nothing else in all creation, as he saw in the naming of animals (Genesis 2:19-20) (Wenham, 1987:70).

Hamilton, citing Brueggemann (1982) states that the formula in Adam's expression, "is a covenant formula and that it speaks not of a common birth but of a common, reciprocal loyalty" (Hamilton, 1990:179). If it is a reciprocal loyalty, it suggests that neither of the two should dominate and abuse the other but both should live in a harmonious and mutual relationship in a manner that equally reflects the image of God. This kind of relationship as laid out in Genesis is the ideal foundation even for contemporary marriage relationships. Hamilton (1990:180) further advances that,

The verse does not attribute strength to the man and weakness to the woman, as if he is the embodiment of bone and she is the embodiment of flesh. Both the man and the woman share the entire spectrum of human characteristics, from strong to weak.

This clearly puts man and woman in Genesis 2:19-20 on an equal footing that is free from superiority, domination, abuse and inferiority. Waltke and Fredricks (2001: 89) state that, “In ancient times the authority to name implied authority to govern.” Does having authority and governance over the other imply inferiority of the other? Sproul (2011: 144) states that, “Because a person is given a subordinate position in a given structure that involves a division of labour does not carry with it the necessary inference of inferiority.” The implication is Adam would lead Eve in a manner that displays reciprocal love, equality and respect for Eve as opposed to oppressive and sinful male authority. Genesis 2:23 naturally suggests verse 24 and in Genesis 1:28 they were already blessed by God to procreate and both given the right to have dominion over creation. The following section discusses that neither of them (Adam and Eve) was self-sufficient; but each lived in support of and need of the other as equal bearers of the image of God.

6.3.3. Man and woman complement each other

Man and woman complement each other. In Genesis 2: 18 God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him”. Implicit in this verse is the impression that there are distinctions between a man and a woman when God created them (Gillham, 2011: 3). If both have differences, this equally suggests that each is not self-sufficient but would need the help of the other. Our attention is drawn to companionship that is direly needed between man and woman. The woman is called a “helper” and this does not mean that she is stronger than Adam, but simply the one being assisted is inadequate by himself. The word “helper” does not imply that Eve had to become Adam’s servant, rather she had to exist and work alongside Adam as an equal human being (Assohoto & Ngewa, 2006: 14). The idea of complementarity is further suggested here rather than identity³¹ (Wenham, 1987:68). If complementarity is in force this means both had biological, strength, ability and relational needs that prompt them to be suitable, fit or corresponding for each other in a mutual relationship.

³¹ “If identity were meant, the more natural phrase would be “like him”. The help looked for is not just assistance in his daily work or in the procreation of children, though these aspects may be included, but the mutual support companionship provides” (Wenham, 1987:68).

From the preceding discussion, both man and woman were created in the image of God and they should reflect the likeness of God in their relationship to one another. Neither of them bears more image of God than the other. Both are equal in the eyes of their Creator for Adam rejoiced at seeing someone similar and equal to him. The fact that the woman is called a helper does not suggest that she is inferior but she simply complements a lack in the other person. As they practised their roles, God expected unity, mutuality, understanding and ultimately love without domineering or abuse of each other. Both were equally blessed by God without lowering the value of the other. It is an atmosphere where Eve was not inferior to Adam or less human. In doing so, they reflected the kind of life that God had designed for them as people of different sexes. A standard of gender relations between men and women has been set by God for the rest of humanity to follow. Adam and Eve's environment had no GBV. So where did the notion of GBV originate?

6.4. The temptation and the disruption of the image of God in Adam and Eve

Genesis 3 comes after the broad context of creation (Genesis 1 and 2) where Adam and Eve were able to perfectly show the image of God. Thus, until chapter 3, Adam and Eve were able to relate to God and as a couple in absolute moral purity and function as God's representatives in the universe for God's glory. The chapter opens by introducing the reader to the serpent and his character (Gen. 3:1). This analysis assumes the serpent or the tempter is the devil as alluded in Revelation 12:9³² and 20:2. The following scholars are also of the opinion that the devil spoke through the snake as a vehicle to convey his message (Simango, 2006:41 c.f. Briggs, 1886:71-72; Hengstenberg, 1956:14-17; Vawter, 1956:64, 67; Greidanus, 2004:267). The character of the serpent reveals moral deficiency and a complete contradiction of what could be referred to as the image of God. As such, the tempter was crafty or cunning in a bad sense. An allusion to such a character is found in Ezekiel 20: 11-18, which speaks of the prince of Tyre but in retrospect, of the tempter's character.

The tempter utilised his flawed character to mislead Adam and Eve from relating to God perfectly and between them as a couple. Genesis 2:25 reveals that, "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed". Regarding their nakedness, Ross (1985:32)

³² Revelation 12:9, And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world-he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him (ESV). Revelation 20:2 alludes to almost the same reading as in 12:9.

comments, “Their nakedness represented the fact that they were oblivious to evil, not knowing where the traps lay, whereas Satan did and would use his craftiness to take advantage of their integrity.” Thus, focusing on their innocence the tempter patronises them by planting doubt in the mind of Eve, “Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden” (Genesis 3:1). In verse 3-5 the tempter added that, “...You will surely not die...For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”. After successfully instilling doubt, the tempter accuses God in front of Eve that He (God) is hiding something from her, which is, He does not like her to be like him and He is hiding things. The tempter labelled God a liar (Currid, 2003:119; Ross, 1985:32; Greidanus, 2004: 268). The serpent is suggesting that humanity could be better than God (Simango, 2006: 41). The woman was left to her natural desires (Ross, 1985: 32; Assohoto and Ngewa 2006:15) and succumbed to the temptation thereby disobeying the commandment of God in Genesis 2:17, “...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” The woman shared the fruit with her husband (verse 6) and after this, “...the eyes of both were opened, and they knew they were naked...” (Genesis 3:7). There is also a change of roles in Genesis 3 when Eve took the lead to speak with the serpent and lead the husband to eat of the tree (3:2-6). The woman usurps the role of a spokesperson on behalf of the husband (Hamilton, 1990: 188) and this is contrary to the complementing plan of God and projecting the image of God.

Their innocence or lacking active knowledge and awareness to sin had been taken away. They felt exposed and vulnerable. Ross states that they became ill at ease with one another and ill at ease with God (Ross, 1985: 32; Boice, 1982:143). Assohoto and Ngewa (2006:16) advance that, “In their relationship with each other, openness had been replaced by shame, mistrust, instability and superficiality.” Simango (2006: 42 c.f. Kline, 1993: 78) advises that they opted to equate themselves with God who rightfully advises what is good and not good.

The Genesis 3 narrative evokes a wide range of interpretations castigating the woman as weak, more vulnerable to sex, sinners, gullible *et cetera* (cf. 2 Cor.11:3; 1 Tim.2:11-15). The interpretations are possible, but lack contextual and textual support (Hamilton, 1990:188). Genesis 3:6 tells us that Adam was with Eve, “...she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate” (Gen 3:6). Adam was sinful and equally responsible for the fall (Wilkinson, 2002: 69) and equally had the image of God in him marred.

As for now, what is clear is that after the fall things were never the same relationally among God, man and woman. God pronounced judgement on the serpent, woman and man (Genesis 3:14-19). It is interesting to note that God said to the woman in Genesis 3:16, “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.” There are other interpretations on this verse, but the one forwarded by Collins (2006) addresses this section better and is relevant to this research. He states,

We conclude that God describes a condition of human marriages that is all too familiar, namely, competition for control. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman’s desire is to control her husband and he must master her if he can (Collins, 2006:176)

The reality among Christian men and women is that the verse casts a shadow on gender relations because of the marred image of God. On the other hand, Genesis 3:15 is suggestive of hope of restoration, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” The verse anticipates the coming of the Saviour who will model true humanity among other things and restoration of gender relations. Magezi and Magezi (2018:6) substantiate that, “it is through Christ, the very God himself that humanity can be restored back to their perfect relationship with God and with one another”. A model for true humanity is needed because God designed a loving and complementary relationship between male and female which has been marred by the distortion of the image of God in humanity.

Therefore, we conclude that, Adam and Even wilfully disobeyed and abandoned their relationship with God. The relational, moral and functional aspects of the image of God in them were marred. They were unable to relate to God (vertically) and to each other (horizontally) in a manner that brings honour to their creator. They decided what was good in their own eyes and rejected the relational and moral likeness, which they had enjoyed in fellowship with God (Simango, 2006:43) and between themselves. Boice states,

When the connection with God is broken, irresponsibility, cowardice, lying, jealousy, hatred, and every other evil descended on the race...the wish to blame others, plus self-interest and the desire to self-advancement, produce the conflict between individuals, races, social stratifications, institutions, and nations which so mar human history (Boice, 1982: 143).

Thus, men and women in communities possess a marred image of God such that treating each other in a manner that reflects God among them has almost become impossible. Living for God and for each other in gender relations comes with complications and this is suggestive of GBV. Before the research establishes concepts that point to GBV in selected biblical passages, it is important to engage in literary reading on the social position of women in the OT. The literary reading aims at demonstrating how the marred image of God in humanity affects gender relations and failure of humanity to live for God. Second, understanding the social position of women in the OT also serves as a broad background to understand concepts and texts that allude to GBV.

6.5. Literary reading of women's social position within the Old Testament

The general social position of women in the OT was barely independent of male authority. Gladson (2006:1) substantiates that women in the OT live, "...in the shadows rather than in the light of life." The freedom and function of women in the OT is linked or not independent from their male companions or relatives. Subservience to a male person demonstrates the socio-cultural position of women in the OT.

The social cultural contexts of biblical times expected the wife to address her husband as master and lord (Gen. 18:12; Judg.19:26; Amos 4:1). To address the husband as 'lord' was socially accepted as a polite manner of addressing the husband as the one in authority over the woman. On the other hand, such an address also intended to reveal submissiveness from the wife (Vine, Unger & White, 1985: 140). The manner of address was also used by slaves or any subject to address someone superior. This means a wife would address the husband in a similar manner as a slave addressed his master or king (De Vaux, 1973:39). This does not mean that her social position matched that of a slave. The social reality was that a woman's life had to conform to the social order by subjecting herself to the husband. In doing so, certain treatment of women had oppressive elements that did not fit the community of God.

Women are also characterised by a dependence on men for social survival. Among the Ten Commandments, a woman is mentioned among the possessions of man. "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is you neighbour's" (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21). The husband was in control of the wife and had the right to divorce her and the woman did not have the same

freedom. When the husband died, a wife could not inherit anything from the husband or her father, except when there is no male heir (Num. 27:8). A vow made by a girl or married woman was only valid by the consent of her father or husband and if this consent was denied, the vow was null and void (De Vaux, 1973:39; Gladson, 2006:3). Gender relations in this case reveal that a woman remained answerable and accountable to men in most cases. Embedded in the above issues one could easily detect that a distorted view of women as equally created in the image of God impacted gender relations between men and women. Men assumed a position of control and dominance, which infringed on living for God and others in a community of faith.

The domestic social position of a woman in biblical Hebrew times was tied up in childbearing. According to Breyfogle (1910:110), “In Israel the influence of a man was measured by the size of his family rather than by riches in cattle and land.” This social perspective created social, cultural and religious conditions for women enforced by the public recognition (Breyfogle, 1910:110; Gladson 2006: 2). The birth of a boy in the family brought a lot of joy. A woman’s respect, comfort and security in marriage lay in giving birth to a baby boy (Gen. 16:4 and Gen. 29:31-30:24) (De Vaux, 1973: 39). In these Genesis accounts, the names given to children by the two wives reveal how important it was to give birth to a boy. Women’s names were not usually mentioned in the OT and where they are mentioned something peculiar would have happened or is to be expected. For example, the mention of Deborah, Jezebel, Jael and Huldah comes with their heroic acts, which could be equated with male authority. A further example, in Genesis 30:21 we read, “Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah”. This is the Dinah who was raped later on.

It is interesting to note that all six boys that Leah bore had the meanings of their names given and for Dinah it is not the case. She is mentioned in one verse, because something peculiar will transpire further on. This shows that boys were more honoured in Hebrew culture than girls were. When wives gave birth, they did it for the husband as seen in the following verses, “Then Leah said, God has endowed me with good endowment; now my husband will honour me, because I have borne him six sons” (Gen. 30:20). Rachel also said when she gave birth to a son, “God has taken away my reproach...May the Lord add to me another son” (Gen. 30:23-24). Rachel’s joy ensued after an agonising desperation ventilated towards Jacob, “She said to Jacob, Give me children or I shall die!” (Gen.30:1). The research could suggest that a woman lived to honour and seek acceptance from her husband, while her own interests did not always come to the fore. This paints a picture on gender relations that determined the social position

of women in relation to men in Israel. Humanity lived in exploitation of the other such that the moral, relational and functional aspects of the image of God in man became tainted. There is difficulty and conflict in trying to be godly for others and society.

The social norm in Israel allowed men to marry and divorce without major complications. This resulted in untold suffering of the divorced women in Israel. This was caused by a lack of monogamy in Israel, such that the nation had many divorced women. Such lack of permanence in monogamy is best seen in the life of Solomon who had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). In Xerxes's time women were treated as sex objects for their beauty and risked being divorced (Esther 1:19) or being killed (Esther 4:16). The display of the harem in Esther 2:12-14, could indicate women being treated as possessions (Gladson, 2006:3). It appears women existed to please men. Most of the divorced women found it difficult to re-enter a marriage relationship. Therefore, such women who suffered at the hands of men and unjust kings inhabited Israel's communities. The divorced women would stay at a house of a male relative and were vulnerable to evil acts in their communities. Thus, God through the prophets spoke strongly against the unjust treatment of such women and widows (Deut. 10:18; 14:29; Job 22:9; 24:3; 31:16; Ps. 94:6; Isa. I: 1, 23; 10: I ff.; Jer. 7:6; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5). By speaking through the prophets, it shows that God was not condoning the gender abuses that existed in Israel emanating from the social position of women.

Genealogies in the OT also paint a picture on the treatment of women in Israel. Women appear in genealogies but in a way that reveals their subordination to men. In the genealogies in the OT, "lineage is traced through the male. The female is mentioned only where she is of historical significance" (Gen.11:29; 22:23; Num. 26:33; 27:1-11) (Gladson, 2006:7). For instance, in Ruth, Ruth is a central figure in that narrative, but the genealogy at the end (Ruth 4:18-22) reveals that the lineage is traced through Boaz and not through Ruth and Naomi. This gives an insight into the social position of women and the existing gender relations in Israel.

This does not mean that the entire OT never had a positive social recognition³³ of women. In Judges 5, Deborah features prominently and in a positive manner in a victory song. Bathsheba

³³ There is a temptation to view the social position of women in the Old Testament in an entirely negative sense. Even though the biblical world was a male dominated society, there are clear insights in which women had rights and protection as members of the community (Lief 1997:18). Sometimes women and children were taken as plunder (loot, booty) (Gen.34:29; Num. 31:9; Deut. 20:14) while their male counterparts were slaughtered. Though there were reasons for preserving the lives of women as opposed to men under such circumstances, there was

boldly approached the king to arrange for the kingship of Solomon (1Kings 1:11ff). Esther courageously delivered the Jews from their impending annihilation (Esther 4:16). The heroes of faith listed in Hebrews mention women; some of whom with questionable backgrounds like Rahab (Hebrews 11:31). An unnamed woman struck Abimelech with a millstone (Judges 9:54). It was regarded a disgrace to be killed by a woman and Abimelech requested to be stabbed to death. The few mentioned examples serve to point out that within a male-led society; women played certain prominent³⁴ and memorable roles in Israel's history. Nevertheless, there remained disrupted reflection of the image of God in gender relations as could be seen between men and women. There are more positive images about women scattered throughout the OT. The following verses in Proverbs allude to this fact about women: Prov.1:20-21; 4:4 ff.; 7:4; 8:1-3; 9:1-6; 14:1. Citing Ackroyd (1962), Gladson (2006:10) comments on the usage of feminine imageries in Israel's society, "The very notion which led to the use of feminine imagery such as this belongs to a society in which women were respected and occupied an important place." By way of comparison, there is a view that the social and legal position of Israelite women was inferior to the positions held by other women in nearby countries like Egypt and Babylon (De Vaux, 1973:40). The comparison made by De Vaux acknowledges positives on the social position of women in Israel though there were dominant negative elements.

In the Israelite covenant community, women had membership and were regarded as worshippers of God just like men. In light of this, their spiritual state was not inferior to that of their male counterparts. The Mosaic Law reveals that they deserve protection and had to be compensated for in case of harm (Exod. 21:22-25; 28-31; Lev.20:16). We also learn from other biblical laws holding women equal to men in execution of punishment for sin committed and respect due to both parents (Lev 11; 19:3; 20:10-11, 17 -18; Deut. 5:16). According to Breyfogle (1910:110), "Injury to her person was rated as damage to property, compensation for

some protection given to them. The raping of a virgin was regarded a disgrace and violation of social norms in Israel. This means women's honour was held in high esteem and protected- Dinah (Gen.34:1-3) and Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-32) were both avenged for (Lief 1997:18). Citing Greenberg (1983), Lief (1997:18) argues that, "the position of mother was almost sacrosanct: dishonouring a mother warranted the curse of God; cursing a mother was punishable by death." This means women had rights and protection as could be discerned further also in the protection of widows as the marginalized of society. God publicly displayed concern, care and protection for them according to Deuteronomy 24:17-19.

³⁴ Some women that played prominent roles in Israel's history are: Miriam (Ex.15:20); Huldah (2 Kings 22:12-20); Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3); Noadiah (Neh. 6:10-14). There was also a wealthy and great woman in the days of Elisha (2 Kings 4:8). For more reading on heroic women, I refer the reader to: Lief, H.R., 1997, *The role and position of Jewish women between 200 BCE-200 CE*, Pretoria: University of South Africa.

which was accepted by the male in authority over her” (Exod. 21:22; Deut. 22:19). Socially accepted relations required that the husband decide what is due to him, not the woman as the victim. On the other hand, some laws did not seem favourable to women. For instance, the birth of a girl required a longer time for the mother to be ceremonially clean unlike if she gave birth to a boy (Lev.12:1-5). In this law, the idea of subordination conjoined with unequal gender relations is reflected at birth. Also, in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, only a man had the right to scrutinise the character of the wife and could divorce her if he was unhappy with her. The Bible is silent about the women examining men for marriage and divorcing men in the OT.

God’s concern is public about the abuse of women by the prophets. For instance, God through Micah expressed his displeasure when women were driven from their homes (Micah 2:9). Judgement was pronounced on the Ammonites when they ripped open pregnant women in Gilead killing both the mother and the child (Amos 1:13). The prophet Isaiah speaks against the ill-treatment of widows and the downtrodden (Isaiah 10:1-2).

So, against the apparent unconcern for the equality of women discernible in the Old Testament stands God calling men to higher and nobler views. The very fact that the prophetic voices spoke in behalf of women indicates that they had rights which had gone unnoticed by the apostate elements in society (Gladson, 2006:7)

Therefore, this section has generally established the social position of women in ancient Israel. Not all the social situations have been looked into. However, those covered show the mention of women is incidental in the OT and that women are subordinate to men. It also emerged that women’s position in the OT is predominantly secondary, standing behind men and confined to the home environment (Gladson, 2006:11). Through the inspiration of the biblical writers, God allowed the negative and positive incidences to be recorded to reveal how badly the image of God in humanity needs to be restored. Such need for restoration can only come to the fore when we analyse the biblical text in its social context to discern its meaning and relate to each other as God intended.

Therefore, to appreciate better understanding on the position of women, a biblical analysis of selected passages is necessary. First, the study briefly explains the process utilised to read the OT and NT passages and states the reason for choosing particular passages.

6.6. The process utilised to read the passages and motivation for selecting texts

To read and analyse selected biblical texts, a systematic process outlined below will be followed. First, the study will establish the social context of the biblical passage. By this, we refer to the knowledge of the situation or context³⁵ in which a linguistic expression occurs. This is important for better and clearer understanding of the text (Du Toit, 1998:4; Harris, 1992:42; Vorster & Van der Walt, 2017). Uprooting the text from its social context may lead to missing the intended meaning of the text. In establishing the social context there is need to also keep in mind the authors' scope, which is the end purpose or goal the author has in mind (Terry, 1968: 210; Sexton, 2011; Poythress, 2007). This approach links with the grammatico-historical interpretation. Second, the study will engage in textual analysis in view of the established context. This stage seeks to analyse the passage under study to get its meaning (Vanhoozer, 1998: 252-253; Osborne, 2006:93; Goede & Van Rensburg, 2009). Note should be taken at this stage that, "words and sentences can have but one significance in one and the same connection. The moment we neglect this principle we drift to a sea of uncertainty and conjecture" (Terry, 1968:205; Kaiser & Silver, 1994). The third stage is discerning the teaching of the text and its implications for the subject under study (Goede & Van Rensburg, 2009:601). This entails discerning the meaning of the text in the present day, which in our case, is in view of GBV. The criteria used for choosing texts for analysis is motivated by the incident in the text, possible teaching from the text and a demonstration of failure by humanity to morally, relationally and functionally live for God and one another. The other motivation for selecting the texts is their inclination to the notion of GBV.

6.7. An exegesis/analysis of Old Testament texts on concepts related to the notion of gender-based violence

As already mentioned, the social construct "gender-based violence" is not found in the Bible and this does not mean that people are creating this notion to push their own agenda against the church and social institutions. Churches are even branded as signatories to the "covenant of

³⁵ "No normal linguistic expression is unsituated, that is, without external context. This applies equally to the New Testament writings. Though these documents deal with the most fundamental questions of humanity, in no sense do they float in space. It is precisely because these New Testament documents take humanity so seriously that they are concretely embedded in the milieu of the people who were involved in their production. To be human is always to be in situ (=in a situation)" (Du Toit 1998:4). However, the preceding quote predominantly refers to the New Testament but what Du Toit is saying equally applies to the Old Testament too. Thus, it must be approached in same manner.

violence against women” (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2013: 9). It could be that the church is unclear about its own understanding of GBV from a biblical point of view. To locate the notion of GBV within the biblical passages, the study needs to bring to the fore concepts from the Bible that are related to GBV. Such concepts will then need to be understood within the milieu of the texts they were written in to discern their meaning and theology for the church. Therefore, it is with this understanding that the following biblical passages from the OT related to GBV are identified and analysed.

6.7.1. The defiling of Dinah as an expression of gender-based violence: An analysis of Genesis 34:1-34

This biblical passage narrates the forcible sexual incident against Dinah. Reading the passage in the English Standard Version (ESV) and New American Standard Version (NASV) shows that the explicit word ‘rape’ as we would have it today is not mentioned. Instead, words and phrases like ‘defile’ (v.13 and 27), ‘seized her and lay with her’ (v.2) and ‘humiliated her’ (v.2) are used as pointers to GBV. The aim is to find out the equivalent of the word ‘rape’ and discern how it was understood in that biblical social context. First, the context of the passage should be established.

6.7.1.1. Context of Genesis 34:1-34

The incident took place in Canaan on the periphery of Shechem. This was after 20 years of Jacob’s exile in Paddan Aram (Gen. 33:18-19) after running away from Esau (Waltke and Fredricks, 2001: 458). Upon his arrival at Shechem, he settled and purchased land (Gen. 33:19). His settlement in the place culminates with the building of an altar, which he called *El-Elohe-Israel* (Gen. 33:20), which is literally translated ‘the God of Israel’ (Hamilton, 1995: 350; Longman, 2009: 63). By this name *El-Elohe-Israel* (Gen.33:20), Jacob is acknowledging that God is now his God and that of his descendants (Wenham, 2000: 301). Chapter 33:18-20 forms a conclusion of the entire chapter, but also anticipates or sets the stage for Chapter 34. The settling of Jacob, is followed by the defiling of his daughter Dinah. This biblical text exists among the patriarchal narratives and God had forbidden intermarriage between Israelites and Canaanites (Ross, 1985:83). It was mentioned above that if a woman’s name is mentioned in the Bible, the reader should pay attention. Dinah’s name was only mentioned in Genesis 30:21 and in this narrative, she is the main character and it is the last time we read about her (Wenham,

2000: 309). Therefore, the following textual analysis seeks to determine if there are traces of GBV that manifest in imbalances of gender relations.

6.7.1.2. *Textual analysis*

The first four verses of the narrative introduce the reader to Dinah's social interaction and Shechem's defiling of Dinah (vv.1-4). The narrator of the story does not give us the details surrounding the defiling of Dinah. Dinah's actions or words are not even recorded. In a series of verbs, the reader is simply told Shechem, "...saw her, he seized her, lay with her, and humiliated her" (v.2). The narrator no doubt denounces the action of Shechem as suggested by the following actions, 'lay with her' implies forcible and debasing intercourse, 'humiliated her' a term also used to describe intercourse without marriage (Wenham, 2000: 311). In Hebrew, the word translated as "humiliated" in verse 2 is rendered "violated" (*chamac*) in 2 Samuel 13:12, 14, 22, 32 in the narrative of Amnon and Tamar. *Chamac* means to maltreat, make bare and take away violently (Strong, 1980: 1246). The meaning of the word accurately reflects the actions of Shechem towards Dinah. He exposed violently her nakedness and forcibly maltreated her sexually. This comes close to our modern word 'rape'. Such an act accompanies humiliation and shame of the victim, as could be discerned when Tamar was raped by Amnon in 2 Samuel 13:16, 19, 20.

Sex occurred in the context of one person domineering the other, without mutual consent (Hamilton, 1995: 355). In the Hebrew culture, once a young woman lost her virginity before marriage and worse through rape, she had no hope of getting married (Wenham, 1994:83; Ross 1985:83). In 2 Samuel 12:15, Amnon hated Tamar after the rape. In this narrative, the rapist seems to develop a 'genuine love' after violating the woman (v.3). This shows on his part unrestrained sexual emotions and an undermining attitude towards Dinah as a woman. Some have put the blame on Dinah for wandering away from home and making herself vulnerable. This is only an assumption (Vos, 2006: 436, Waltke, 2001: 462). The text does not put any blame upon her and only mentions her intention as a social being, "...to see the women of the land" (34:1). Even if she had wandered away from home, Shechem had no right to overpower and defile her.

We are left to wonder if she ever uttered a word or struggled to free herself from Shechem. Her voice is not heard, she is passive though the rapist seems to express good intentions in the

narrative (v.4, 8, 11, 12) (Brueggemann, 1982:275). After the rape incident, no apology is offered, but what we read is that he loved her and spoke tenderly to her, such that he said to his father, “Get me this girl for my wife” (v.4) (ESV). The ideal gender relations between man and woman as set by God in Genesis 1-2 are violated by Shechem. This gives the reader a glimpse into the Canaanite social and cultural conditions that failed to match the image of God in humanity as discussed above.

In verses 5-7, we read about the reactions of Jacob and his sons to the defilement of Dinah. Jacobs’s response is perplexing. Upon learning about the rape of his daughter, Jacob held his peace until his sons came home (v.5). He did not even treat the matter with the urgency it deserved as implied by, ‘...he held his peace until they came’ (v.5). A cursory study of Genesis 29:11, 18; 32:7; 33:4; and more especially 37:34-35 at the supposed death of Joseph reveal Jacob’s reactions (Waltke, 2001: 463). Waltke further advances that,

...there is also censures about Jacob’s passivity³⁶ in the face of his daughter’s defilement by contrasting his reaction to that of his sons: They were filled with grief and fury, because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing. David was rightly furious when Amnon raped Tamar (2 Samuel 13:21) but wrongly did nothing (2 Samuel 13:20-21) (Waltke, 2001: 463).

Jacob’s sons expressed the opposite response of their father. The biblical text states clearly, “...as soon as they heard of it, and the men were indignant and very angry, because he had done an outrageous thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, for such a thing must not be done” (v.7). The sons’ reaction to the news mirrors God’s reaction to the chaos that existed in Noah’s days when God was angry with the sinfulness of people (Gen. 6.6) (Hamilton, 1995: 357). The narrator of the story does not even credit the summoning of the sons to Jacob, he leaves a gap. In the discussion, Jacob still does not seek to take a leading response when the sons come home; rather the sons lead the discussion. Maybe Jacob was subconsciously afraid of the people that surrounded him, as is expressed later in verse 30 of this narrative. Still this does not justify his silence over the defilement of his own daughter. Up to this point, the narrative does not tell us how Dinah felt after this incident. Her brothers’ reaction is welcomed, but she remains silenced. Other people had to discuss her issue and decide for her. It is undoubtedly obvious that she

³⁶ Wenham makes an interesting observation when he notes, “Jacob was never fond of his first wife, Leah, and it seems that his coldness spilled over to her six sons and her daughter Dinah” (Wenham 2000:317). This is observed when Hamor and Shechem came to discuss about the marriage of Dinah. We do not read about Jacob’s decision or response on the matter. Rather what we find is that Hamor and his sons turn to Dinah’s brothers for the negotiations. Thus, Wenham’s observation remains valid about Jacob’s attitude towards Leah’s children, worse for a raped daughter and his own daughter.

suffered physical and emotional trauma after being violently subjected to rape. She had been reduced to the level of an outcast because of this defilement (Hamilton, 1995: 356).

There were negotiations³⁷ between Hamor's family and Jacob's family for Dinah's marriage in verses 8-12. This is actually a proposal for marriage, which does not only include Dinah, but the success of the negotiations broadens to intermarriage³⁸, which was against God's instruction to Israel (v.9). The sinful act of one person is affecting other innocent women, forcing them to intermarry, simply because these men had made a decision without their consent. Hamor, the father of Shechem should have started with an apology on behalf of his son since his son never apologised for his abuse of Dinah (Waltke, 2001: 464). Instead, the father escalates his case echoing how Shechem's soul longed for Dinah (v.8) and the willingness to pay whatever bride price (v.12). The commitment to the young girl is very positive, but it is happening under forced circumstances for Dinah. She knows her future prospects of getting married are doomed and is trapped in a situation she cannot change because it is socially sanctioned.

The research still asks: What does Dinah think about these discussions? Is she willing to marry this young prince or is she simply going to do it, because these men have decided and she cannot object? She was obviously detained (v.26) at Shechem's place after the rape and this was against her will (Wenham, 2000:312). The success of the discussion would mean that even future women in Israel and Shechem have to obey the agreement as the text suggests by, "Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves" (v.9). As discussed above, women in biblical culture were subservient to their male counterparts. As such, the propositions and decisions made by men in this chapter are expected to be without women's involvement.

The narrative shifts to the deceitful plan by Jacob's sons (vv.13-29). The sons hatched a plan to deceive the Shechemites, just as their father (Gen. 25 and 27) deceived his brother Esau. The stratagem was that they would give their sister to Shechem after every Shechemite male was circumcised. There is no indication in the text to show the father was aware of this stratagem, or that he was consulted for his opinion or approval. He remains at the level of passivity and

³⁷ Where premarital intercourse exist, the Old Testament law allowed mandatory payment of marriage present (bride-price) which was an equivalent of several years wages. This was paid to the girl's father. If he wanted he could then allow the marriage to proceed (Ex. 22:16-17; Dt. 22:28-29; cf. Gen. 24:53) (Ross 1985:83).

³⁸ The Law of Moses forbade Israel to intermarry with other nations (Deut.7:3) and endorsed by Joshua 23:12; Ezra 9:14. Abraham and Isaac feared this for it was a perversion for Israel but Hamor is seeing an opportunity for cooperation (Waltke 2000:464; Wenham 2000:312). However, this cooperation is happening at the expense unwilling women that are simply coerced into a situation created against their will.

non-involvement (Hamilton, 1995:363). Does it mean that the circumcision of the Shechemite men was going to make them participate in God's covenant with Israel? The circumcision in this case had nothing to do with the covenant, but was simply an initiation into communal life and in particular inter-marriage, which God abhorred (Hamilton, 2000:363). Shechem circumcises himself and the rest of the men who went out of the city gate with him (v.24). Three days later when all who had been circumcised were in severe pain, Jacob's sons pounced upon them and killed them with the sword. The desire of these sons was to punish Shechem, but they overreacted and engaged in a holy war without divine approval (Numbers 31:3-24). In verse 27, the narrator is still maintaining the defilement of Dinah and telling the reader where Dinah was all this time (v.26). This is the last time we read about Dinah and her feelings remain concealed in the entire narrative and are left to the imagination of the reader. What remains pertinent is the subservient social position of this woman.

After the killing of the Shechemites, Jacob spoke and expressed his concern over his security in the land and mentions nothing about Dinah (v.30). To this Wenham expounds,

Jacob condemn them for the massacre, for abusing the rite of circumcision, or even for breach of contract. Rather, he protests that the consequences of their action have him unpopular. Nor does he seem worried by his daughter's rape or the prospect of intermarriage with the Canaanites. He is only concerned for his own skin (Wenham, 2000: 316).

However, the sons insisted evil had been committed against their sister, "But they said, Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?" (v.31).

6.7.1.3. *Towards gender-based violence*

Reflecting upon the gender relations set by God in Genesis 1-2, there is complete violation and reverse of relations between men and women. The marred image of God in humanity continues to upset how genders relate to each other.

The narrative has no mention of God and leaves the reader pondering what He (God) would have to say about the rape of Dinah. The narrator intentionally leaves that gap (Waltke 2001, 459). God is not happy with Jacob; he should have stayed away from the Canaanites by obeying God's instruction for him to build an altar at Bethel where God appeared to him (35:1) (Waltke, 2001: 459). This disaster befell his household because he disobeyed the Lord. The bedrock of ideal social relations for man and woman in Genesis 1-2, has taught us that they were both

created in God's image, equal and complementing each other without negatively domineering each other. The consequences of the disrupted image of God, manifest in this narrative where Dinah suffers physical and emotional GBV. Other people presided over her issue and she was not asked for her opinion.

Dinah was raped, abducted, defiled, humiliated, side-lined and remained voiceless. This is an expression of GBV. Though the term is not in the narrative, the incident and concepts are clear. God's displeasure on this issue is expressed implicitly by the deceit of Jacob's sons in which many Shechemite men perish. The lack of humanity to live morally upright, relate to each other well and being representatives of God on earth leads to a down spiral in gender relations. The social and cultural position of Dinah in this narrative is dependent on men in a manner that marginalised her. On a broad scale, the narrative is reflective of the prevailing gender relations that existed between men and women in Canaan.

6.7.2. The Judah and Tamar story as a concept expressing gender-based violence: Analysis of Genesis 38.

6.7.2.1. Context of Genesis 38

This narrative seems to lack continuity with chapters 37 and 39 of Genesis. Brueggemann (1982:307-308) notes that, "This chapter stands alone, without connection to its context. It is isolated in every way and is most enigmatic...It is difficult to know in what context it might be of value for theological exposition." This entails Brueggemann simply outlining the chapter and keeping his commentary brief because he finds no connectivity with other chapters. On the other hand, Vos (2006:460) notes the contribution of this chapter to the deplorable weakening of Jacob's family through its close associations with the Canaanites. However, Vos regards the entire chapter as offensive and shocking (Vos, 2006: 460). Though he acknowledges the chapter as God's Word as affirmed in 2 Timothy 3:16, he does not comment on the chapter at all.

Hamilton (1995) also notes that most commentators agree that the narrative interrupts the flow of the Joseph story, as Genesis 39:1 picks up where 37:36 left off. However, he (and other scholars) goes on to ask very important questions: "Why the insertion of the story about Judah, his sons, and his daughter in-law into the Joseph story at all? And why its insertion between chapter 37 and 39?" (Hamilton, 1995: 431; Wenham, 2000: 363; Waltke, 2001: 506; Calvin, 2001:303). These questions challenge the reader to find the value and purpose of the chapter.

The research coincides with the opinion that there is value in this narrative and the reader cannot simply brush it aside. The incident took place in a social context and there are lessons God wants to communicate to the community of faith. Hamilton (1995) notes the following two points. First, the narrative informs us about the life of Judah after Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. Second, he suggests that this is the logical place to insert it since chapter 39 does not pick up from where 38:30 left but where 37:36 ended (Hamilton, 1995:431). Calvin also acknowledges it as an insert between chapters 37 and 39. He, however, goes on to note that this is the lineage the Redeemer came from. In other words, he sees its importance attached to genealogical purposes through which the Messiah is traced. He further posits, “But instead of its glory being celebrated, its great disgrace is exposed...At first sight Christ’s honour seems to be tarnished by these events” (Calvin, 2001:303). The research also treats the narrative as an independent chapter with its total value as part of scripture and its shocking details deserve to be studied to unveil the concept of GBV for this research.

6.7.2.2. *Textual analysis*

The reader is introduced to Judah’s marriage to the daughter of a Canaanite³⁹ man, named Shua and Judah had three sons with her namely: Er, Onan and Shelah (vv.1-5). As noted earlier in this chapter, names of women are not always mentioned in the Bible. Shua’s daughter remains nameless in this narrative (Waltke & Fredricks, 2001: 509). It is regrettable that since the incident of Dinah, Jacob kept on losing control of his children as demonstrated in them marrying foreign wives (v.2) (Hamilton, 1995:433). Nothing is mentioned about the gender relations between Judah and his wife.

Their relationship to each other is conveyed by six verbs: three for him (he meets her, marries her, and his intercourse with her, v.2), and three for her (she conceives, bears a son and names the child, v.3). Judah and his wife relate sexually, but the text says nothing else about their relations (Hamilton, 1995:433; Waltke & Fredricks, 2001: 510).

The impression one gets seems to be that the couple exist to bear children without a more engaging complementary relationship with each other. This does not mean that he hated his wife.

³⁹ Judah demonstrates a flagrant behaviour by marrying a Canaanite woman and this contradicts the concern of Abraham that Isaac should not marry a Canaanite (Genesis 24:3). Later it was also Isaac’s concern that Jacob should not marry a Canaanite too (Genesis 28:1) (Hamilton, 1995:433).

Then Judah took a wife for his firstborn Er, called Tamar (v.6). Her origin and family name are not supplied, but the research could be safe to assume that she came from one of the Canaanite places. Her name only appears because she dominates the rest of the narrative. The passage reveals that God killed Er, because he was wicked in His sight (v.7). Though not stated, the sin of this man must have been serious and its silence indicates that it is not important for the movement of this narrative (Hamilton, 1995:434; Waltke & Fredricks, 2001: 510; Wenham, 2000:366). After his death, his young brother Onan was asked to continue with conjugal relations with Tamar to produce a progeny (v.8) as sanctioned by social norms. Each time Onan slept with Tamar, he would spill his semen on the ground and God was not happy with this resulting in him being killed⁴⁰ by God (v.10).

Though it was not God's ideal plan for marriage, the practice of marrying the wife of the deceased brother was acceptable in ancient Near East and Biblical laws (Deut.25:5-6; Ruth 4:5, 10, 17) (Waltke & Fredricks, 2001: 510). The practice paints a picture of the existing gender relations that men always made decisions on behalf of women. Women could not refute such decisions, even if they had other options. It also shows that women lived to serve the needs of men and not their own. A widow had no power, had to remain subjected to men, because being a widow meant she was vulnerable, and had limited choices. It was a society controlled by men and complementary relations as God designed in Genesis 1-2 were not prominent. The domination of man is further seen in Judah withholding Shelah from lying with Tamar (v.14), as approved by their social custom. According to the Jewish culture, Tamar knew she was denied what rightfully belonged to her. This means men could override and control what was culturally accepted for their own benefit. Therefore, after Judah's wife died, she (Tamar) devised a plan to conceive and also to secure her place in the family (v.15).

Her plan to have children with her father-in-law was a culturally acceptable⁴¹ ethical practice, since he refused to give her the last surviving son. She took off her mourning clothes and waylaid her father-in-law pretending to be prostitute. Her plan was successful and she conceived (vv.15-23). After three months, the news of her pregnancy reached Judah and Judah

⁴⁰ By spilling his semen on the ground Onan seems to be sabotaging blessing to the patriarchs, to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 17:6; 20: 28:3; 35:11; c.f. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 32:13). It was an opposition to the divine agenda and God snubbed him (Wenham, 2000: 367).

⁴¹ The Hittite (14th century-13th century B.C.) and Middle Assyrian laws legislated that if a married man died and his brother died, then "his father shall take her... There shall be no punishment" (Waltke & Fredrick, 2001:511-512).

immediately wanted her burned to death for prostitution (v.24). Judah acted like David in this case, who also ordered that a man should be killed (2 Samuel 12:5). Tamar does not defend herself immediately but waits for an opportune time to do so. She then produced evidence to identify the person who had sex with her (v.25) and the deceiver became the deceived (Hamilton, 1995:450; Waltke & Fredricks, 2001: 513; Wenham, 2000:369).

Judah recognised his seal, cord and staff. At once, he confessed that, “She is more righteous than I since I would not give her to my son Shelah” (v.26). We see an element of male dominance expressed in Judah’s immediate order to have Tamar burned to death for prostitution. He exercises extreme authority over her and if she was guilty of getting pregnant by another man, she was going to be killed. When the pendulum shifted and identified Judah as the one responsible for the pregnancy, nothing is mentioned about punishment. It looks like, certain laws are imposed or designed to deal with certain people (women) in society without affecting other people (men).

6.7.2.3. *Towards gender-based violence*

GBV is expressed in this narrative through deception when Judah denied Tamar access to Shelah. Second, Tamar was treated like a sexual object by Onan when he spilled his semen on the ground. The social cultural condition that the children would not be his led to this behaviour. The narrative opens a window for us to access the life of a widow in ancient Israel. The death of a husband had its own challenges for the woman for she remained isolated and subjected under male guardians that seemed not to care much about her.

In this narrative, we have the voice of a woman who carefully presents her case and wins. Judah immediately acknowledged his sin and credited Tamar as more righteous than him. Though she experienced GBV, Tamar emerges victorious and risks her life for family fidelity (Waltke & Fredricks, 2001:514). Often men refuse to own their sin, but Judah sets an example for all men and we would not be wrong to say that God forgave him. Judah also displayed a unique attitude to listen to a woman and let her speak, something we did not see in the raping of Dinah.

6.7.3. *The Levite and his concubine as a concept expressing gender-based violence: Analysis of Judges 19: 1-30 c.f., 21:8-24*

6.7.3.1 Context of Judges 19

The major context of this passage is the moral degeneration of Israel as could be readily learnt from the repeated statement, “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The statement is an inclusion and serves “...to unlocking the whole” (Evans, 2017: 196; Younger, Jr 2002:347). According to Lindsey (1985:374), “theologically the period of the Judges formed a transition between Yahweh’s mediatorial activity through Moses and Joshua and His mediatorial rule through the anointed kings of the monarchy.” The underpinning purpose of the book is God’s demonstration of divine judgement over Israel’s apostasy. Humanity (Israel in particular) has failed to reflect God’s likeness. By including this chapter, the writer is emphasising the social, moral and religious degradation, which has already occurred in the previous accounts (Evans, 2017: 196).

The events of chapter 19 ignite what happened later in chapters 20-21, which cover the battles and securing of the wives for the surviving Benjamite men (20:47). The characters in this narrative are nameless except for the priest who serves at Bethel (20:28). Block (1999) states that,

...namelessness of the characters reflects the dehumanization of the individual in a Canaanized world. To have a name is to be somebody, to have identity, and since names are given and used by others, to have a name is to have significance within the community (Block, 1999: 518).

This suggests that people in that Canaanised world had lost their values and human dignity such that each did as he saw fit. The weak were exposed and made vulnerable to serious danger. Those who were supposed to protect the vulnerable plundered them. There is a total collapse of what it means to be community and being human for each other in Judges. Nobody had the backbone to stand up for what is right and speak against the moral decay.

Block (1999) and other scholars rightly posit that, “Because Israel refuses to acknowledge Yahweh as King, the nation lacks a theological reason for sinking to the ethical level of the Canaanites at the personal, tribal, and national levels” (Block, 1999:518; Wilcock, 1992:166; Webb, 2015:227; Evans, 2017:196). Such is the broader context of the text and the events in the chapter clearly echo the moral collapse of Israel as a nation. The study is going to focus on

chapter 19 to discern the concept of GBV. Reference will be made to events in chapter 21:12-25 as well, because the events are direct repercussions of what happened in chapter 19. As the study commences the textual analysis, it is crucial to note the last chapters of Judges are very unpleasant to read. Webb (2015:228) advises that, "...but if we read carefully, we will find that even here God is present and therefore there is hope" in the total cover of moral, rational, relational and functional degeneration.

6.7.3.2. *Textual analysis*

Chapter 19:1 opens in a way that connects with the previous chapters (17:6; 18:1). It begins with a marriage breakdown between a concubine⁴² and a Levite. The phrase, "...took to himself..." (v.1), "...may not sit well with modern sensibilities about male-female relationships, but it was normal with language for betrothal in Old Testament times" (Genesis 24:3; cf. Genesis 28:1; Leviticus 21:13; Jeremiah 16:2) (Webb, 2015: 228). The research would argue that God's ideal plan for marriage as in Genesis 1-2, has been disregarded in this case resulting in conflicting gender relations between men and women. The concubine had proven to be unfaithful and later went back to her parents (vv.1-2). According to Evans (2017:198), she might have decided to leave the Levite due to mistreatment by the Levite as suggested by the treatment she received later from him. This is an argument from silence and the study cannot seek to pursue it. Though the narrator does not disclose the nature of her unfaithfulness, social norms would not allow a concubine to prostitute herself, but she would go back to live with her parents. Which means her life remained under the control of either her husband or her parents (male person). Whether this Levite regarded this woman, more as his property is something that remains to be seen as the analysis unfolds. One is left wondering why the Levite took her as his concubine, instead of as a wife (Webb, 2015:228, Evans, 2017:197). This is suggestive of an imbalance in gender relations between men and women resulting in one gender living under the domination of the other.

⁴² A concubine was regarded a secondary or inferior wife. In Judges and other passages outside Judges where this type of marriage occurs, they were bound to problems. As early as Gen 22:24 we read about Rebekah's father Bethuel not having one wife but also a concubine. Later Abraham to Hagar Genesis 16:1. The evil continued in the next generation with Esau multiplying wives as pleasure and Jacob taking the first two women as wives and the other two as concubines. The practice continued in Israel (Eliphaz Gen. 36:12; Gideon Judges 8:31; Saul 2 Sam 3:7; Solomon 1 Kings 11:3; Rehoboam 2 Chronicles 11:21; Abijah 1 Chronicles 13:21). They took concubine to bear children yes but also for sexual gratification. Unfaithfulness by a concubine was regarded a crime and punishable Leviticus 19:20 (Unger, 1957: 217).

Four months after her departure, the Levite decided to journey to her parents' home and speak gently to her father to win her back and reconcile (vv.3-9). One would credit that the Levite had some redeeming features, because of his determination to follow his concubine. Four months may have given him enough time to reflect on what had happened before making this decision. The concubine received him and brought him into her father's house (v.3). The impression here is that she was ready for reconciliation after four months of separation. There is hope. However, the pattern of Judges is always characterised with deterioration and the entailing scenes lead us that way (Webb, 2015:229).

The father-in-law entertains the Levite for longer than the Levite intended to stay, as indicated by his repeated urge to want to leave (vv.4-9). It could be that the father-in-law is happy about the possibility of reunion, since the separation may have been a disgrace to the family (Younger Jr, 2002:352). For the four nights, the Levite received great hospitality, the narrator does not indicate to the reader if the concubine and the Levite had conversation (Evans, 2017: 198; Webb, 2015:230). This poses as a window for us to ascertain the position of women in ancient Israel. Women maintained a subordinate position and role, while men enjoyed full access to social life. We find a similar issue in Genesis 18 when Abraham conversed with the visitors while Sarah was in the tent, though she spoke once because she was set up to speak. The hospitality offered here exceeds that of Abraham in Genesis 18 (Block, 1999:526). The procrastinated departure serves as the bedrock for the mishap that took place in Gibeah (Younger Jr, 2002:354; Wilcock, 1992:168). This section leaves the reader, "...with a strong sense of the concubine's vulnerability and a lot of questions about the Levites moral character" (Webb, 2015:230).

After the late departure of the Levite, the concubine and the servants lodged in Gibeah for the night. Thus, Judges 19:10-30 narrates the unpleasant event that ended in the demise of the concubine. At first, they did not receive a pleasant welcome in Gibeah from Benjamin, for they sat in the open square (v.15). This probably agrees with the theme that they sinned against God and did what was good in their own eyes. Hospitality and good manners to strangers were trampled upon. This painted an unfriendly atmosphere for their night. It took an old man, a temporary resident of Gibeah, to offer decent hospitality to the Levite and his concubine (15-21) (Webb, 2105: 230).

As they began to fellowship, a mob of men knocked on the door demanding to sexually abuse the male visitors (v.22). This is reminiscent of an event that took place in Genesis 19 in Sodom (Block, 1999:532; Longman, 2009: 445). They were about a homosexual rape (Webb, 2015:231; Evans, 2017:201-202). The old man is shocked, but his response⁴³ and decision are even more shocking. The old man offers them his daughter, a virgin, and the Levite's concubine to be violated, while all the men stayed in the house for their safety (vv.23-24). The writer uses the word 'violate' for rape. Literally, it means, "torment them" and "do to them what is good in your eyes" (Schwab, 2011:202). The language recalls Genesis 34:2 where Shechem 'seized' Dinah forcibly and raped her. What seemed to be a proper understanding of hospitality in Israel is twisted in an instant that leaves two women vulnerable. The old man had become as vile as the men knocking at the door. The old man could be trying to redirect the vile men's sexual urge to the right gender, but in a manner that is abhorrent. He did what was right in his own eyes. Here is a complete degeneration of the likeness of God's humanity.

The Levite seized his concubine and threw her out to be gang-raped all night (v.25) and the old man's daughter might have been saved at the last minute. When the reprobates had violated the concubine, she staggered to the door and collapsed (v.26) which signifies that she had no strength to open the door and cry out (Webb, 2015: 231). When the Levite found her at the door, he told her to get up so that they could continue with their journey (v.27). When there was no response, he put her on the donkey and they journeyed home. Upon arrival, he dismembered her body into 12 pieces. Extremely gruesome, horrific and new in all Israel (vv.29-30). The true character of the Levite had remained hidden, but in the end, his real identity is laid bare. The unpleasant events of this narrative are later recalled by the prophet Hosea, where he states it as an example of the great corruption of human society (Hosea 9:9; 10:9) (Cundall, 1968: 198).

The events of chapter 19 birthed the further abuse of women in chapter 21:8-23. The moral degeneracy of Israel had taken a serious downward spiral. The people of Jabesh-Gilead killed

⁴³ The following responses by men in the Bible fail to protect and respect the dignity of women. First, Genesis 12: 10-20 the matriarch Sarah is left exposed and vulnerable to abuse when Abram sought to use her for his protection. Second, Genesis 19:6-9 Lot had offered his virgin daughters to be molested by the wicked men of the city and God rescued the daughters (and Lot) by striking the homosexuals with blindness. Third, Genesis 20:1-7 Abraham later repeated the same tactic where Sarah is left vulnerable to Abimelech. Abraham's tactic is later repeated by his son Isaac in Genesis 26:6-11. God intervened again to uphold and protect the dignity of these women in the occasions. In all the incidences, God spoke, miraculously intervened and cared about the dignity of women when all those men failed to protect the women.

all men, children and women that had slept with men, leaving 400 virgins (vv.8-15). The 400 virgins were to be forcibly given to the 600 Benjamite men, that had escaped the attack in Gibeah. It means as women, they were going to be married against their will and taken as prisoners. They were treated as subhuman and chattels.

The position of women in relation to men comes to the fore. The moral decay does not end here. The Benjamite men still outnumbered the women. A plan was devised to forcibly grab women from Shiloh to supply wives for the remaining 200 Benjamite men (vv.16-23). Webb (2015:239-240) rightly states, “What started with the rape of the concubine in Gibeah has led to the abduction (and effective rape) of four hundred virgins in Jabesh-Gilead and ended with the seizure/abduction of two hundred more in Shiloh.”

6.7.3.3. Towards gender-based violence

First, an analysis of this passage in relation to the concept of GBV reveals a number of things. The domination and abuse of women by men is a further reflection of humanity’s inability to relate vertically to God and horizontally to man.

Second, earlier in this section the study wondered if the Levite was genuinely concerned about this woman or if he simply treated her as his property (Webb, 2015:232). Now it is clear that he did not care for her but cared only about his own flesh. This is demonstrated when he threw her out to be sexually tortured the entire night while he enjoyed the protection of his host. Third, he did not offer protection for his wife as a real man would do but left her vulnerable to the demise of her life. Fourth, his command to have her get up in the morning displays to the reader an uncaring and callous attitude. Fifth, by dismembering her body into 12 pieces it shows his violation of her personhood (Webb, 2015:232). Sixth, we do not know what happened to the 12 pieces but the study could be safe to conjure that she was denied a decent burial. Webb notes that, “it is the most appalling abuse of a woman in Biblical literature and perhaps in any literature” (Webb, 2015:232). Evans (2017) also affirms that this points to how badly women were treated at that time and that Israel had degenerated into a moral decline is proven by the abhorrent treatment of this woman.

The woman is the victim throughout the narrative and not an equal of the husband (Evans, 2017:203). From a socio-cultural milieu perspective, Cundall argues that,

Womanhood was but lightly esteemed in the ancient world; indeed it is largely due to the precepts of the Jewish faith, and particularly the enlightenment which has come through the Christian faith, that women enjoy their present position (Cundall, 1968: 197).

The research concurs with Cundall, but the church remains fingered in some abuse women face today. Lawrence (2013:113) rightly states, “The church is church only when it is there for others.” This is a demonstration of God’s likeness in showing compassion, love and servanthood for the marginalised of society. Just like in the Judges 19 narrative, society is lamenting, “...for a church that is failing to live for others, failing to be the true community of God on earth, failing to live out her calling in world” (Lawrence, 2013:114). Tribble, further succinctly depicts the GBV concept of this narrative in the following words,

The betrayal, rape, torture, murder, and dismemberment of an unnamed woman is a story we want to forget but are commanded to speak. It depicts the horrors of male power, brutality, and triumphalism; of female helplessness, abuse, and annihilation. To hear this story is to inhabit a world of unrelenting terror that refuses to let us pass by on the other side (Tribble, 1984:65).

One wonders why such acts of abuse against women were recorded in the Bible. Alsup responds to this by saying, “God caused such violence to be recorded in Scripture, not to glorify the acts but to show the stark condition of mankind apart from God” (Alsup, 2017: 63).

6.7.4. Solomon’s polygamous marriage and concubines as a concept expressing gender-based violence: Analysis of 1 Kings 11:1-8.

6.7.4.1. Context of 1 Kings 11:1-8

1 Kings and 2 Kings were both written to record the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The thrust of the historical record is on the royal actions and the acts of certain prophets during that period. Theologically, the books provide timeless spiritual lessons from history (Constable, 1985: 484). More important is that, “God intended that the nation Israel demonstrate to all people how glorious it can be to live under the government of God” (Ex. 19:4-6) (Constable 1985: 485). Solomon takes over as king and is blessed by God. The blessing of God on him could be seen in all that he achieved after taking over from his father David. He managed to engage in big building programmes, rearmament and government (Wiseman, 1993:134). Chapter 10:14-29 ends with a remarkable report chronicling Solomon’s relationship with the Queen of Sheba, characterised by the exchange of gifts. This section gives a final assessment of Solomon; marking his decline and that of the kingdom of Israel. He has failed to remain faithful and obedient to the covenant and God brought judgement upon the nation (House, 1995:

165). The decline of his kingdom is attributed to the women he married. Most people that read this section settle on how women misled Solomon. The quest of the study is to analyse how he used women to secure his kingdom apart from the idolatry that plagued him and the nation later because of these marriages.

6.7.4.2. Textual analysis

Chapter 11:1-2 opens by alerting the reader that, “Now King Solomon loved many foreign women...”, but also citing the geographical locations of the origins of his women and God’s prohibition from marrying them. By doing so, Solomon violated what the Lord had commanded him not to do – marrying foreign women (Deut. 7:3-4; Exod. 34:15-16). Solomon also displayed disregard for the command given to kings by God (Deut. 17:17) (House, 1999: 167). The unions with wives and concubines that he amassed for himself were politically motivated. He needed to foster peaceful relations with many nations (House, 1995: 167; Bright, 1984:212).

A brief backdrop on marriage alliances⁴⁴ reveals that marriage was used as “tool of diplomacy throughout the ancient Near East” (Walton, Matthews & Chavalas, 2000:364). David concluded a series of marriages that strengthened his political and economic position. His marriage to Michal, Saul’s daughter granted him connection to the royal family. Later he got married to Abigail giving him access to the areas around Hebron. Therefore, any king that engaged in this, aimed at securing friendly voices for his benefit and the Kingdom (Walton, Matthews & Chavalas, 2000:364). It is difficult to assess if kings with many wives had absolute fulfilling gender relations as husband and wives.

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines (v.3). The impression could be that they were too many to count (DeVries, 1985:143). The women were not simply bundled together, but they were classified as higher rank and lower rank; that is, wives and concubines respectively. It was the husband’s role to do this classification and brand them as such and they had to comply. Even children born from these two classes of women were treated differently. Children from the royal or higher ranked wives had access to the throne, unlike those from the lower rank. Apart from consolidating and maintaining political alliances, polygamy was culturally acceptable. Therefore, socially and culturally Solomon did not engage in something strange to

⁴⁴ In 18th century B.C. Zimri, King of Mari used his daughters to cement alliances and establish himself with his neighbouring kingdoms. Pharaoh Thutmose IV (1425-1412 B.C.) arranged a marriage with a daughter of the Mitannian King to demonstrate good relations and end a series of wars with that middle Euphrates kingdom (Walton, Matthews & Chavalas, 2000:364).

his society. The Bible is written in the context of human culture and it is important for the interpreter to discern God's will from human culture (Phiri, 2006:429-430). Socio-cultural prestige depended on having many sons, as opposed to daughters. Women were also used as a symbol of power and prestige of the husband (Walton, Matthews & Chavalas, 2000:365) and this contributed as an incentive for men to marry more than one wife. To rule out the aspect of love for these women by the husband may seem to conflict with their socio-cultural settings. Solomon loved them and clung to them regardless of the Lord's warning not to amass wives for himself (11:2). However, the problem was that the husband was not able to love them equally and this gave way to domestic squabbles (Gen.16 and 29-30) (DeVries, 1985: 143). The last section vv.4-8 reveals the impact of Solomon's harem on his spiritual life. Solomon was not faithful to the worship of Yahweh and ended up worshipping the gods of his wives. The irony is that he worshipped the gods of the people he had conquered and whom he already controlled (House, 1995:167; Wiseman, 1993:135).

6.7.4.3. Towards gender-based violence

As mentioned earlier, womanhood in the ancient near east (ANE) was treated with low esteem. Though it was a socially acceptable practice for kings to enlarge their harem for political and economic reasons; in doing so, they trampled on the dignity and humanity of women. Abuse is demonstrated in using women as guarantee that peace existed between the males (or nations) that exchanged daughters. Women were socially powerless to object to such oppressive practices because the existing society sanctioned them. Being surrounded by 700 wives and 300 concubines meant that Solomon never knew these women personally let alone could love them equally. These women related to him by association because they belonged to him, not through personal and meaningful relationship. His was a gathering of women propelled by self-interest though he was able to provide for them because he was rich. Williams (2007:35) argues that, "God's intended society is one in which women are treated with respect as heirs together with the men". Respect for women as heirs is ignored and Solomon seemed to focus on what he could achieve through them. He deviated from God's command about amassing many wives and judgement befell him. This shows that the Lord was not happy with the practice. His ideal plan has been and continues to be one man one wife. The practices of getting more than what God decreed, fail to reflect in humanity the likeness of God because it is a disobedience of what he decreed. Alsup (2017:62) argues that, "The dignity of being an image bearer is found in

treating other image bearer with dignity and loving your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:39).”

6.8. The social position of woman in the New Testament

The social world of the NT serves as context in which the NT gospels and letters were written. The notion of gender relations is a current issue and feminists are raising their voices against the abuse of women in the church and society (Botha, 2000:2). Some biblical passages have been quoted as proof that the church is subjecting women to GBV in various forms. Any serious study of the biblical passages related to study on concepts pointing to GBV should not neglect an understanding of such a social-cultural world. Du Toit succinctly supported by others notes,

In our attempt to understand these texts, one of our most important efforts must be to expand our referential framework regarding the world of the New Testament in such a way that it will approximate as closely as possible to the milieu in which an informed contemporary hearer/reader would have received those documents (Du Toit, 1998: 5; Goede & Van Rensburg, 2009).

Expanding our knowledge on the background of the biblical passage helps the reader to avoid subjective interpretations of the text (Botha, 2000:1; De Silva, 2000⁴⁵:18).

Greeks and Roman households were characterised by strong patriarchal family systems such that the head of the family was called *paterfamilias* (Du Toit, 1998: 151; Jeffers, 1999: 238-239; Stambaugh & Balch, 1986: 123). Therefore, the *paterfamilias* had authority and control over those that lived in his home. In the same vein, De Silva (2000:18) concurs that the Jew and Gentile world had their households arranged hierarchically with the husband as the master, husband and father over the entire household. This means the position of women remained subservient to that of the husband.

Upon marriage and establishing their own homes, young men perpetuated the same type of leadership (*paterfamilias*) in the home. Women had to remain under the guidance and teaching of men. If women were not married, they remained under the authority of their fathers or other male blood relatives to whom they were accountable. Marriage was arranged between the

⁴⁵ The readers of the New Testament shared certain values, such as honour, and codes of forming and maintaining relationships, such as patronage and kinship, and ways of ordering the world, expressed frequently in term of purity. If we are to hear the texts correctly, we must apply ourselves to understand the culture out of which and to which they spoke” (De Silva, 2008:18)

fathers of the bride and son-in-law without the involvement of women. This shows that men had absolute authority over women even in decision-making (Du Toit, 1998:151). If a woman failed to satisfy her husband, she risked being returned to her parents or transferred to another family (Du Toit, 1998:151-152; Jeffers, 1999: 238). In most Roman homes, the position of the wife was to receive visitors, take part in family discussions and appear in public (Du Toit, 1998:152). In other words, in Roman society women received better treatment in the home with some kind of freedom; though not completely independent of men. In case of barrenness in a Roman marriage a man would be chastised for divorcing his barren wife because marital loyalty preceded having children. On the contrary, Jews sanctioned that a barren wife should be divorced (Jeffers, 1999:241).

As time progressed, individualism crept into society and women became more independent of men. There was a backlash demonstrated by,

...a growing liberation of women and steady deterioration of family life that characterise the New Testament context. The subservience mentioned in the New Testament texts, this picture suggests, is basically constructive (Botha, 2000:3).

This means the teachings found in the NT texts on submission seek to restore the lost family dignity or improve on gender relations. This is revealed by likening marriage to a relationship such as the one Christ has with the Church as in Ephesians 5:22-33 (Du Toit, 1998:3).

On the other hand, the idea of treating women as inferior to men has a long history. De Silva (2000:180) states, “Aristotle hold this to be inherent in the nature of the two genders, just as it is inherent in human nature to mate in the first place. The male is natural ruler and the female is the subject” (De Silva, 2000:180). It should be underscored that there was acknowledgement of male and female being equal in nature but they would differ functionally. This means the role of the man remained above that of the woman. Reference is also made to Plutarch who demonstrated that male authority remained unchanged in the following quote,

When two notes are struck together, the melody belongs to the lower note, Similarly, every action performed in a good household is done by the agreement of the partners but displays the leadership and decision of the husband (De Silva 2000:181).

This means a woman could not take credit for something done in the home no matter how brilliant her ideas may be, the idea remains attributed to the husband. In addition, Josephus the famous Jewish historian wrote about a man getting a woman for marriage,

It (the Law⁴⁶) commands us also, when we marry, not to have regard to portion, nor to take a woman by violence, nor to persuade her deceitfully and knavishly; but demand her in marriage of him who hath power to dispose of her, and is fit to her give her away by the nearness of his kindred” (Whiston 1960, *Josephus Against Apion*: 25.200).

Couched in the mind of this Jewish historian is respect for woman though the authority to dispose of her remains in the power of a male head. This, further paints a picture on gender relations among the Jews in the first century. The following line of thinking from Josephus further paints a picture on gender relations,

...for saith the Scripture, a woman is inferior to her husband in all things. Let her, therefore, be obedient to him; not so, that he should abuse her, but that she may acknowledge her duty to her husband; for God hath given the authority to the husband (Whiston 1960, *Josephus Against Apion* 2.201).

It is clearly articulated that a woman is inferior to man and exists to be obedient in serving the husband. Actually, leading and dominating a woman is regarded as a God-sanctioned role for men. Still we note that as man leads, he is not supposed to harm the woman and the implication is that of love and protection.

In the same vein Philo⁴⁷ encourages women to be submissive, but not as under compulsion to promote obedience (Yonge 1993, *Philo Hypth.73.LCL*). An analysis of both Josephus and Philo shows that submission of women was not meant to degrade them, but was supposed to be voluntary. However, the underpinning idea that women could not live independent of men and must be instructed by men, cannot be glossed over. It remains unambiguous. In classical Greece, the husband continued to maintain the position of senior partner and was bestowed with the responsibility to train women (De Silva, 2000:184). In their subordination women had to maintain silence and this was considered as a woman’s glory, as confirmed in Sirach 26:14. When the NT passage refers to the silence of women, the reader (De Silva, 2000:184) must determine the historical context. Such silence in marriage was demonstrated by overlooking the extramarital affairs of the husband, but a woman was badly chastised for engaging in extramarital affairs (Jeffers, 1999:242-243).

⁴⁶ Bracketed addition mine

⁴⁷ “He also gives many injunctions, such as these that wives shall serve their husbands, not indeed in any particular so as to be insulted by them, but in the spirit of reasonable obedience in all things...” (Yonge 1993, *Hypothetica*, 73). In as much as wives are called to serve their husbands there is a call to obey in a reasonable manner. This suggest that that male dominance over women was inexistence.

The gender relations between men and women had an unlevelled playing field in which women remained accountable to men. In one of his confessions⁴⁸, Augustine (one of the church fathers) narrated how his mother suffered violence at the hand of his father. This shows that, “there was an ever-present substratum of violence or at least the threat of violence in gender relations” (Botha, 2000:10).

Against this brief background, we get an idea about gender relations in a world that influenced the writing of the NT. It is not far-fetched to conclude that gender relations in the first century remained unfavourable for women. Men always had authority over women, even in situations where it appeared that women were treated fairly. Thus, the threat of GBV in its various forms undergirded gender relations. This leads us to analyse selected biblical passages from the NT.

6.9. An analysis of New Testament passages on concepts related to the notion of gender-based violence

The following NT passages will be analysed using the same approach utilised for the OT texts.

6.9.1. *The woman caught in adultery as a concept expressing gender-based violence: Analysis of John 7:53-8:11*

6.9.1.1. Context of John 7:53-8:11

This text is treated as an excursus or pericope by many biblical commentators (Milne, 1993: 123; Hendriksen, 1954; Tasker, 1983; Morris, 1971; Ridderbos, 1997; Bruce, 1983).

The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have *it*⁴⁹... It is in point of fact absent from virtually all early Greek manuscripts, and from very many in other language groups. None of the early Church fathers who wrote commentaries on

⁴⁸ She knew well enough that an angry husband should not be contradicted either in deed or even in word. But when he had calmed down and seemed receptive, she used to give him an explanation for her conduct, if by chance he had been offended (or too slight an occasion). Many women, whose husbands were actually more mild-mannered than hers, bore the scars of beatings on their disfigured faces. But when, in conversations with friends, they criticised the behaviour of their husbands, my mother gave them a serious warning though phrased as a humorous remark about their gossiping, advising them that from the moment they had first heard the so-called matrimonial tablets read aloud, they should think of those tablets as the instruments by which they had been turned into slaves, and that, mindful of their Status, they should not be insolent toward their masters. (Augustine *Con/coffessionem* 9.9 in Botha 2000:10).

⁴⁹ Addition of ‘it’ mine, not found in the original quote. Morris notes that the story is ancient and Papias referred to it and it is mentioned in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. It is not mentioned in early days. The reason could be that punishment for sexual sin was very severe among Christians and the story of this woman could have been misunderstood as allowing unchastity. Later when discipline on such matter was relaxed, the story was circulated with stern sanctioning from officials (Morris, 1971:883-884).

John's gospel include it...One or two manuscripts include it in Luke after 21:38 (Milne, 1993: 123-124).

Being an excursus means one could read John 7:52 to 8:12 without 7:53-8:11 and still not miss the natural flow of the passage. Leon Morris and FF Bruce relegate their commentary on this text to the appendix of their commentaries (Morris, 1971: 882-891; Bruce, 1983:413-418). The exact context of these verses remains problematic to ascertain. Does this then mean that this portion is not part of scripture? Like other commentators, the study asserts the opinion that it is difficult to locate where this part of scripture belongs and the story happened during Jesus's earthly ministry.

One wonders why it was included in the fourth gospel and not the other gospels? Ridderbos (1997: 286), notes that some commentators argue that John 7 and 8 have strong themes on "judging" and "witness" as seen in 7:49 ff.; 8:114ff.; and Jesus's declaration in 8:15 could have led to its inclusion in John. Ridderbos acknowledges this as important, but maintains that more questions remain unanswered regarding this issue. He adds,

But still we have here such a precious and -in the judgement of many - historically authentic tradition from the life of Jesus that not only does its place in the Fourth Gospel have to be maintained but also exposition of it rightly remains in most commentaries of John (Ridderbos, 1997: 287).

Hendriksen also states, "...it is our conviction that these same facts indicate that no attempt should be made to remove this portion from Holy Writ" (Hendriksen, 1954: 33). Morris (1971:883) concisely argues that, "Throughout the history of the church it has been held that, whoever wrote, this little story is authentic. It rings true. It speaks to our condition."

The research is going to analyse this account and seek to extract concepts of GBV contained in this story. Like other passages, this passage acts as window to the gender relations that existed between men and women in the time of Christ.

6.9.1.2. Textual analysis

The manner in which the story starts in 7:53, reveals that it was part of another story, which is unknown to us (Ridderbos, 1997: 287). Everybody went to their homes but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. This appears to have been the habit of Jesus at the end of his ministry and teaching during the day in Jerusalem (Luke 21:37; 22:39). John does not mention the Mount of Olives but the other three gospels make mention of it (Morris, 1971:884).

Jesus appeared again early in the morning in the temple and people gathered around to listen to his teaching (v.2). Those who were his enemies knew where to find him because Jesus had developed a pattern of meeting with people in the temple. The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees hauled in a woman caught in adultery and made her stand in front of Jesus. Ridderbos notes that the combination of these two groups (teachers of the Law and Pharisees) is not usual but it reveals to us in this incident their common mentality regarding the woman they brought to Jesus (Ridderbos, 1997: 287; Milne, 1993:124). The woman had been caught in the act of adultery and stood accused by her accusers. The accusers solicit Jesus's opinion on the matter for she has, "...been caught in the act of adultery" (v.4). The accusers want to make sure that Jesus understands that she has been caught in the very sin. It seems these men simply entered the temple and caused an interruption of Jesus's teaching. The use of the term "adultery"⁵⁰ suggests that the woman was married to somebody. The group of men dragging this woman to Jesus may have had affinities with the Sanhedrin and they probably intended to take her to this highest court of the Jews for a decision (Hendriksen, 1954: 36). However, as one reads the story further it is clear that these men were simply using this woman as bait to trap Jesus (Milne, 1993:124). The sin of the accused occurred in the prevailing circumstances of the Feast of Tabernacles⁵¹.

In verse 5, the accusers state that, "...the Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women." It appears these men are twisting the Law of Moses to their own advantage to trap Jesus and jeopardise the life of the woman. In Deuteronomy 22:22 and Leviticus 20:10 there is mention of death by stoning for the man and woman caught in adultery. Concisely, both were victims not just the woman. Therefore, we seem to have a slight manipulation of the law by the Scribes and Pharisees. It could be that the law had changed⁵² at the time of these accusations (Morris, 1971:886; Milne, 1993:124) since the Pharisees were notorious for additions to the law. However, they are referencing their understanding of such a punishment to Moses; they are misrepresenting and misunderstanding Moses. The point remains clear that they would like to

⁵⁰ Some scholars object that she was a married woman because the Old Testament states that a betrothed woman was supposed to be stoned to death if she was guilty of adultery (Deut. 22:23f.) and for a married woman that commits adultery, the method of death was not specified.

⁵¹ "The feast of Tabernacles, as it was actually celebrated, was a gay festival. It is not surprising that immoral acts occurred when so many people were crowded together amid such hilarity and merry-making" (Hendriksen, 1954:36).

⁵² Regarding adultery exceptions were, "made among the nations in favour of men. He might have more wives that one or have intercourse with the person not espoused or married to him without being considered an adulterer" (Unger, 1957:29). Whether this could have been influencing the accusers thinking or it is purely their own circumstantial plot it is not clear.

trap Jesus as indicated in the passage, “This they said to test him, which they might have some charge against to bring against him” (v.6).

Jesus faced a dilemma in three ways. First, if he had said ‘stone her’ that was going to erode his ministry of the mercy and compassion he had laboured to establish. Second, stoning the woman to death was going to put him into serious conflict with Rome. Rome alone reserved the right to execute someone. Third, if he did nothing, he would be guilty of disobeying the Law of Moses, lose the confidence of the crowd and be liable to persecution by the Sanhedrin (Bruce, 1983: 415; Tasker, 1983:111; Milne, 1993:124). Therefore, his response is critical, he did not speak but simply bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger (v.6). As for what he wrote on the ground with his finger, the text is silent and the study cannot venture to speculate on what he wrote. They continued to ask Jesus what he was going to do about the woman. He straightened up and said, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” (v.7). Jesus is not modifying the Mosaic Law but simply rules that the guiltless people must be the first to stone her (Bruce, 1983:416). In other words, Jesus is almost saying, let anyone who has never had such a desire as this be the first one to stone her. The answer is no-one. This brings to mind Matthew 5:18, which alludes to a lustful look, which constitutes adultery of which none of the people standing there were innocent. Bruce (1993:416) advances that, “He appealed to the consciences of the witnesses, he takes the question off the judicial plane altogether and raises it to the moral level where it properly belongs, in accordance with his regular attitude and teaching.”

The next thing is that they left one by one with the elders going first (v.9). When Jesus straightened up it was just him and the woman left. Jesus addressed her in a similar manner as he addressed other women in John 2:4; 4:21; 19:26; 20:13. “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more” (v.11), Jesus does not deny the accusers’ allegation against the woman. He acknowledges her sin as a fact. Bruce (1983:417) states, “He discharges the sinner without condoning her.” The woman no longer had to fear anything from those who threatened her life. She is a contrite sinner (Luke 7:36-50; Romans 8:33, 34) (Ridderbos, 1997: 290). The accusers were disarmed and the woman went home forgiven. What concepts are there in this passage that point to GBV?

6.9.1.3. Towards gender-based violence

The passage reveals to us something about the gender relations that prevailed during Jesus's time in Jewish society. Analysis of the text above leads the study to extract concepts that point to GBV. Why did the Scribes and the Pharisees act in the way they did?

Primarily, the social and cultural position of women in that society has always been subservient, such that men enjoyed the upper hand in society. This is demonstrated in the fact that the woman alone was dragged to Jesus without the man she committed the adultery with. If the accusers claimed that she was caught in the very act of adultery, it is certain that they identified the man too. It is possible that they let him off the hook. In the same vein Milne (1993:125) notes, "The male adulterer's absence from the story is critical. It makes clear that this is also a story of male chauvinism, which was reflected widely in practice in the application of the law." Second, if truly Jesus had sanctioned that she should be stoned to death, the man was going to stay alive and unchallenged. Third, the accusers did not care about the dignity and personhood of this woman but were concerned about using her as bait against Jesus. They even manipulated the law against her though they were targeting Jesus to achieve what they wanted. Fourth, they did not care about the humiliation and embarrassment she went through as a human being. Fifth, the woman remained nameless and silent (until Jesus spoke with her) in the entire narrative and we are left wondering about the intense stress and fear she was subjected to in the story. Sixth, the accusers paraded this woman as the worst sinner until they faced their own uncleanness when Jesus pointed out their sin (Tasker, 1983:113).

Jesus's intervention served as a measure that refused to see the woman getting disadvantaged as in the case of divorce (Matthew 19:1-10) (Milne, 1993:125). In his teaching on divorce in the Matthew text above, it was allowed because of their sinfulness. His underpinning point was that divorce is not God's wish. It is almost as if Jesus is saying in this John story; you cannot continue to disadvantage women. By speaking with her and defending her as he did, Jesus proved that she is fully human and deserved protection and dignity as a member of society. Jesus set straight the skewed and oppressive gender relations in that society that wanted to disadvantage women. Lastly, by defending her, Jesus is not saying sin is not serious (Tasker, 1983: 112; Milne, 1993:126; Ridderbos, 1997: 291). "Jesus upheld the law here; even to the point of setting in motion the application of its judgements...he clearly sees her repentance as the natural outcome of it" (Milne, 1993:126; Morris, 1971: 891; Ridderbos, 1997:291). Jesus

is demonstrating to them what it means to reflect the image of God in relation to God and others. He is being truly human for others in a society that bears a skewed image of God, such that their attitude to each other failed to reflect relations that God desires. Thus, through this Jesus teaches society and the rest of humanity what it means to represent God's glory in gender relations.

6.9.2. Wife submission as a concept understood to cause gender-based violence: Analysis of 1 Peter 3:1-7

Among other texts, the interpretation of this text has sparked controversy among feminists. Sproul (2011:90) argues that,

It is argued that the traditional interpretation of the text has been controlled by a seemingly incurable chauvinism that has held captive the minds of the scholars. The feminist movement heralds the liberation of these texts from the tyranny of such male dominance.

Such interpreters, though some take the Bible as their authority, sometime see it as an oppressive tool against women. Hence, they advocate for reading texts like 1 Peter 3:1-7, with a goal to liberate the text from male chauvinism. On the other hand, others claim that what Peter said remains confined to that cultural context and cannot be applicable to our time. Hence, wife submission becomes irrelevant for my analysis (Sproul, 2011: 90).

This is not a section to settle debates on feministic interpretations, but their approach to the text certainly has live implications on how people behave in society. Therefore, the study seeks to understand this text in its context and discern its implications for us today. To this, Boring notes (1999:124), "The exegetical task is neither to defend the cultural presuppositions of the author and his readers, nor to impose ours upon them, but to understand the text in its own context."

6.9.2.1. Context of 1 Peter 3:1-7

In seeking to establish the context of the passage, the study will be indebted to Doriani (2014:109) who writes that, "to get a firm grasp of this passage's occasion - its historical, cultural, literary, and canonical contexts - is vital." The three aspects Doriani mentions are key to understand and find the meaning of this text. First, historically, he says Peter's message applies to all Christian women and some are married to unbelieving men. He instructs them to

be submissive to their husbands for the purpose of winning them to Christ (1 Peter 3:1) (Doriani, 2014: 190).

Second, culturally Peter leans on the norms cherished by Greco-Roman people as he gives this counsel to women particularly in what he says in verses 3-4. Women had to be meek and quiet. Peter's strategy is that where the biblical and Greco-Roman norms mutually coincide, he urges Christian women to behave in ways that honour God and win the favour of their husbands. Women that embraced the Christian faith could not submit themselves to pagan worship. Peter writes to mitigate against the likely marital tension caused by their faith in Christ (Doriani, 2014: 109). "In this case, the patriarchal family is in view...The typical and preferred pattern from the Roman point of view, however, was the patriarchal household ruled by the *paterfamilias* (head of the family)" (Boring, 1999: 124; Jeffers, 1999:238-241; De Silva, 2000: 180-188; Botha, 2000; Du Toit, 1998).

Third, literally Peter taught Christians to be faithful followers of Christ in a pagan world. He called such followers "strangers in the world" (1 Peter 1:1), and urged them to abstain from sinful desires for the sake of representing Christ in every aspect of life (Doriani, 2014: 109-110). Peter knew that Christian faith was likely to cause conflicts as mentioned earlier because of the hierarchical structures of the Greco-Roman world. Thus, in the same vein he instructs wives to be submissive to their husbands. That is, if they (wives and slaves) could not speak, their Christian behaviour had to speak for them and win the favour of the authority. In this manner, the study concurs with Doriani who posits that, "The message of Scripture always transcends its occasion...the text of *1 Peter 3:1-7*⁵³ has no hint that it is temporary counsel" (Doriani, 2014:109).

Therefore, Peter instructs Christians that they are called to holiness (1:13-19), speaks about submission to authority (2:13-25), submission of wives to husbands (3:1-7). The connecting thread in all these sections is behaviour that honours Christ in a hierarchical society. In view of this linking thread, "Peter upholds societal norms for the purpose of the churches witness in society...husbands were always in position of authority in that culture⁵⁴" (Keener, 1993: 715).

⁵³ Italicised addition mine and is not found in the original quotation

⁵⁴ Greco-Roman culture

6.9.2.2. Textual analysis

In verse one, the text begins with the words, “Likewise, wives be subject to your own husbands...” (v.1). The adverb, “Likewise” indicates that Peter is continuing with the same idea on Christian submission to authority from 2:13-25. Now he is instructing the reader that in a similar manner, wives must submit to their own husbands. Peter is not saying that women must be submissive, “...like slaves but the wives and husbands, like slaves and Christians in general, should fit into the given structures of society” (Boring, 1999:124; Grudem, 1988:142-143). The text no doubt suggests a patriarchal family in the background in which gender relations were not equal. Households consisted of the *paterfamilias* and the wife remained subordinate. Romans were said to be nervous when it comes to the freedom of a woman (Boring, 1999:124).

In other cases, some women were married to pagan husbands. Peter supplies the reader with the reason for a wife’s submission to a husband. The reason is that a submissive wife might bear witness to the truth of the gospel. They were expected to respect the authority of the husband in a patriarchal household (Sproul, 2011:93; Boring, 1999:125). Women⁵⁵ found more freedom and great admonition within the church than anywhere else in society such that some women despised their husband’s authority. This embarrassed both the men and the church and I can see why the admonition to submit is needed (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2-16) (Davids, 1990: 115). The submission that Peter has in mind is a willing submission, not forced. The command given to wives does not mean that they are inferior in their personhood or that they were less important (Grudem, 1998:141). Instead, “marriage is another of God’s ordinances for human society bringing individuals into mutual relations of responsibility” (Stibbs, 1971:122).

1 Peter 3:2 continues, “...when they see your respectful and pure conduct”. Antiquity regarded this behaviour as the most suitable and acceptable for women. Women had to cherish a meek and quiet spirit instead of chasing after the latest fashionable clothes (vv.3-4) (Keener, 1993: 715; Boring, 1999; Du Toit, 1998; Jeffers, 1999; Stibbs, 1971). This actually means Peter is writing with the context in mind as he seeks to make Christianity attractive without breaking

⁵⁵ Just like Judaism and some non-Roman religions, Christianity spread rapidly among wives and this found husbands on the losing side when it came to household religions. Wives were expected to honour their husbands in Greco-Roman antiquity and this honour included subjecting themselves to husband’s religion. Other religions that shifted the attention of the wife from the husband’s religion were treated with disdain. Therefore, Peter is writing to give advice so as to reduce martial tension that ignites an attitude towards Christianity (Keener, 1993:715).

the conventional social norms of that time. In verses 5-6, Peter mentions Sarah, a matriarch, who addressed Abraham as lord. Peter is almost saying such is a demonstration of a quiet and meek spirit. In addition, Sarah's submissive attitude to Abraham is mentioned in contrast to the prevailing models of Roman high society (Keener, 1993:716). Inasmuch as Sarah gave respect to Abraham, this does not mean that she was, "prohibited from giving her opinion" (Sproul, 2011: 95; Doriani, 2014:117; Davids, 1990:121). Thus, Peter is saying this in the context of tight and domineering gender relations against women. A meek and quiet spirit was not only expected of women alone, but it is a characteristic of Christian life as seen elsewhere in scripture (Matt.5:5; 11:29; 1 Cor.4:21; Gal. 6:1) (Boring, 1999:126). While this is true, the instruction is given predominantly to women with unbelieving husbands.

Peter turns his attention to Christian husbands and this suggests that husbands mistreated their wives. He states, "...husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life..." (v.7). This verse is couched in the context of men's attitude to women in antiquity. Keener notes that,

Many philosophers, moralists and Jewish teachers complained about the moral and intellectual weakness of women; some referred to the weakness of their bodies...Roman legal system simply assumed their weakness and inability to make sound decisions on their own. Much of this was due to the influence of Aristotle, who argued that women were by nature inferior to men in every way except sexually (Keener, 1993:717; Du Toit, 1998; Jeffers, 1999; Botha, 2000).

This indicates the unfair treatment with contempt of women in ancient times. They were treated as inferior to men in their personhood and therefore could not live independent of men.

The exhortation from Peter to Christian men is for them to live with their wives in harmony. Peter is encouraging in this case not abusive behaviour as sanctioned by society, but considerate authority (Grudem, 1998:150; Boring, 1999:126). Stibbs notes that, "The Christian husband should let all his living together with his wife be informed and guided by proper awareness of her condition in relation to himself both in nature and grace" (Stibbs, 1971:127). A weaker vessel does not mean weak in mind as the immediate society understood it. Instead, Peter is referring to physical strength. In most cases, men are stronger than women physically, though there are exceptions where some women show great physical strength (Sproul, 2011:96; Davids, 1990:120; Doriani, 2014: 118). Men were not to use their physical strength, "to bully, threaten, or strike their wives, nor should they demean their wives for being weak or slow-

footed. Marriage is a union of two weak and sinful people, even if we are weak and sinful in different ways” (Doriani, 2014: 118; Davids, 1990:123). Though the social structures did not approve of it, Christian husbands should treat their wives with respect as co-heirs of God’s grace. Thus, women are not less spiritual than men are and a husband who fails to acknowledge his wife’s spiritual equality with him before God puts his prayers in danger (Keener, 1993:717; Boring, 1999:127).

6.9.2.3. *Towards gender-based violence*

Among other texts, this text has been subjected to an interpretation that favours women’s oppression through submission. Such interpretation ignites abusive submission and legitimises the exclusion of women in the church (Museka *et al.*, 2013: 114). This promotes GBV. Admittedly, the context informing Peter’s writing is that of oppressive gender relations in Jewish and Greco-Roman society and the primary reader understood it that way.

Husbands were always in a position of authority, which saw women with limited freedom as human beings created in the image of God. If availed, such freedom would not mean disregarding or disobeying the husband resulting in incessant conflicts. Rather it is a freedom that honours and obeys the God-ordained mutual gender relations between men and women as in Genesis 1-2. By urging women to be submissive to their husbands, he is not encouraging GBV or simply adopting the existing gender relations and seeking transformation that better reflects the image of God in marriage relationships. He is writing to tone down marital tensions that were caused by the introduction of Christianity in homes. Many wives had embraced Christianity. Christianity and non-Roman pagan religions were seen as a threat to gender relations (Botha, 2000: 29). So, Christian women (Peter urges them) had to behave in a way that upheld and not demeaned godly values and this would eventually win their unbelieving husbands over to Christ.

In addition, men in that historical context were abusive. Philosophers argued that a wife had to fear her husband and Peter is completely against submission in fear as discerned in 1 Peter 3:6 (Keener, 1993:716). His refutation of the idea of fear, unveils emotional and psychological GBV that women experienced. Lastly, Peter turns to Christian men and implores them to treat their wives with understanding. He wants men to move from domination and oppression of women such that godly values supersede and transform cultural norms on gender relations. Men

should reflect authority through godly knowledge, servanthood and love towards wives to cultivate an atmosphere where a couple lives for each other.

6.9.3. Silence of women in the church perceived as a concept of gender-based violence: Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:11-14

1 Timothy 2:11-14 is a unique and most controversial passage in which women are instructed to learn in silence, cf. 1 Cor.14:34-35 in public worship (Stott, 1989: 74; Guthrie, 1994:89; Hughes & Chapell, 2012: 67). The passage seems to go against the fabric of other passages where Paul commends the ministries of women (Rom.16:1, 3, 6-7, 12-13) (Keener, 1992: 101). The text (1 Timothy 2:11-14) also appeals to the creation and fall as the alleged cause of women's subordination, hence the injunction to be silent. The injunction on the silence of women and prohibition to exercise authority over men has been understood as a form of GBV that discriminates against women in the church. I wonder if just this text would exclude over half of the body of Christ from speaking in the church universally. Is the text dealing with a specific historical situation? If so, is it setting a universal prohibition? Or is this just an ad hoc comment passed by Paul? To handle the text better, I need to understand the immediate context of the text in conjunction with its historical cultural context and the argument of the book.

6.9.3.1. Context of 1 Timothy 2:11-14

Timothy has been left in Ephesus by Paul to continue with the ministry. After Paul's move to Macedonia, he suspected the birth of heresies in the church (Acts 20:29-30) and it appears that Timothy instructs Paul that such a situation has arisen in the church. Therefore, Paul strongly exhorts Timothy to stop the false teachers (1:3b) and then instructs that everyone must conduct himself well for the church to be effective in society (3:15) (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 135). Thus, the main argument of the letter could be stated as follows: "In response to false doctrines the sound doctrine of the gospel, a trustworthy message, should be preached" (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 135). This forms the general context of the letter and its argument.

A brief study of the historical cultural⁵⁶ context of the text aids with better hermeneutics of the text. For God never spoke in a cultural vacuum, he spoke in a cultural context. Inasmuch as it

⁵⁶ Being one of the most controversial text, it no doubt invoke divergent views of the cultural element of scripture. Stott notes that some enthrone the cultural form and treat it with the same normative authority because they may

is valuable to study the historical cultural context, interpretation must guard against culture to overrule what scripture teaches or to allow personal opinion to overrule scripture (Ryken, 2007:87). It is God's nature to communicate with his people in their situations (Stott, 1996:74). The textual analysis will incorporate the historical cultural context component where it is needed to shed light on the text. My quest on this is to investigate the historical situation that led Paul to pen such words as I analyse the text.

6.9.3.2. Textual analysis

In the previous section (1 Timothy 2:9-10) Paul gave warnings about women regarding being immodest. This section (1 Timothy 2:11-12) is about women learning in silence with submissiveness (Ryken, 2007:88). A closely related word for learning in silence is found in 2:2 but in connection with all believers (Keener, 1992:611). The Roman world did not educate its women very well as compared to their male counterparts (Ryken, 2007:89; Keener, 1992:611). Women were less trained in philosophy and never in rhetoric as compared to men. On the other hand, in Judaism, women were not a priority to be educated in the law. If they were, they could be well educated in the law, which was an exception (Keener, 1992: 611). The point here is that women were academically inferior and unprepared by social society to present themselves in public. Men could be seen in dominance and discrimination of women in education. Such discrimination could be discerned from Stott (1996:85),

...the chauvinistic Rabbinical opinion expressed in the Jerusalem Talmud that it would be better for the words of the Torah to be burned, than that they should be entrusted to a woman. If she may learn, then, may she not teach, if she does it quietly.

Furthermore, the Babylonian Talmud states that men came to the synagogue to learn and women would come to listen (Ryken, 2007:89; Knight III, 1991 139).

Concisely, this shows that women were deprived of proper education and this limited their participation in public. In ancient time, the equity of sexes was not a central issue; unlike in modern days (Guthrie, 1990:89). This did not mean women could not learn. They could listen to the rabbinic expositions in synagogues and listen to lectures. The gender relations of the day

not want alter God's Word. This is a rigid, literal interpretation. Second, others would go to the extreme of dismissing the cultural relevance and treat it as out dated. Last, others hold to the principle of cultural transposition. This is where the reader needs to discern between essential revelation (changeless) and its cultural expression (changeable). This enable the reader to preserve the former as permanently binding and transpose the later into current cultural terms. It is just like Jesus's foot washing, we definitely need not to go around washing each other's feet, but we would gladly wash dishes and toilets out of love (Stott, 1996:75).

did not allow them to share in public even the little they learned. This could be what Paul is referring to when he said women must learn in silence. Hence this silence is a, "...concrete expression of the principle of submission...*which is*⁵⁷ the norm for the relationship of women to men in authority functions within the church" (Knight III, 1992: 139). Women must learn but are prohibited from teaching and exercising authority over men. This implies that women must actively learn at church but they may not teach and lead men (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 141).

Does this injunction on 'silence' of women completely bar them from teaching at all cost? There is need to recall that Paul is saying this in the context of false teachers. With their lack of education as stated above, they could not counter the false teachers. Therefore, men who were schooled in philosophy and rhetoric could do well to address the heresy facing the church at Ephesus. By saying that women should learn in silence, it implies that there must be a platform for women to verbalise what they learnt. Paul was not prohibiting women at all cost from speaking. Biblical evidence elsewhere proves that Priscilla and Aquila both taught in private Apollos (Acts 18:26), in Titus 2:3 older women must instruct younger women, in Colossians 3:16 all (women included) Christians must teach and admonish one another (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 141; Knight III, 1992: 140). However, the context we have has to do with church gatherings. In these, Paul says women must learn in silence and not exercise authority over men (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 141). This certainly implies women can exercise their various ministries in church in a quiet and orderly manner.

In verses 13 and 14, Paul gives us the reason for what he said in verses 11 and 12. Paul has made his point that man has the authority to teach and to substantiate his argument he appeals to creation and the fall of man. "The priority of Adam's creation established his headship (v. 13), as we have seen, while Eve's folly in challenging it led to disaster" (v.14) (Stott, 1996: 86-87). These verses have been used by men in the church to label women as sinners and gullible. Paul is not saying Adam (men) was perfect because he did not adhere to what God had instructed him as the head. He succumbed to the temptation too. Paul is not also saying women are universally gullible (Keener, 1993:611). "Both sinned equally and were equally guilty. The point is: men and women must respect the special places God assigned each of them" (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 142; Knight III, 1992:143). The relationship between men and

⁵⁷ Italicised words not in the original quote

women must not be viewed as competitive but complementary as God intended in Genesis 1-2 (Guthrie, 1990:91). It is in Genesis 1-2 where we discern what it truly means to live in the likeness and image of God before that image was disrupted in Adam and Eve (Gen.3).

6.9.3.3. Towards gender-based violence

The socio-historical context that Paul was surrounded with certainly excluded and deprived women. This we could learn in both the Greco-Roman and Jewish world. Women were kept inferior through denial of education and were regarded as incapable of handling the law. Their personhood as people created in the image of God was trampled upon. When Paul pronounces the injunction for women to learn in silence and not to teach men, he is not oppressing women for he allows them to learn in silence. He is not against the elevation of the state of women as long as it does not conflict with God's order of creation as laid out in Genesis 1-2. God gave man and woman roles to fulfil but the disrupted image of God in Adam and Eve resulted in conflicting gender relations.

Christians are blamed for perpetuating GBV because of failure to reflect the likeness of God displayed through Christ for others. A scripture such as 1 Timothy 2:11-14 has been twisted to suit denominational traditions but it must be studied in its context. However, it must be acknowledged that the church has transformed the status of women in society. Ryken sums up this idea perfectly when he writes, "The church has some reason to be ashamed of the way it has treated women, but no reason to be ashamed of what God has said about women in his Word" (Ryken, 2007:90). The church must remain committed with conviction to faithful interpretation of the Word to interface with GBV.

6.9.4. Headship marriage as a concept perceived to cause gender-based violence: Analysis of Ephesians 5:21-33

Male headship in marriage is the source of controversy. The controversy seeks to transform how male-dominated roles and responsibilities should operate (Chapell, 2009:271). Male headship in marriage has been perceived as the source of GBV. Headship in marriage is seen today as synonymous with controlling, domineering, oppressing or total subjugation of women (Hughes, 1990:179). Is that what the text in consideration teaches about male headship in marriage? What is the nature of headship the biblical text is communicating to the church? How

does God want that headship to function? An analysis of the context and text should lead to a response to these questions.

6.9.4.1. Context of Ephesians 5:21-33

Ephesians 5:21-6:9 addresses what most biblical scholars call *Haustafel*⁵⁸ or household code (Hoehner, 2002:720; Foulkes, 1989:159; Stott, 1989:214; Hughes, 1990:179-180). A brief study of the *Haustafel* situation in Paul's day helps to situate the text better. I have previously mentioned that the setting of the NT was steeped in Greco-Roman culture and society where the *paterfamilias* had absolute authority over the wife, slaves and everything in the home. Women in the Greco-Roman world could enjoy some liberty but undergirded by the *paterfamilias* who could withdraw the privilege at any time (Lampe, 2003:488).

Paul is writing this section of the epistle in a situation where many believers in Christ,

...have adopted the ego-centred canon of self-fulfillment as the ground for their union.

Marriage is seen more as an alliance to promote personal growth than a lifelong commitment to mutual love and service (Hughes, 1990:180).

The household codes that Paul is using were found in the context of Greco-Roman society. He carefully borrowed and 'thoroughly christianised' what he observed in that world (Stott, 1989: 215; Keener, 1993: 551). However, he brought a new perspective to the codes, which challenge the practices of the existing *Haustafel* with a goal to transform relationships. Relationships were based on the person with more power resulting in the stronger and weaker people in society and this included marriage relationships (Maisiri, 2016:46).

The theme of Ephesians is, Christ is the head of the church. The theme is sustained in four categories: the salutation (1:1-2); God's work of salvation and the principle of Christ's headship of the church (1:3-3:21); the headship of Christ portrayed in day-to-day life practice (4:1-6:20); and the conclusion (6:21-24) (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008:82). The text falls in the last section that deals with the headship of Christ portrayed in practical life. In particular, the section deals with the husband and wife relationship as it is modelled after the headship of Christ's sacrificial love for the church.

⁵⁸ The term *Haustafel* was Martin Luther's designation. Other biblical texts that fall into this category are: Col.3:18-41; 1 Pet. 2:18-3:7; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 6:1-10; Titus 2:1-10.

6.9.4.2. Textual analysis

Verse 21 serves as a transition that bridges the preceding verses and the section that follows. The verb, 'submit' is used as participle 'submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ' (v.21). The participle concludes a series of exhortation, which Paul started in verse 18 with the imperative, "be filled with the Spirit". Thus, submitting to one another forms part of being filled with the Spirit (Knight III, 1991: 166; Hughes, 1990:180). Paul mentions the unthinkable in that context by saying: submit to one another. This challenges the *paterfamilias* social context of the Greco-Roman world where it was strange for those in power (husbands, masters *et cetera*) or authority to submit. In this case, Paul transforms the household codes to bring out a new society without asymmetrical (unequal) relations.

As Paul continues on the practicalities of being filled with the Spirit he states, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (5:22). Some people have understood this wife submission from a perspective of chauvinism where wives treat husbands like their master. Rather the submission that Paul has in mind is actually a duty they owe to God (Hughes, 1990:180). In the ancient world, wives were expected to obey their husbands and some marriages had contracts dictating the wife to be obedient and maintain a low profile. Therefore, Paul's injunction on submission to one another was inconceivable for Greek thinkers (Keener, 1993:551) who were used to domination of others.

Paul gives the reason for wife submission, "For the husband is the head of the wife" (v. 23a). In addition, as Paul confronts the family structure of that day, he seems to have Genesis 2:24 in mind. Then in verse 23b, Paul uses a comparative conjunction 'as' and the adjunctive conjunction 'also'. By using these two conjunctions, he leads the reader to understand that the headship of the husband over the wife is similar to (or comparatively) the headship of Christ over the church. It is important to understand the headship of Christ in relationship to the church to better understand the implications of the husband as the head of the wife (Hoehner, 2002: 738). Otherwise, the entire meaning on headship would take another turn that runs contrary to the passage. Further, the comparison of Christ as the head of the church is that he is its Saviour. Which means headship does not imply abuse of the position to exploit the wife (Stott, 1989:219) but servanthood in rescuing her from oppressing circumstances. The implication is that the husband must willingly give protection for the wife and look out for her well-being. Verse 24 mentions two issues: church submission and wife submission. The implication is that

if the church submits to Christ as the head, it follows that the wife submits to the husband as the head (Hoehner, 2002:744; Lincoln, 1990:352). Wife submission does not mean submitting to sinful things and abuse, but a reflection of mutual relationship that brings glory to God.

As the wife submits, the husband has a responsibility to love the wife as Christ loved the church (v.25). In the ancient household codes, it was assumed that the husband had to love his wife, but love was never listed as the husband's duty to the wife. The codes only instructed the wife to submit. In this case, Paul is strongly upholding the concept of submission found in the existing social culture and places it in the context of mutual submission. He relates Christianity to the standards of his culture, but at the same time, he goes beyond his culture (Keener, 1993: 552). The love of the husband is patterned after that of Christ's love for the church. Regarding that love, Mitton (1976:152) advances that,

It means not only a practical concern for the welfare of the other, but a continual readiness to subordinate one's own pleasure and advantage for the benefit of the other. It implies patience and kindness, humility and courtesy, trust and support (1 Cor. 13:4-7). This love means that one is eager to understand what the needs and interests of the other are, and will do everything in his power to supply those needs and further those interests.

In verses 26-27, Paul refers to sanctifying, cleansing and ultimately presentation of the church to God by Christ without blemish or stain. Stott (1989:227) argues that this could be Paul's deliberate reference to the bath by the bride, which took place before Jewish and Greek weddings. Without delving into the details of this bath, the point Paul would like to make in relation to this bath is in verses 28-30. The point is just as the bride takes time to bathe herself, so too the husband must nourish and cherish his wife just as Christ does to the church. Hughes notes, "The *Haustafel* for wives, 'Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord' (v.22). The *Haustafel* for husbands is, 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her' (v.25). Together they form the divine order for Christian marriages" (Hughes, 1990:192).

In verse 31-33, the Greeks and Romans alluded to the unity that exists between husband and wife, but the image was unique to Judaism. The indissolubility of the marriage union is borrowed from Genesis 2:24. The head and body are used as an image of unity rather than authority (Keener, 1993:552; Stott, 1989: 230). The injunction is for the husband to leave his family and be united with his wife and become one flesh (Hoehner, 2002: 772). If the two are one flesh, it logically follows that the husband who abuses his wife is doing so against his own

flesh. This is what Paul calls a mystery and which is also found in Christ's love for the church. Then Paul gives a fitting conclusion, he began with love and submission, he ends with love and respect. The love that is constantly woven in the text is sacrificial love that, "...enable the wife to become what the Lord intends her to be" as she willingly submits to the husband (Stott, 1989:231).

6.9.4.3. Towards gender-based violence

The text is written against the backdrop of asymmetrical gender relations in the Greco-Roman world. The *Haustafel* required that women kept a low profile as husbands rule over them. Love was included in the codes listed and Paul weaves in love and submission, love and respect to challenge the gender abuses that existed. Thus, he challenges Christian men that were used to patriarchal leadership to lead their homes in a manner that mirrors Christ's sacrificial love for the church. On the other hand, women who were accustomed to abusive headship had found new freedom in Christianity and submitting may have been a problem. Therefore, Paul writes to balance and transform gender relations between men and women. The passage is not advocating for male dominance over women. Paul consciously refers to Genesis 2:24 with a view to restore what the fall (Genesis 3) disrupted in gender relations. Men in many cultures are of the opinion that they should rule their wives and thus the belief among most Christian men. Invalid understanding of passages like these perpetuate ungodly male dominance. The opposite is that husbands should be prepared to sacrificially give themselves to their wives, just as Christ gave himself up for the church (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan, 2008: 85). A wife that follows the biblical injunction to willingly submit and a husband that adheres to the injunction to love and respect the wife; work towards restoration of lopsided gender relations in the church and their communities.

6.10. Summary and conclusion

The chapter has engaged in a biblical analysis to examine the notion of GBV utilising the grammatical historical analysis to interpret the biblical passages. Before the analysis of biblical passages, the chapter set out to discern gender relations from Genesis I and 2. The research found that both man and woman were created in the image of God. Four views regarding the image of God came to the fore and were discussed. From the views discussed, what could be discerned is that to be created in the image of God means that humanity embodies the moral,

relational and representative aspect to God (vertically) and to mankind (horizontally). The implication of this is that Adam and Eve were fully able (in Genesis 1 and 2) to live in way that reflected the image of God to God and to each other as a couple. Gender relations between them as a couple were symmetrical. The understanding that men and women are created in the image of God should lead the church to transform its attitude towards women. Acknowledging and appreciating the image of God in others allows the church to be a church for others, particularly the marginalised in society.

The chapter also discerned the social position of women in the OT. It emerged that God revealed himself to people in their socio-cultural milieu. The predominant social position of women in the OT is that they lived subservient to men in many respects. There were positives discerned for this social position of women though GBV elements abounded. The guiding principle learnt from this is that the church should allow God's word to guide in discerning what to keep, reform or do away with in any culture. This paves the way towards transforming certain cultural elements that infringe on women in society. It is important to discern what God wanted to communicate in that cultural context; what the Bible reader might understand as negative treatment in the biblical culture.

The greater part of the chapter was devoted to the analysis of biblical passages from both the OT and the NT. The research found that the word 'rape' is not used in the Bible; instead words like violated, humiliated and defile are used. There are many forms of GBV that could be discerned from the Bible based on the passages studied. Rape is one form of GBV and the existing socio-cultural norms regard rape as a disgrace. Like in other biblical narratives, the Judges 19 incident reveals the degeneration of humanity in society resulting in extreme GBV. The story shows the stark reality of humankind living completely the opposite of reflecting the image of God. There is no living for God and others but instead humankind engages in what it prefers. Instead, humankind must strive to view every person as created in the image of God as the primary step towards transformed gender relations.

It further emerged that invalid interpretation of biblical passages related to male headship, submission of women and silence of women aggravate GBV. Most men feel that they need to dominate women. The biblical injunction is that men should move from domination and suppression of women such that the likeness of God supersedes and transforms cultural norms and gender relations. Instead of being negatively dominant, the Bible teaches that men should

demonstrate servanthood and sacrificial love just as Christ loved the church. This allows couples to cultivate an atmosphere where living for God and each other becomes possible. Finally, Ryken (2007:90) argues, “The church has some reason to be ashamed of the way it has treated women, but no reason to be ashamed of what God has said about women in his Word” (Ryken, 2007:90).

If there is no reason for the church to be ashamed of what God has said in his Word, it logically follows that the church should engage in public pastoral care of women experiencing GBV. Instead of failure by the church to live for others by becoming a community of God on earth, it must begin to frame public pastoral care ministries that address the needs of the discriminated and marginalised in society (Lawrence, 2013:114; Koppel, 2015).

The church does not only need a better approach to analyse biblical passages to mitigate against GBV. It also needs to make an effort to understand the public pastoral care notion and be able to discern how it could be utilised in the real context of GBV.

Chapter 7: Understanding public pastoral care concept within spaces of real-life challenges of gender-based violence from the intersection of biblical understanding, public theology, practical theology and pastoral care

7.1. Introduction

This chapter argues for the notion of public pastoral care with a view to apply the concept to GBV. It locates public pastoral care as a church ministry function that should hinge on and be informed by the words of Jesus Christ to be the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14) in dehumanising circumstances of society. The chapter argues that the images of salt and light are not theoretical but practical because their effect is evident wherever they exist. The chapter assumes that the church should embody the metaphors of salt and light. Thus, the chapter argues that the public life and ministry of the church must be visible and life transforming for the common good of society. Accordingly, pastoral care in and through the church should aim at engaging human situations and propose relevant solutions (Koppel, 2015:151; Dreyer and Pieterse, 2010:6).

A guiding connecting thread in this chapter is influenced by Osmer's third normative question in doing practical theology, namely "what ought to be going on?" (Osmer, 2008:133-135) in and through the church in our context of GBV. Therefore, this chapter focuses on an understanding of the church within practical ministry, operational conception of public theology, the intersection between public theology and public pastoral care, conception of pastoral care, the biblical notion of public pastoral care and an anticipation of public pastoral care in a context of GBV.

7.2. Conception of the church within practical ministry

Clowney (1998: 140) argues that defining the meaning of 'church' helps us to understand its nature and how it is supposed to publicly function as a "fundamental reality of the Christian faith". The conception of church should not only be confined to denominational affiliation. A broad uniting factor should define what church is as God intends. This allows for an understanding of the church towards better practical outward care practices in particular situations. Therefore, the greater meaning and mission of the church should be understood by,

“describing the identity and purpose of the church by looking at God’s identity and plan or mission with creation and humankind” (Hendriks, 2007:999).

The church is defined as a community of all genuine believers that by grace through faith confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The church embodies believers of all time covering the OT and NT eras. Jesus builds his church by calling people to himself (Mt. 16:18). The church is also the dwelling of God among his people as fulfilled by Jesus Christ through his incarnation (John 1:14; 2:19, 20) and later after his ascension he dwells among his people through his Holy Spirit (John 16:12-14) (Clowney, 1998:140). The presence and public ministry of God among his people continues through the agency of his Holy Spirit.

The church should be incarnational in its approach to ministry. Being incarnational means to be present, public, prophetic and interacting with issues affecting society. This would also mean that the church views and understands itself as an instrument of Christ in the world (Dingemans, 1996:93). Andria and Saayman (2003:503) describe the church in Africa as defective for failing to make transformation in its societies. Hence, they argue for new ecclesiology in Africa that makes a visible impact in its communities on different aspects of life. According to them (Andria and Saayman), the new ecclesiology should be involved in public life (Andria & Saayman, 2003:503). Brodd (2006:124) states that, “understanding of being Church might be hidden or openly operative in ecclesial life.” It is the open operative aspect of ecclesiology we are concerned with in public pastoral theology rather than a ‘hidden’ church. An operative ecclesiology could be what Andria and Saayman (2003:503) are proposing when they use the term ‘new ecclesiology’. Practically, the church forms a context in which the gospel

...can be mediated and realized. As an embodiment of *koinonia*-the fellowship of believers, the congregation forms the context in which pastoral encounter can take place. Encounter means the communication process that takes place between God and humanity within a real situation where they discover meaning through faith and guided by scripture...pastoral encounter is humane and contextual (Louw, 1998:70; Potgieter, 2015:3).

The concept of operative ecclesiology was introduced by a French Dominican scholar called Yves Congar (1904-1995) (Brodd, 2006:124). Magezi and Magezi (2018:7) state that,

...operative ecclesiology entails engaging pressing public issues within concrete situations of people rather than abstractions. This means the Bible and dogmas are brought to bear on communal life systems.

If the goal of operative ecclesiology is to bear an impact on public issues affecting people, it logically entails that practical theology and ecclesiology, as theological disciplines are closely related (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:7). For operative ecclesiology to be truly functional, the church should socially engage public issues such as GBV. In other words, what the church cherishes as its dogma must be expressed in a manner that addresses contextual issues affecting society. Hendriks states that the church must, “discern how to participate in the missional praxis of the Triune God and as such, how to become what God wants his people to be: his image, his body” (Hendriks, 2007:1002). The church is able to participate better in the missional praxis of God if it continues to align itself with the character of God who formed it. Such character of God is possible if the community of believers reflects the image of God by relating to the Creator and care for humanity in needy and deplorable situations.

Hendriks (2007:1007) further adds that, “God revealed Himself as the God who heard the voices of slaves, who took notice of the suffering of people with no social standing. He called them, they obeyed his call and they became his people.” The church also should strive at engaging its congregational members towards being transformative in society (Hendriks, 2007:1000). The goal of the church in becoming involved with society is to transform communities of faith through its theological teachings, which should, “address society’s issues and problems in a holistic way” (Hendriks, 2007:1000) with relevance to the context in which they exist.

This gives rise to the importance and need for public pastoral care. Osmer’s four core tasks of practical theology inform this entire research namely: a descriptive-empirical task (What is going on?), an interpretive task (Why is it going on?), a normative task (What ought to be going on?) and a pragmatic task (How might we respond?) (Osmer, 2008:11; cf. Magezi & Magezi, 2018:7). Therefore, “with particular relevance to operative ecclesiology, the goal of pragmatic task seeks to provide guidance and transforming assistance for church” (Magezi & Magezi, 2018:7) societal issues such as GBV. As stated above, this means operative ecclesiology within practical ministry, justifies the need for operative public pastoral care.

7.3. Towards an operational conception of public theology

The above section set out to understand what the church is and how it should function within practical ministry. The section argued for operational ecclesiology in the context of practical

ministry. We saw that the church must not be defective but rather operational by holistically dealing with public contextual issues that affect people. The relevance of this understanding means that the church must be public in its approach to ministry. If the church must be public in its approach, public theology is indispensable. Hence, this section seeks to accomplish three things, namely, to establish an understanding on what is public theology, set out the importance and value of public theology in public issues and finally link public theology with practical theology as an umbrella for practical ministries.

7.3.1. Understanding public theology

The term ‘public theology’ is labelled as a “new comer to the field of religious studies and spirituality” (Van Aarde, 2008:1213) and is regarded “a recent addition to our lexicon” (Day & Kim, 2017:2). Koppel (2015:151) alludes that public theology, “is not a clearly demarcated field”. However, the use of the term is well received and is gaining considerable prevalence in academia with some stating that it goes beyond the parochial ministries of the church and monopoly in doing theology (Muller-McLemore, 2018:312, Day & Kim, 2017:2, Cady, 1987:193). Day and Kim further express the same idea as they refer to Cady who proposes that, “the growth of public theology is corrective of individualistic theology which is inaccessible and belonging to the church only” (Day & Kim, 2017: 2, cf, Cady, 1987:193-212). This should not be understood in a manner that dislodges the church as completely having failed to influence communities. The fact that the church exists is evidence of impact and influence, but it needs to be more explicit and intentional in handling issues of society. Regarding the subject under research, the church has been blamed for its silence, theorising (Chisale, 2020:1) and complicit nature on GBV as one of the social ills of society.

Defining public theology remains somehow elusive. Part of this elusiveness emanates from “multiple definitions” (Muller- McLemore, 2018:312) the term has received. In addition, the understanding that the term is new in the field of religious studies as mentioned above could be a reason for the elusive definition. Van Aarde (2008:1213) states that, “some confusion reigns among its users”. I have noted in my research that some authors evade defining the term and simply move on to the functional part of it. However, this does not mean that a working conception of the term is impossible.

In a more general and simplistic manner, public theology is defined as the, "...church reflectively engaging with those within and outside its institutions on issues of common interest and for the common good" (Day & Kim, 2017:2; Koppel, 2015:151). On the other hand, Juma cites Thiemann who advances that public theology, "...is faith seeking to understand the relation between Christian convictions and the broader social and cultural content with the Christian community" (Juma, 2015:3). Williams also concurs that public theology is Christian faith addressing matters of society and that central to public theology is "public relevance" (Williams, 2014:159). Slight differences and similarities can be discerned from these attempts to construct a definition of this important term. What could be gleaned from the above definitions about public theology is as follows:

- it reflects on and living out our Christian faith,
- it goes beyond the implicit (or parochial) nature of church to a more explicit outlook,
- it is intentional and contextual, and
- it seeks to publicly address social ills for the common good of society.

Though not relevant at this stage, the understanding follows that the church in its communal pastoral care must be driven by public theology. Koopman (2012:4) state that knowledge about God does not only assist us to know reality better, but it helps us to change our reality so we continually transform and radiate the love of God to humanity. Therefore, in a context of GBV, as one of the social issues affecting society, there is need for Christian faith to intentionally and publicly challenge this sometimes imperceptible and violent phenomenon. My next concern is to establish why public theology is crucial to public issues.

7.3.2. The importance and value of public theology to public issues

The importance and value of public theology to public issues of society is pertinent. Ranging from local to global spaces, people are experiencing public issues which include oppression, poverty, human migration, xenophobia, human trafficking, racism, GBV, infanticide, climate change, politics, civic life *et cetera* (Muller-McLemore, 2018:313; De Gruchy, 1991:45-62; Smit, 2007:3-5). These mentioned public issues could be summarised as human suffering (McClure, 2012:270). Given the vastness of public issues affecting humanity, it raises the following questions: How are communities of faith interfacing with these realities of life in their theological reflection? What reflective transforming theological interventions are being offered by the communities of faith in dealing with public issues?

The above questions are realistic and evoke the importance and value of public theology in engaging with public issues. Cady states the following about theology, "...having lost its power to influence the public debate about our beliefs and actions, theology has increasingly become a privatised form of reflection" (Cady, 1987: 193). In this private state, the community of faith fails to address human suffering. Therefore, public theology is important and valuable because human suffering exists. In addition, the advent of public theology allows the community of faith to reclaim its power in public debate so that it is able to address issues affecting societies thorough public reflection. 'Reclaiming its power', does not mean that the goal of public theology is to fight a battle but rather to "cultivate a sense of common life" (Bezuidenhout & Naude, 2002:11) that allows people to construct transforming solutions to their public issues. The construction of solutions to public issues is achievable through public theology. Koppel (2015:151) notes that the "intention of public theology is to engage people, develop resources, and strategize on a collective level". This allows communities of faith and other social structures outside the church to be able to find each other and work towards transformative interaction to curb public issues.

In an article, *A Model for Public Theology*, Cady refers to Royce (1968) who says the following about public theology, "...address the central problems of the age rather than perennial, abstract theological issues and reconstruct the tradition in light of contemporary insight" (Cady, 1987:204). This means if public theology is going to be important in dealing with public issues, its jargon/language also must not be confusing to those inside and outside ministerial contexts (Bezuidenhout & Naude, 2002:10). Important to public theology is that it aims at communicating the Christian faith to the public, leading to framing of pastoral care ministries (Koppel, 2015:151).

The importance and value are further realised in that public theology corrects the community of faith from degenerating into private confessions of faith to being public (Cady, 1987:193). This means public theology influences or persuades others to reflect on and embrace transformative ideas on public issues (Cady, 1987:194). In addition, public theology affords the church the opportunity to speak its theology to issues of public concern. In doing so, the church should not be swamped by external ideas as it seeks to be public with its theology. Instead, the church should, "develop a public theology that remains based in the particularities of the Christian faith which genuinely address issues of public significance" (Bezuidenhout & Naude, 2002:11). Williams (2014:160) poses a question that I think reinforces the importance

of public theology to public issues. He says public theology asks the question, “How is God interfacing with human condition of the moment?” and he adds that, “theology unable to meet this challenge maybe useless in the pursuit of affecting human transformation” (Williams, 2014:160). Thus, the salt and light (Matt.5:13-14) effects of the communities of faith must be public and relevant in a manner that brings solutions to public issues of society.

A further elaboration on public theology at this stage is pertinent. Day and Kim (2017) in their introduction to *A Companion to Public Theology* lay out the following five important distinctive marks of public theology. I owe the following five points to Day and Kim (2017:10-16) with some minor alterations:

- The first and key essential mark of public theology is the recognition that theology, to be relevant, is inherently incarnational.
- Public theology must have a sphere of operation and be able to engage publics like the church, academy and society.
- Public theology must be interdisciplinary by drawing from fields like history, theology and anthropology to understand better human experience.
- Public theology should have the character of being dialogical. In this manner, public theology would speak *with* (identifying) society instead of speaking *to* (isolated from) society.
- Public theology should have a global outlook by constantly interweaving and interacting together issues like religion, politics, technologies, economies, *et cetera*. This is important because local contexts do not exist in isolation but are shaped by what is happening in the global world.

Though public theology is claimed to be a new concept among pastoral and practical theologians as stated already, the fundamental key aspect about public theology is that it arises out of a need and the need is to be public. Coupled with the need to be public is the goal to transform the communities of pastoral and practical theologians (Leslie, 2008:80-81). To respond to this, Juma refers to Ramsay who advances that, “...redefinition of pastoral theology as public theology also means new delineation of pastoral care’s central functions” (Juma, 2015:2). To this Juma responds by saying that the impression one gets from Ramsay seems to be that public theology replaces practical theology. The research coincides with Juma who notes that public theology is not a replacement of practical theology. Instead, “practical theology finds expression not replacement in public theology” (Juma, 2015:2). Public theology may serve as a means or channel through which the other disciplines of theology may find each

other with the aim of promoting the concept of individuals expressing their spiritual values and beliefs (Juma, 2015:1, Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:18).

According to Koppel, “public theology is not a clearly demarcated field, but generally represents an intention to engage people, develop resources, and strategize on collective level” (Koppel, 2015:151). The implication gleaned from Koppel is that the intrinsic aim of public theology is to move pastoral and practical theology from an inhibited mode to a more visible and life changing mode. This means public theology is concerned with inhumane aspects of human life and all oppressing social experiences (Day & Kim, 2017:11). In the same vein at the centre of public theology, “pastoral care practitioners and theologians are strongly urged to take seriously and engage mindfully with issues that concern groups of people and whole populations, rather than individual persons in isolation” (Koppel, 2015:151; Masango, 2010: 3; Hendriks, 2007).

Regardless of the field in which public theology is utilised, its underpinning goal remains principally as the concern for matters affecting people in the public domain (Koppel, 2015:151; Juma, 2015:1; Leslie, 2008:81). Public theology assists the pastoral care theologian to understand the relation between, “Christian convictions and the broader social and cultural context with which the Christian community lives” (Thiemann, 1991:30). This means pastoral care and practical theologians’ faith must interact with the context to bring positive change. Hence, context determines how one should practise public theology (Juma, 2015:12; Williams, 2014:159; Garner, 2015:22-25). If public theology is not imbedded in the context of the phenomena, it becomes irrelevant and only scratching the surface with no long lasting and transforming solutions for societal issues.

To interact with public issues better, the word ‘public’ needs to be properly understood. Day and Kim (2017:11-12); Garner (2015:26) suggest three ‘publics’ which theology must engage: “the church, academy and society.” Magezi citing Dreyer notes that public theology is not confined to the church and clergy. They cannot have a monopoly on practical theology but the wider community has a role to play (Magezi, 2017:2; Ganzevoort & Roeland, 2014: 95; Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015). There is a debate on the identification of ‘public’ which public theology should address and this is not the focus in this research. For the purpose of this research, the identified ‘publics’ help to clarify the word ‘public’. Day and Kim (2017:11) concur that, “As long as public is perceived as *the* public—amorphous and monolithic—any

attempt at theological engagement will be abstract and irrelevant.” They further state that the premise of discussion in public theology must not be confined to academic theologians for this does not serve the social ills of the context(s).

Public theology is used as a larger theoretical lens to establish what the church ought to do with GBV within the church. The church should focus on matters that affect the community (Koppel, 2015:151), instead of remaining in an inhibited mode. This means,

...the church is a set-apart public whose life and witness serves the interests of the broader public (i.e., “every nation and tribe” [Rev. 14:6] as well as every social caste and class). Public theology has to do with shaping the people of God to be a hermeneutic of God’s love (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:21).

With this in mind, Garner (2015:25) notes that public theology

...seeks to offer distinctive and constructive insights from the treasury of faith to help in the building of a decent society, the restraint of evil, the curbing of violence, nation-building...It strives to offer something that is distinctive, that is gospel, rather than simply adding the voice of theology to what everyone is saying already.

Public theology as an expressive dimension of practical theology aims at meeting the current human condition with the goal to bring transformation. This means the link between practical theology and public theology is important.

7.3.3. The link between public theology with practical theology as a larger umbrella

An understanding of the link between public theology and practical theology as a bigger umbrella or branch of practical ministries is indispensable. In our quest for the connection between the two, a cursory understanding of the branches of theology is important. The branches of Christian theology reveal how they build on each other. Bromell (2011:3) states that Christian theology as an academic discipline is classified in “three major branches for practical and theoretical purposes.” The branches are categorised as follows:

- Historical theology – focuses on the history of the Christian faith with particular focus on what it had been in the past.
- Systematic theology – deals with critical thinking on the meaning and truth of Christian faith and witness, in terms of its theoretical credibility, now and always.

- Applied theology – sometimes called practical theology is critical thinking about the meaning and truth of Christian faith and witness, in terms of its practical credibility at this time, in this place (Bromell, 2011:3).

Though some differences can be noted, the three branches are not completely independent of each other because they still share shades of meanings. Historical theology and systematic theology deal with the theoretical aspects of theology; whereas practical theology or applied theology wrestles with the practical side. About practical theology Tidball states “has something of the character of an octopus...it leaves many puzzled as to its exact nature” (Tidball, 1997:13; Muller-McLemore, 2012:18-20; Lapsely, 1969: 31, 43; Thurneysen, 1963:11-12). This means it is possible to engage in studying this “octopus” and still struggle to fathom what one has at hand. Nevertheless, practical theology seeks to demonstrate how the other two branches could be lived out practically in light of the circumstances of our Christian faith. Within practical theology as a big umbrella of practical ministries, the following sub-disciplines are identified; pastoral care, pastoral theology, pastoral counselling (Tidball, 1997:18).

Muller-McLemore (2012:5-26) lists and expounds five misunderstandings about practical theology “...in the history and development of scholarship in practical theology.” She lists the following five points:

- practical theology is a marginalized discipline with a serious identity crisis
- the problem with practical theology and theological education is the clerical paradigm
- practical and pastoral theology are interchangeable terms
- practical theology is impossible to define or, inversely, can be defined simply
- practical theology is largely, if not wholly, descriptive, empirical, interpretative, and not normative, theological, and in some cases (dare I say) Christian (Muller-McLemore, 2012:5).

Consequently, the misunderstandings contributed to the degeneration of practical theology as theological discipline over the years (Tidball, 1997:13). This means practical theology ‘ceased’ to be practical in dealing with issues affecting the public. Instead, the church became introverted in its approach to practical ministry. The community of faith and its teachings had become more concerned and focused on those within the community of faith without public relevance (Williams, 2014:159) and impact. In the same understanding, Lapsley (1969:44) states, “The need for increased attention to the communal aspects of life in the church and society alike is facing us squarely, but we have been slow to rise to the challenge”. Though

Lapsley does not mention the term ‘public theology’ in the previous quote, the statement is almost suggestive of it. How do we rise to the challenge, which Lapsley alludes to?

A connection between public theology and practical theology is inevitable. While practical theology deals with the relevance of theology to everyday concerns, public theology ensures that theology addresses the contemporary public issues of society (Magezi, 2017:2; Williams, 2014:159). On the other hand, pastoral care is concerned with providing care and support to people in pain and anxiety, including any other life situation (Magezi, 2017:2; cf. Campbell, 1987:188; Clebsch and Jaeckle, 1964:4; Buffel, 2004:40).

Instead of practical theology remaining subjective, individual and private (Graham, 2000:9), public theology assists practical theology to be visible and interact with society. Magezi makes a valid contribution regarding private theology by saying that theology must not be “...locked in a private cupboard by theologians” (Magezi, 2018:6). He (Magezi) further proposes “a shift to a public practical theology” (Magezi, 2018:6). This means the traditions of the church and clergy cease to be the only focus as in practical theology (Dreyer, 2004:919-920), but are taken further to another horizon through public theology to deal with contextual issues affecting society. Koppel (2015:151) states that,

Practising public theology asks that pastoral care practitioners and theologians take seriously and engage mindfully with issues that concern groups of people and whole populations, rather than individual persons in isolation.

Thus, practical theology is putting my faith in Christ, whereas public theology is my faith making an impact on and transforming societal public issues. It follows that Christians should be vigilant in their communities and intentionally seek to change such communities by being incarnational (Day & Kim, 2017: 11; Hendriks, 2007:1000, Makgoba, 1999). This means Christianity as a religion exists in context (Ganzevoort & Roeland, 2014:1) and must be practical in ways that give new meaning to various problems embedded in societies like human trafficking, gender issues, corruption, racism *et cetera*. While public theology’s effort is on dealing with public issues that affect society, pastoral care focuses on giving care and support as needed by the context (Magezi, 2017:2). How does public theology intersect or connect with pastoral care? The following section discusses the link between public theology and pastoral care.

7.4. The intersection of public theology and public pastoral care

In his article *Practical theology and the Shaping of Christian lives*, Fowler (1983:148) started his discussion with 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (ESV). The idea of being an ambassador and making an appeal links with the notion of public pastoral care. The role of an ambassador is to represent the interests of the one who sent him in visible, faithful and transforming ways. In this particular verse, Paul is an ambassador of Christ and is able to publicly represent and exercise care for others as Christ would.

In like manner, public pastoral care cannot be public unless it is practised from God’s perspective as the ultimate caregiver. This is important because any public pastoral care must derive from God as the ideal caregiver. To demonstrate the idea that God is the caregiver, Louw (2015:1) argues for a shift from “omni-categories to pathos-categories in order to deal with issues like human suffering, dignity and justice.” Though nothing is wrong with understanding God in what he (Louw) calls the ‘omni-categories’, the ‘categories’ seem to suggest a dormant, inactive, unconcerned God (Louw, 2015:1). He further argues for the notion of a “sustainable God”, “...in order to frame God’s compassionate presence...” (Louw, 2015:1). This means human suffering of any kind touches and affects the heart of God such that he is compassionate about it. His compassion is made visible in public pastoral care through the people he uses. This is what moved David to say, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1). With public pastoral care in mind, the compassion of God for humanity is fully realised in Jesus Christ, “...as the compassion of God” epitomised in Jesus Christ emptying himself (Philippians 2⁵⁹) (Louw, 2015:3). God actualised his compassion into public pastoral care for David in Psalm 23 and translates his attributes into care. Public theology realises pastoral care in the context of care. Propelled by love and compassion (public theology) broadens pastoral care to visible and life changing reality with the ability to confront the social ills of society.

Public theology interacts with the social ills of societies for the betterment of the community. As it is utilised, it should eventually lead us to frame pastoral care ministries (Magezi, 2017: 2; Koppel, 2015:151). Leslie also notes that public theology assists us to, ‘widen the lens of care’

⁵⁹ Though my words are couched in Louw’s frame of thinking the Philippians 2 reference is my addition.

ranging from faith communities to complex issues affecting society (Leslie, 2015:81). This forms a basis of the intersection between public theology and pastoral care.

Emanating from public theology, pastoral public care leads us to ask questions like:

- “What distinctive help can a pastor give?” (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:9).
- What can the pastor and the community do to help people with issues like crime, rape, drugs, politics, economy, *et cetera*?

The proposed assistance should be aimed at dealing with a myriad of issues affecting society. People invest confidence in a doctor because his profession deals with what people battle with (public) and shows that he cares (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:14). In a similar manner, the pastor should wrestle with what people struggle with in order to emerge with pastoral care ministries that address issues of society. However, this can only happen if the pastor knows that he is a public figure that exists within and for the community (Magezi, 2017:2). Also, in dispensing public pastoral care ministries, the pastor must have confidence that the care he offers is unique, systematic and is not just helping or being auxiliary to what a psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker is offering (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:9). Leslie adds that, “the dilemma for many pastoral theologians is that we do not believe we are equipped or welcome to think about or offer care in public arena. Our work is private, assuming, and circumspect” (Leslie, 2015:83).

Public pastoral care should not be private by focusing on those people in the church alone. Societies can only be transformed when Christians do not privatise care. Leslie rightly states, that if we move out (public pastoral care) of the private office, church and the Christian community to other new spheres it allows for transformation (Leslie, 2015:83). It is true that theologians think of human suffering, but the immediate and probably the only audience in mind is a Christian audience which Leslie notes, “remains an in-house conversation” (Leslie, 2015:84). This is where we say public theology helps us to take pastoral care to the public arena. Leaning on Josutti’s view, Louw states that pastoral care must be life care mediated through one’s faith in God. He adds that pastoral care needs not be limited to an individual because this would result in social blindness to those practising the care. Pastoral care should liberate humanity from all negative life situations (Louw, 1998:37-38). Concisely, public issues affecting communities call for public pastoral care, which springs from public theology.

Magezi underscores that by using a public theology lens, our pastoral care must spread “beyond spiritual nourishment and *diakonia* care to engaging diverse issues affecting humanity ranging from politics to leadership, corruption, injustice, et cetera” (Magezi, 2017:2; Leslie, 2015: 83). In dealing with the mentioned social phenomenon affecting humanity the pastor theologian (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015) must frame public pastoral care ministries. In addition, to translate public theology into public pastoral care ministry effectively the pastor theologian must be ‘an organic intellectual’ (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015: 22-25). According to Vanhoozer and Strachan (2015:24), an organic intellectual pastor theologian is one who “articulates the needs, convictions, and aspirations of the social group to which they belong. The organic⁶⁰ intellectual brings to the level of speech the doctrines and desires of the community.” This speaks of someone who is knowledgeable, identifies and articulates issues affecting his community and country. This makes public pastoral care relevant because it is not detached from the context as the theologian is able to translate his discipline (Leslie, 2015:84).

Not only does the pastor engage in public pastoral care alone, but also the church congregants have a role to play in exercising such care. This means pastoral care should not be individualistic as observed in the traditional understanding of the pastor doing everything for the congregation. There is need for renewed emphasis on pastoral care among the congregants to care for one another and ultimately the community (Louw, 1998:13). The church is the public of God, where God’s people live (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015); as such, God’s people should translate their knowledge of God into care. However, the church congregants can only do so if the pastor equips them. This implies that the pastor should be public by shaping the people of God into what they should be and in turn, the congregants become lay public theologians (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:16). Finally, for public theology to translate into public pastoral care the pastor must communicate what God is saying in Christ (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:16). According to Louw, “A misrepresentation of God has at its root a fallacy in thinking which creates a distortion of God in our minds” (Louw, 1994:20). The faith (theology) that a pastoral theologian and the congregants have should be translated into, “faith care *as* life care” (Louw, 1998:38).

⁶⁰ “The immediate focus is on the organic intellectual as one who serves the interest of a minority or oppressed social group by giving it prophetic and poetic voice—speech designed to clarify the situation, express the aims and objectives of the community, and rouse it to act in ways consistent with its vision” (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:24).

How a pastor theologian represents God in the public will determine the kind of pastoral care he will give to people. This is important because the public ministry of Jesus serves as the prime example of what public pastoral care should be for a pastor theologian and the community of faith. During his earthly ministry, Jesus's public theology constantly challenged the multifaceted human suffering and resulted in him framing relevant pastoral care ministries. In practising his pastoral care, Jesus showed compassion for people (Matthew 15:32; Mark 6:34; 8:2; Luke 10:33). He cared for the "oppressed, marginalised and rejected people of God" (Masango, 2010:3). Making reference to Gutierrez, Masango states that pastoral care cannot offer lip service to the hungry, poor and abandon them in the same state with the assurance that God loves them (Masango, 2010: 5).

Since knowing God is a relational reality and not stand-alone idea, compassion and mercy are at the very heart of it and God's demand for his people is to practice these qualities towards the vulnerable in the society (Kim, 2017:56).

Thus, pastoral care must be characterised with compassion, which stays around to help, to care, does not walk away and transforms the way we deal with societal issues (Beals, 1985:41-42; Masango, 2010:4).

Influenced by public theology, the pastor and communities of faith must design pastoral care ministries that show compassion to people. This entails that pastoral and practical theologians must be pertinent to contextual issues that affect people in their ministerial contexts. Garner (2015:28) also affirms that, "The good news of Jesus Christ is embedded in and speaks to our contexts of the everyday world." Juma (2015) in her article *Public Theology in the face of pain and suffering* advancing Williams' argument states that, theology that fails to deal with how God is interfacing with the condition of mankind may be ineffective in transforming the human condition (Juma, 2015:3). Therefore, the following authors rightly state that public theology is not institutionalised theology. They say it is an approach to theology that engages in public discourse with social situations and human contexts (Juma, 2015:1; Dreyer & Pieterse, 2010:6; Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015: 17; Garner, 2015:23; Koppel, 2015:151). Hence, the following section focuses on the meaning of pastoral care and gives a concise history of the discipline to appreciate its need in addressing public issues.

7.5. Public pastoral care

7.5.1. Definition of pastoral care

Understanding the meaning of the term ‘pastoral care’ is important for exercising care to those in need within and outside the church (Wotton, 2017:3). According to McClure (2012:269), “The term pastoral in “pastoral care” comes from the Latin *Pastorem* meaning, shepherd and includes in its deep etymology the notion of tending to the needs of the vulnerable”. McClure further states that the OT and NT grew out of pastoral societies and had a direct influence on the metaphor of shepherd as demonstrated with Jesus (shepherd) and the church (flock) (McClure, 2012:269). Lapsley (1983:168) also confirms the biblical origins of the term by saying pastoral care, “is associated with the intensely personal and unique as in Psalm 23 and as in the parable of the one lost sheep in Matthew 18.” Pastoral care includes the roles of guiding, protecting and providing (Lapsley, 1983:168). The means of care is not only inherent and dormant in the heart but it is practised in a visible manner. McClure (2012:269) states that *care* is the theme central to the heart of pastoring and caring for someone is not independent of love, protection and sacrifice.

The term pastoral care is defined as, “the practical outworking of the church’s concern for the everyday and ultimate needs of its members and wider community” (Hurding, 1995:78). Hurding’s definition of pastoral care discourages the church from focusing on the needs of its members only, but to care also for the everyday needs of those outside the church. This thinking encourages a public pastoral care approach to life challenges that affects people in and outside the church. Thus, pastoral care to people subjected to GBV extends beyond the church walls to the wider communities in which the church operates. Lapsley advances that pastoral care is, “The essence of the church and its ministry to direct a concern toward the personal dimensions of the lives of the members” (Lapsley, 1983:168).

Lapsley’s understanding of pastoral care puts emphasis on ‘direct concern’ (Lapsley, 1983:168) in addressing personal issues that affect members. The underpinning point is that pastoral care cannot simply ignore the needs of people. It is possible to focus only on the visible dimensions of human life and neglect the personal issues, which are accessible through the caring, shepherding, guiding and protecting aspects which only pastoral care can provide. The private and public aspects of human life can be addressed using pastoral care. In the same vein, Lapsley

argues for an inclusive pastoral care that caters for the individual (private) and the flock (public). He also adds that one cannot attend to one and neglect the other (Lapsley, 1983:169). In addition, Clebsch and Jaekles understand pastoral care as a ministry focused on the care of souls mediated through a helping person with the goal of healing, sustaining, guiding and sustaining people in need (Clebsch & Jaekles, 1964:4; Benner, 2003:15). This definition gives four guiding themes in exercising pastoral care and how the themes are utilised is determined by the context.

McClure (2012:270) defines pastoral care, "...as a form of practical theology specified as an intentional enacting and embodying of a theology of presence, particularly in response to suffering or need, as a way to increase among the people the love of God and neighbour". McClure's definition is all encompassing in that theology is not practised privately. Rather it is visible through responding to the suffering and needs of people in a visible manner (public pastoral care). Not only that, pastoral care is intentional and love is its launch pad as the individual or church practising care radiates the love of God to a neighbour in need. Given the above discussion, pastoral care has a history. A concise understanding of such history for the purposes of this research is important.

7.5.2. Concise history on pastoral care

The care of human souls or *cura animarum* remains a result of pastoral care (Louw, 1998:1). The care of human souls is steeped in the earliest Christian traditions where pastoral care was practised in Christian communities (McClure, 2012:270). This means down through the ages, "the demonstration in exhorting, sustaining, reconciling and healing activities of the people of God" (Hurding, 1995:80) have been seen as pastoral care. Congregations always extended pastoral care to the "hurting and in need of care and concern" (McClure, 2012:270). However, as history unfolded pastoral care became drowned by various prevailing cultures and this included perspectives that arose from the field of psychology.

7.5.2.1. *Origins of pastoral care in the Bible*

The historical basis of pastoral care and its elements are rooted in the OT. God's care for people is seen in the images of prophets, priests, wise men, kings and judges appointed over Israel to exercise care for people (Wotton, 2017:2). Among other passages in the OT Psalm 23 paints a

clear picture of shepherding, especially of the one who, “offers presence and guidance toward the restoring of the soul” (Patton, 1983:3; Lapsley, 1983:168). God is viewed as the shepherd over Israel in the Exodus through delivering them, leading and guiding them in their wilderness wandering. The judges and prophets were raised by God to provide pastoral care in Israel. The nature of the care was centred on love, but also judgement of his people so that they could learn and reform their ways by returning to God. A reflection of the history of Israel shows that pastoral care sometimes called for radical and painful measures by God on his people. For example, we see God using pagan nations (Assyrians and Babylonians) to punish Israel. However, this did not diminish God’s pastoral care love for Israel for he continued to look after Israel and restored the nation to its homeland.

Pastoral care in the Bible is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus and the practice of pastoral care onwards is modelled after Jesus as the ideal model (John 10:7-11). He instructed his disciples to love one another, care for one another and care for his sheep (John 21:15-17) (Wotton, 2017:3). According to Kerlin the phrase, “one another” covers about 80% of the verses found in the NT and has the idea of supporting and affirming people (Kerlin, 2014:2). Kerlin further advances that, the Pauline epistles in some measure address issues in connection with pastoral care in a general form going back to the early centuries of the church (Kerlin, 2014:3). This means the NT pastoral care was modelled on Jesus. As the church grew under the apostolic era four functions of pastoral care were prevalent though not all of them were emphasised in different eras (McClure, 2012:270). The apostle Paul was one of the earliest pastoral caregivers and he emphasised the aspects of sustaining and reconciliation (McClure, 2012:270). Apart from the physical needs of the members, the early church also cared for the spiritual needs of its members (Kerlin, 2014:3).

7.5.2.2. *Pastoral care from first century to middle ages*

During this period, reference is made by church fathers in particular to the writings of church fathers like Augustine, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Tertullian, Ambrose *et cetera*. Key among such writings reflecting elements on pastoral care is the *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* (Kerlin, 2014:3). This writing belongs to the fourth century, as a pseudo-Apostolic writing comprised of eight books that cover issues regarding Christian discipline, worship, doctrine and qualifications for priests, deacons and elders (Kerlin, 2014:3). In this literature, it appears attention was focused on holy living not only as it relates to God but to other Christians as well.

In this manner, there was a caring for one another though the care seemed to have less outlook on the broader community especially on issues affecting humanity. Hurding makes reference to an era before Constantine where the *Shepherd of Hermas* was written dealing with sin after baptism and also some letters written to the Bishop of Carthage regarding discipline and remaining faithful in tribulation (Hurding, 1995:80; McClure, 2012:270; Kerlin, 2014:3-4). Though still in the early stages of Christianity, the writings reflect a spirit of pastoral care for the saints though with much focus on individuals and the Christian community.

Following the period after Constantine, the preaching and writings of John Chryostom and the impact of Gregory, the Great (504-064) in his *Pastoral Rule* were unique examples of pastoral care (Hurding, 1995:80; Kerlin, 2014:4). The priests were informed on how to deal with individuals with a different personality and be able to unearth the cause of their problems (Kerlin, 2014:4). The pastoral care of that age began to gravitate towards psychological understandings. During this ‘primitive stage of Christianity’, these writings sustained the ideas of healing, guiding and reconciling which remained apparent as pastoral care was exercised (McClure, 2012:270). During the mediaeval period, there was much emphasis on the sacramental system with the emphasis on baptism, Eucharist and penance; for one to be in the right relationship with God (McClure, 2012:271). An outward focus on the poor and the rejected people in society during this period was another element of pastoral care (Hurding, 1995:80). The entire goal was to assist Christians to live holy lives through various attempts of pastoral care.

7.5.2.3. *Pastoral care in reformation and enlightenment period*

The reformation period is renowned for its establishment of “biblically based pastoral theology saw a renewed emphasis on the various strands of pastoral care” (Hurding, 1995:80; Kerlin, 2014, McClure, 2012). Hurding refers to the *Fourteen Consolations* of Martin Luther, *On cure of souls* by Martin Bucer and the teachings of John Calvin in which reconciliation, shepherding and church discipline were emphasised (Hurding, 1995:80; McClure, 2012:271). The reformation sought to bring the community of faith to proper order as response to the degenerate state of the church in the middle ages. Such an effort by the reformation period is viewed as pastoral care that seeks to respond to phenomena (spiritual degeneration and suffering) of the middle ages. The enlightenment period viewed “the immortality of the soul as the most important focus and the enlightenment of personal morality as the primary function of religion”

(McClure, 2012:271). During this period, pastoral care was focused on personal values, appropriate behaviour and suitable morality (McClure, 2012:271). The turn of the 19th century put less importance on morality as seen in relaxed or decreased church discipline. Instead, pastoral care providers opted for private conversations in executing care, models of effective visitation in an effort of giving compassion and guidance (McClure, 2012:272).

In the 20th century, psychology had an influence on pastoral care such that interpretations of human suffering by pastoral caregivers would have psychological overtones (Wotton, 2017:8). McLemore states some reasons why psychology seems to overtake biblical pastoral care. First, she notes that people found doctrinal theology barren and insensitive to the needs of people. Second, psychology appealed easily because it treasured human experience and offered fascinating ways of explaining why people do what they do (Muller-McLemore, 2018:309). McClure (2012:272) further states that the advent of psychology “has left some observers worried that psychology has supplanted theology as the orienting discipline and dominant lens of contemporary pastoral care.” This has evoked mixed reactions in that some people view this as secularisation of pastoral care while others view this as an effective way to respond to the human needs and suffering (McClure, 2012:272). It could be only now that there is a perception that pastoral care seems to be dependent on psychology. But the biblical roots of pastoral care (and its development) show that it is independent but could certainly interact with other disciplines as the need arises (McClure, 2012:272; Wotton, 2017:9; McLemore, 2018:309). As one practices pastoral care (even in interacting with other disciplines) it must be emphasised that, “The person means far more to God than the problem that he or she presents” (Wotton, 2017:9 citing Patton, 1983:118). This means the biblical injunctions about GBV, economic suffering, political exploitation, human trafficking, sexual abuse, poverty *et cetera* remain operational and effective even after borrowing from other disciplines.

The above concise history of pastoral care shows that human suffering in different epochs call for various approaches to pastoral care. Also important is that the underpinning focus of pastoral care in various epochs is the care for human beings experiencing pain and suffering. That “practical outworking of the church’s concern for the everyday and ultimate needs of its members and the wider community” (Hurding, 1995:78), remain the core focus of pastoral care. McClure also advances that while history shows changes in concerns and foci, themes such as careful attention, theologically informed diagnosis and compassionate support or intervention are evident (McClure, 2012:273).

While these themes remain realistic and useful, “people’s life issues are complex,” (Magezi, 2019:3) and this complexity occurs in a context. As such, community structures are in themselves representative of public pastoral care contexts. For instance, the positioning of women in the community, religious or national structures acts as a window to their GBV experiences in a particular community structure. The question that arises is: How could pastoral care operate within community structures in a manner that fosters holistic transformation of life?

7.5.3. Public pastoral care within a community structure

Women’s encounter with GBV takes place in community structures and “...pastoral care is called upon to intervene” (Magezi, 2019:3). Historically pastoral care focused on individuals within the church. Practical theology or pastoral care used to be what the pastor and the clergy did in the confines of a religious setting (Muller-McLemore, 2018:312). Greater importance was put on the care that the pastor displayed during illness, death, grief, *et cetera* and this was only a small portion of the broader care of the congregation (Muller-McLemore, 2018:312). Instead of focusing on individuals alone when exercising pastoral care there is need for the involvement of community structures. Muller-McLemore (2018:311) calls this a movement from living human document to living human web. The living human web approach promotes flourishing of persons and their communities by moving towards context and more collaboration (McClure, 2008:189; Muller-McLemore, 2018:311).

According to Muller-McLemore (2018:311), the introduction of the living human web has seen three trends identified as follows:

- the interest in congregational studies,
- the call for a new public theology, and
- the rise of liberation movements.

The above trends resonate well with the idea of addressing community structures in pastoral care. The reason is that the three trends do not only focus on an individual but are suggestive of wider social groups, which are in this case community structures. For instance, studying GBV within a religious community structure confirms “the congregational nature of pastoral care” (Muller-McLemore, 2018:321). This entails that apart from the pastor exercising public pastoral care alone; congregants are still able to engage in pastoral care among themselves through various church activities. Studying community structures in relation to social ills being

experienced helps to promote human flourishing within community structures. Thus, public pastoral care encourages diagnosis of oppressive structures, power imbalances, and promotes advocacy (Muller-McLemore, 2012:276).

Magezi states that, “the world that an individual Christian and the institutional church exists in is diverse and complex. Therefore, public theology is about being church in the world with its complexities” (Magezi, 2019:4). Some of the complexities are found in the church as a community structure and the surrounding communities with their beliefs and practices. An individual lives out the values and ethics of a particular community and communities live out what each individual accepts in society. With GBV in mind, a woman could be viewed as a window or entry point to the beliefs about community structures. It is commendable to focus on the women in pastoral care, but ultimately pastoral care analysis of community structures is paramount for transforming change. The thinking in the general community about women needs to change through public pastoral care.

Furthermore, liberation movements react against oppressive community structures in situations where gender inequality, poverty, oppression, *et cetera* prevail. Liberation movements are sometimes treated as controversial. Their motivation shares a concept of the living human web in seeking to address issues of gender, race, poverty and oppressive community structures to achieve structural change (Muller-McLemore, 2018:313). Tendencies of oppressive community structures exist in religious context and liberation movements have sometimes acted in ways that seek to address such oppressive structures. Through its pastoral care, the church also has a role to play in responding to the social ills caused by community structures.

Does this mean the church utilises the same motives used by liberation movements to curb GBV? The motives used by the liberation movements may differ from the church’s approach in responding to issues that affect human flourishing in community structures. The church and the liberation movements maintain the same underpinning motive of encouraging a living human web in addressing social ills. However, the difference lies in that the church draws its motivation from what the Bible teaches as it seeks to transform community structures. Magezi advances that, “the church has to influence and embody the ethical and moral standards expected by society” (Magezi, 2019:4) through relying on biblical principles. In doing so, public pastoral care should utilise dialogue for meaningful human flourishing. Dialogue allows

community structures to re-examine themselves and pave the way towards addressing issues of the marginalised as a priority (Magezi, 2019:4).

It has been observed that discussion about church and academia are operational but there is little focus on society (Magezi, 2019:5). Failure to focus on society in public pastoral care means society remains unchanged and would continue to perpetuate oppressive tendencies. Making reference to Moseley (1990), McLemore says that pastoral care should be understood as the care of society (Muller-McLemore, 2018:313). Dealing with society is important because human pain and suffering is not only individual but societal as reflected in broader relationships and structures which humans interact with (Muller-McLemore, 2018:313).

In relation to GBV, community structures play a role in how women fit in and behave in society. As discussed earlier, a woman is representative of or a window through which we learn how community structures view women. For instance, a woman could be appointed president or pastor and still fail to represent women well, because the dictates of the structure that appointed her determine whom she should serve. In this way, her behaviour or performance serves as a 'dipstick' that measures how the structures treat women. This means the church as an institutional structure should be able to critically analyse and address community structures through public pastoral care. This is possible if the church could rigorously explain its context theologically and biblically in order to assist the community structures to address the situations in an imaginative and Christ-like manner (Magezi, 2019:5).

The church utilises a congregational dimension in its practice of public pastoral care. This means the congregation in itself is a community structure with beliefs and values that influence a view and perception of women as evident in behaviour. On the other hand, a good congregation acts as a context of care. There is need for fresh commitment by the congregation and broader community structures to cherish the heart of pastoral care and not the clergy alone (Muller-McLemore, 2018:316; Kerlin, 2014: 14). Citing Brita Gill-Austen (1995), Muller-McLemore (2018: 316) refers to, "the 'ecology of care' within congregations when engaging in pastoral care." Muller-McLemore (2018) when alluding to Patton (1983) who states that the European mentality of pastoral care used to be that of the clergy, makes a further valid point. She says the shift has been that both clergy and laity are able to offer care in various contexts and Christian communities (Muller-McLemore, 2018:316). Apart from the former European perspective, the African theologian has had a better appreciation of "the community in giving

care” (Muller-McLemore, 2018:316), since the African philosophy of life is predominantly communal. In her article *Pastoral Care* among the three developments in pastoral care, Muller-McLemore (2012:275) states, “the move away from the model of care for an individual by ordained professionals toward the model of care for the community and its members by the community and its members.”

The theologian in any context needs not to be naïve about the complications involved when taking pastoral care to the public (community structures) (Leslie, 2008:95). Such complications arise from those we seek to minister to who may not be Christians. In such situations the biblical mandate to love a stranger and show compassion as a neighbour prevails (Luke 10:27). Such love should be able to meet the stranger where he is theologically, emotionally, physically, culturally and communally (Leslie, 2008:95).

The congregational (communal) dimension to pastoral care is a concept that can be learned from the early stages of the church in Acts 2:42-47. Believers met and cared for one another in fellowship. Wotton (2017:8) says, “...done they can be the foundation of good soul care, offering networks to establish friendships and support groups whose primary focus is to care for the needs of the group, offering support, care and encouragement...”. This promotes holistic quality of life that lasts to eternity as opposed to just a change of oppressive structure without a change of heart. Citing Nauer (2010), Louw states that, “A credible, reliable and sustainable understanding of pastoral caregiving is possible only with the emphasis on quality and the understanding of the Christian tradition of wisdom with its emphasis on compassion, faith and God” (Louw 2015:3). In other words, life in full (authentic life as God gives it to humanity) is our goal in public pastoral care. This makes our approach to public pastoral care in challenging community structures different from liberation movements or gender activists. Both liberation movements and the church have concern for the oppressed and suffering. However, what we do as a church is motivated by the love and compassion of Christ which compels us (2 Cor. 5:14). It must be acknowledged too that being compelled by the love of Christ does not mean that we understand all that is involved in community structures instantly. Muller-McLemore (2018:318) cautions that we “must admit our inability to fully comprehend and respond to the oppressions suffered by others.” Such limitations are real and pastoral caregivers should be willing to give up on finding solutions but earnestly seek to empower those around us to make their own decisions (Muller-McLemore, 2012:275). In view of such complexities that public

pastoral caregivers might encounter, Muller-McLemore (citing Gunderson 1997) makes the following point, quoted in its entirety.

As a foundational responsibility, good pastoral care builds a community in member accompany one another through the many complexities of life, creates a welcoming and inclusive place where the faithful and seekers alike convene to find God and each other, mobilizes the community to give sanctuary in which the wounded can rest when buffeted by life's storms, and takes up the task of celebration and remembrance, retelling the stories of the community, thus remembering it. In this model, then, the community becomes both the subject and the agent of care (Muller-McLemore, 2012:275-276).

The church and community structures should be informed by the biblical notion of pastoral care as the point of departure.

7.6. Biblical notions of public pastoral care

The Bible gives a normative and authoritative approach to public pastoral care. Williams (2014:160) states that, "There are hundreds of verses in the Bible on varying definitions of the poor, social justice, and God's deep concern for those who have been marginalized." Public pastoral care originates with God who revealed himself to humankind through many ways in biblical history culminating with the incarnation of Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2). Juma (2015) relying on Fowler (1983) elaborates on revelation, "as the act of God, entering the human sphere to reveal himself and commune with His creation" (Juma, 2015:10). The reason God revealed himself to humankind is primarily his love and care for his creation as demonstrated by sending his Son to die for the world (John 3:16) (Hendriks, 2007:1004). This section explores the biblical notion of public pastoral care. To fulfil this, the study will demonstrate the public nature of God in pastoral care to people through biblical examples. The study will also wrestle with the following two questions: How does pastoral care become public? Within public issues, what is it that is termed pastoral care? The concept of public pastoral care will be explored from the OT and NT. Cross-referencing will be utilised using the OT and NT to validate a point where necessary.

7.6.1. Public pastoral care notion in the Old Testament

The notion of public pastoral care has its roots in the OT where we find the origins of humanity and how God demonstrates pastoral care to humanity. Public pastoral care is actually God's character and his manner of dealing with the social ills that concerned Israel as a nation. There

are times when God dealt with a particular individual in a public pastoral care manner, but the overall lesson(s) was intended for both the individual and Israel as a nation. Public pastoral care originates with God as the commonly known Psalm 23:1-6 confirms and as identified in “God-human relationships” (Louw, 1998:83). *Cura animarum*, which is care of human souls (Louw, 1998:1), remains the controlling focus of pastoral care in God-human relationships. “Concepts of God” (Louw, 1998:82) that have public pastoral care understandings correctly position us on how we could become public in pastoral care and conceptualise better what is termed pastoral care within public issues. To demonstrate the public pastoral care notion in the OT, I have chosen a few OT⁶¹ incidences to illustrate the nature of public pastoral care.

7.6.1.1. *The temptation and disruption of the image of Genesis 3*

In attempting to understand the biblical notion of public pastoral care, the temptation in Genesis 3 shows the disruption of the image of God in man. That led to humankind’s inability to fully reflect the image of God and live for each other. The Genesis 3 narrative demonstrates God’s public care for his people in an environment where man alienates himself from God through disobedience. God demonstrated pastoral care and fellowship with humanity at individual and communal levels. For instance, when sin marred the image of God between God and man in Genesis 3, God publicly looked out for Adam with a restorative aim (Genesis 3:9). After publicly and pastorally engaging Adam and Eve; God restored the fellowship between him and them (Genesis 3:21). In these initial stages of humanity, it is clear that God cares about the human situation which in this case is man alienating himself from God because of his choice to disobey the Creator.

The Genesis 3 narrative shows the degeneration of society (Adam and Eve) from the perfection portrayed in Gen.1:31 (Wenham, 1994:62) where God pronounced that everything he had made “was very good”. The peace and harmony that Adam and Eve were supposed to enjoy from God was ruined by the marred image of God. The lure of instant pleasure and gratification led the two to breach God’s command not to eat of the fruit (Wenham, 1994:63; Ross, 1985:34). In Genesis 3:9-20, both Adam and Eve are compassionately approached by God. The questions framed by God are designed to induce a spirit of confession for their salvation. The lasting effects of disobedience by humanity are pronounced with the warfare between man and the

⁶¹ The following biblical passages in both Old and New Testaments are not meant to be an exegetical analysis. They are simply illustrative of the notion of public pastoral care in the Bible.

serpent (Gen.3:15). This is an ongoing to a long-term battle but there is promise of hope in Gen. 3:15 in that man will crush the head of the serpent. A hint of a future Saviour for humanity is alluded to in Genesis 3:15 with allusions to this echoed in Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14 and Rev. 12 (Wenham, 1994:63). Instead of letting man and woman instantly face death (Ezek.18:20; Rom.6:23) God demonstrates his long-suffering and patience with his humanity (Longman III & Dillard, 2006:57). Though the couple lived outside the garden, they were saved by God and restored back to fellowship with him. The animal skins that God covered the couple with constantly reminded them of God's provision (Gen.3:21). God graciously responded to Adam and Eve to mitigate against death (Longman III and Dillard 2006:57). This was fulfilled in Christ where God accepted the sacrifice of his Son to clothe believers in righteousness (Rom.3:21-26) (Ross, 1985:33).

Out of love and compassion, God intentionally took the initiative to seek out Adam and Eve as a demonstration of public pastoral care. Since love and compassion are some of God's attributes, he made these visible and actualised to Adam and Eve. In his demonstration of public pastoral care in this narrative, the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience remain; though completely forgiven. The man now had to labour for food and the woman had to experience pain in childbirth (Gen. 3:16-18). In exercising public pastoral care, God shows that "punishment does not exclude mercy, and that his mercy does not exclude judgment" (Assohoto & Ngewa, 2006: 65). It would be misleading to think of public pastoral care where consequences to sin or retribution do not exist. It is also important to learn from God, particularly the manner in which he forgives and still allows the result(s) of sin to be felt without harming the person, but promoting a sense of human flourishing for individuals and society.

Pastoral care in this case became public when God cared for humanity (Adam and Eve). God's acts of public pastoral care are directed at healing the estranged souls, sustaining them by giving hope, guiding them to confession and reconciling them back to Himself for fellowship (Clebsch & Jaekles, 1964: 4). Furthermore, pastoral care is seen in engaging them in a discussion and provision of coverings for their naked bodies. The care of souls and physical provisions for the body coverings in this narrative are evidence of public pastoral care in a holistic manner. It follows that pastoral theologians should reflect on the nature of God by being equally constrained by love and compassion (2 Corinthians 5:14) to publicly care for human situations.

Graham states that, “when pastoral theology engages *the*⁶² dimensions of care, it takes on a ‘public’ nature, and finds affinities with other forms of public theology” (Graham, 2000:6; Arnold, 1982: 15). In practising public pastoral care, the church is regarded as an interpretive community in a world with social ills and must constantly seek to engage with God’s patterns of praxis (Hendriks, 2007:1011). With the God-human relationships as seen in the Genesis 3 narrative the church should show practical concern couched in love and compassion to issues that affect people in and outside the church (Hurding, 1995:45).

7.6.1.2. *The murder story of Cain and Abel*

The undergirding notion of public pastoral care as cure of souls is further alluded to in the Cain and Abel narrative of Genesis Chapter 4. This narrative is a further depiction of the flaw or lack of human flourishing in the community, which starts in Genesis 3. Eve conceived and gave birth to Cain and she said, “I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord” (Gen.4:1). She still acknowledges the soul healing and reconciliation she learned from God in chapter 3. Later she gave birth to Abel who kept sheep, while Cain worked in the fields.

The public issue or social ill becomes clear and discernible when the two brothers brought the produce of their labour as offerings before the Lord (Gen. 4:4-5). God accepted or showed favour for Abel’s offering and did not approve of Cain’s offering. Abel presented what aligned very well with Leviticus 3:16, “a pleasing aroma to God” (Assohoto & Ngewa, 2006: 67). As to how they knew what was desirable to God as a suitable offering we may speculate (scripture is silent particularly in the case of Cain and Abel) that God had told them or they learnt from their parents (Assohoto & Ngewa, 2006:67). Cain presents a marred image of God by murdering his brother (Gen.4:6-8) out of jealousy when God had disregard for his offering (Wenham, 1994:64). God identified the social ill of disobedience, jealousy and murder.

God publicly approached Cain and confronted him about his behaviour which he openly denied and made fun of (Gen.4:9) (Wenham, 1994:64). Cain’s sin affected not only Abel, but his community and ultimately God. To show his pastoral care for Cain God takes the initiative to ask him, with the intention to restore his soul. The opportunity for such restoration is discerned in the words of God, “If you do well, will you not be accepted. And if you do not do well, sin

⁶² Not in the original words

is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it” (Gen.4:7). Thus, God’s public pastoral care is focused on restoring Cain back to Him.

Pastoral care can sometimes be confrontational with the goal of dealing with a social ill motivated by love and compassion for people. Wisdom should be applied to decide on the most suitable approach in each situation. Public pastoral care should lovingly and compassionately confront complexities of life, like jealousy and murder that affect society. It also guides people towards transformation as seen in God giving room for Cain to change, though he seems to nature a desire to transgress more (Gen.4:23). Guiding people to make prudent choices in public pastoral care does not isolate the merciful judgement of God as seen with Cain (Gen. 4:13) (Benner, 2003:15). What is also pastoral, is that God gives room for reconciliation to Cain though he (Cain) snubs the opportunity. In pastoral care, such reconciliation has in view restoration of the damaged image of God among people and God himself (Benner, 2003:15). This promotes the common God for the people concerned and rethinking of better solutions to deal with a social problem. Citing Leslie (2008) Magezi (2019:5) elaborates that pastoral care that shifts to public pastoral care allows for practical avenues towards healing in the public space. God demonstrated his public pastoral care by confronting Cain (promoting dialogue), by sparing him from death, by according him a chance to do well and punishing him publicly for his own good and the community around him.

7.6.1.3. God’s deliverance of Israel from Egyptian oppression

The biblical notion of public pastoral care is further demonstrated by God in the deliverance of Israel as a nation from Egyptian slavery. God’s public demonstration of love undergirds his care for Israel (Exodus 19:4; 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Chronicles 6:14; Psalm 98:3; Psalm 130:7; Psalm 136:11; Hosea 3:1). The deliverance came after God saw (Exod. 3:7) and could not bear any longer the pain, suffering, disorientation, slavery, murder and exploitation of the Jews by the Egyptians (Exod. 3:7-9). These were some of the public anomalies suffered by the Jews. Through visible acts, God came alongside to answer the plea of the suffering Jews through the human agency of Moses (Exod. 3:10). The Lord knew that Moses could not quickly accept (Exod.3:11) the public task of delivering his fellow Jews. God had to remind Moses of His public pastoral care for Moses’s forefathers, “...I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exod. 3:6). In mentioning the patriarchs, God is reminding Moses of his ever-abiding presence (Exod. 3:12) (public nature) and pastoral

care. It also shows that there is “continuity between the patriarchs and Israelite nation both in the present and in the future” (Ndjerareou, 2006:91).

Inherent in his name “LORD” (“I am what I am”, or “I will be what I will be”) is also the unchanging, loving and compassionate character of God. God gave Moses and Israel the assurance that “he has always existed and will always exist. It is assurance of permanent presence among his people” (Ndjerareou, 2006: 91). Presence in this case means being active through visible acts of compassion and care for His people. God as the divine deliverer expresses the pertinent pastoral care aspect through Moses by divine acts and signs. After such visible acts of deliverance, the Lord said to Israel, “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagle’s wings and brought you to myself” (Exodus 19:4). Public pastoral care should create or facilitate comfort, liberate and instil hope in the lives of the suffering (Louw, 1998:74). As already mentioned above public pastoral care has as its goal to reconcile people to God, to heal and guide them (Benner, 2003: 15).

Public pastoral care is evident when God interfaces with human challenges and cares about the longings of human beings (Juma, 2015:3). In their wilderness experiences, God’s public response to the plight of Israel revealed some of His pastoral care attributes and divine nature (Hanson, 2017:27). Moses describes such public pastoral attributes as the God who is merciful, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving and not overlooking sin (Exodus 34:6-7a).

In addition, Moses and Israel were accustomed to the presence of the Lord, which demonstrated His public pastoral care. For instance, in Exodus 33:14 Moses said, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here” and the Lord had promised that, “My presence will go with you and I will give you rest” (Exodus 33:14). Thus, God living among his people and caring for them is a clear public pastoral care notion in scripture. Where care exists, reciprocity is expected from those that have received pastoral care. The community of Israel was not passive and dormant but gave a response to God based on what they had witnessed and learned about God’s public pastoral care. On behalf of Israel’s community Miriam and her maidens composed and sang a song to God (Exodus 15:20-21) (Hanson, 2017: 27). This means public pastoral care that accurately speaks to the human situation should evoke a response. The response serves as a marker to detect if restoration and transformation has occurred in the community receiving the pastoral care. Thus, when the Lord said Israel had to deal justly with others and not oppress people because they were once oppressed; Israel had to listen (Exodus

23:9). A transformed community should equally seek to transform others through public pastoral care acts. God had taught Israel that oppression is inhumane and degrading. Israel had to behave like a transformed community on this aspect (and others) and had to extend public pastoral care to those in need of it.

The following section pays attention to the prophets by focusing on selected instances to highlight the notion of public pastoral care. For the purposes of this research, the selected examples will do well to serve the purpose of the following section.

7.6.1.4. God's public pastoral care through Judges

The book receives its name from the 'rulers' or 'judges' who guided the fortunes of Israel between the death of Joshua and the rise of Solomon (Harrison, 1969:366). Webb (2001: 261) states that, "much of the book is devoted to account of the reigns of Israel's kings, beginning with Saul, David and Solomon" (Webb, 1994:261). The special relationship that God had with Israel is expressed as judgement and salvation in the Israelite history based on their covenant relationship with God (Webb, 1994:26). Judges were raised by God to execute leadership, judgement, driving out enemies and to settle disputes among the Israelites. In other words, judges were appointed to deal with social and political public issues that hampered human flourishing among the Israelites. God demonstrates his public pastoral care for Israel through the appointed judges. Sometimes, such public pastoral care was inconvenienced both by the disobedience of the judge and Israelites when they had disregard of the covenant by doing what was good in their own eyes (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The individualistic attitude in the community of Israel served as a source of oppression and marginalisation of other people.

The Judges are viewed as people who "saved" the nation of Israel from the public issue of oppression (2:16; 3:9, 31; 8:22; 13:5). Characteristic of the entire book of Judges is the sin of the nation of Israel, oppression by foreign nation(s), prayers for deliverance and that God pardons his people. The individual public issues of oppression, leadership crisis, poverty, bad governance (Adeyemo, 2006:295-296) and GBV (Judg. 19) expressed in Judges are reminiscent of the public issues confronting the church today. The Judges like Gideon, Jephthah and Samson had their own flaws as they led Israel. Yet God still worked through such leaders to deliver his people from the hand of the enemy and social ills that affected individuals and

the nation (Adeyemo, 2006:296). God's public pastoral care is evident in his forbearance over the nation of Israel's constant disobedience to adhere to the covenant stipulations.

Through his love and compassionate care, God constantly cared for Israel. Though he used human Judges to exercise care over his people, God is the ultimate judge over Israel. His presence during the reign of each Judge was evidence of public pastoral care as the following verse suggests, "Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them" (Judg. 2:18; cf. 10:11-12). The notion of the public pastoral care of God is evident in being the judge, pitying his people for the pain and oppression they went through and eventually delivering his people. The deliverance of God's people in Judges is further echoed in Psalm 3:8; cf., Psalms 37:39; 62:6-7, where we learn that, "Salvation belongs to the LORD". This means the LORD is the only true saviour of His people (Sproul, 2015: 352).

7.6.1.5. The calling of prophets and their roles as demonstration of public pastoral care

The biblical notion of public pastoral care is also demonstrated in the calling and ministries of the biblical prophets. Contexts of pain, suffering, oppression and injustice continued to dominate the biblical history of human beings. God did not remain silent and condoning of the social ills of that society. Through prophets (major and minor) who spoke as His mouthpiece, God's will and public pastoral care remained clear for the common good of society. The prophets communicated God's intentions and will for his people. Biblical prophecy was clustered around times of crisis, which included religious and political crises as public concerns. There were messages for kings and common people that aimed to address anomalies of society (Hill & Walton, 2009: 159) in order to promote human flourishing.

In a public pastoral care manner, God continued to meet people where they were theologically, emotionally, physically, culturally and communally (Leslie, 2008:95). God never intended his will for the people to be hidden as he addressed the social problems of society (Isaiah 13-23) in the prophetic era. God did not hide his light from the public; rather through his agents, he made his light visible to the public. He publicly spoke against evil and oppression with a promise to deliver and restore his people, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save or his ear dull, that it cannot hear" (Isaiah 59:1). God's promise to listen and prevent

the suffering is a clear declaration of his public pastoral care against public issues that concerned Israel and other nations. At the core of his public pastoral care is the restoration of human worth and dignity (Koopman, 2012:2; Juma, 2015:5; Hendriks, 2007:1004; Masango, 2010:1).

For example, God set Ezekiel as a watchman in Ezekiel 33 as a further demonstration of the concept of public pastoral care (soul care). “People that have been broken and expelled from their land are promised healing, restoration and return to their ancestral land” (Habtu, 2006:997). The watchman’s role was to identify an upcoming public social ill (the enemy) and because of devotion and love for his people, he had to herald the coming of the enemy to save his people. The watchman draws his role and character from God as the ultimate watchman in pastoral care. The image of a watchman calls for a place of prominence (literally) for easy viewing and warning for the nation’s safety. Hence, the ministry is both public and calls for a pastoral care disposition; without it one cannot be a watchman. In this image, God is the ultimate watchman (through human agency) over the issues confronting Israel.

God accused the nations in Amos 1:3-2:16 of crimes against humanity. The crimes included physical violence and oppression of the less privileged in society by the rich. The longest accusation is pronounced against Israel (Amos 2:6-16). Israel should have treated others better given its history of being oppressed (as mentioned already) in Egypt and later divinely delivered by God. It is a community of faith that has forgotten to appropriate its story in order to understand its identity (Hendriks, 2007: 1004) and how it should behave in a transforming manner. Thus, through Amos (and other prophets) God confronts social ills for the restoration of society. In that context, God revealed himself as the God who listened to the cries of the suffering people who had no social standing (Hendriks, 2007:1007). The biblical prophetic literature is littered with many examples on public pastoral care. However, God’s public pastoral care was also demonstrated to non-Israelite people.

7.6.1.6. God’s pastoral care to non-Israelites

The Israelite Yahweh demonstrated public pastoral care to Israel as an under-shepherd to other nations. There were many times when Israel failed to represent God through their disobedience. The Lord pastorally demonstrated love, compassion, patience, steadfastness and constant forgiveness as seen in these verses: Num. 14:8; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15, 103:8, 145:18, Nah. 1:3,

Jonah 4:2. However, it is important to note that God's public pastoral care was not limited to Israel alone. Beyond the nation of Israel, the Lord showed love, compassion and forgiveness to foreign nationalities as his broader public pastoral care as seen in 1 Kings 8:60ff; 1 Samuel 17:46 c.f Philippians 2:10 and Revelation 7:9-12. For example, Rahab (and her family) a non-Israelite woman is saved physically and spiritually from destruction (Joshua 6:17). In addition, the inclusion of the Gibeonites among the Israelites (though through deceptive means) reveals God's public pastoral concern for nations outside Israel (Joshua 9). A pagan and most cruel city of Nineveh receives love and compassion from God through a reluctant preacher (Jonah 1-4).

The biblical prophets further preached to foreign nations as a way of showing God's pastoral concern for them. By demonstrating his public pastoral care to nations, God was also challenging institutions of society to conform to his will. Finally, the Lord constantly reminded Israel that they had been slaves in Egypt (Lev.26:13). Consequently, Israel was mandated to show love and compassion to poor and marginalised people in their societies regardless of their nationality (Deut. 24:17-22). Drawing from God's public pastoral role, it emerges that the church should learn that God holistically cared for the physical and spiritual needs of people. The church as a representative of God in society must intentionally go beyond its members in caring for the poor, sick and marginalised of society.

7.6.2. Public pastoral care notion in the New Testament

The NT sheds light on the biblical notion of public pastoral care. The commandment to love one's neighbour, as yourself (Matt.22:39) remains key as the NT interprets the OT (Kerlin, 2014:2; Leslie, 2008:95-96). The ministry of Jesus best demonstrates how the Matthew 22:39 teaching can be lived out in a manner that promotes human well-being. Leslie alludes to the complexities that might be involved as we seek to live out our Christian faith among unbelievers (Leslie, 2008:95). Jesus presents the ideal public pastoral care in such complexities by addressing different socially dehumanising issues of society among people with various religious perceptions and motives. I have selected a few passages to highlight the notion of public pastoral care.

7.6.2.1. *The incarnational nature of Jesus's public ministry as an act of public pastoral care (John 1:14)*

John 1:14 is important to study in seeking to establish the biblical notion of public pastoral care. Key in this verse is the phrase, "...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us". This verse also summarises the birth of Jesus (Mt.1:18-25; Lk.2:1-7 cf. Isa. 7:10-14). Jesus's taking on of human flesh and entry in human life is public identification with human social conditions. "The divine word had become the human Jesus" (Guthrie, 1994:1026). The Word dwelt among humanity and this recalls God in the OT dwelling among his people (Exod.13:21) in the tabernacle. Since the dwelling of Jesus among humanity was a public event John (the author) testifies to seeing him and beholding his glory. The entire ministry of Jesus was possible and able to interact because he identified with humanity through the incarnation. For example, immediately after establishing that the word became flesh in John 1:14, the following section John 2:1-12:50 demonstrates the public ministry of Jesus. This means the incarnation of Jesus was intended to love, sympathise, restore and heal the social ills of communities. The incarnation culminating in the death and resurrection of Jesus serves as demonstration of God being with humanity (Magezi, 2017:5).

Incarnational public pastoral care allows for Christians to be "able to contribute towards dealing with current vexing problems, locally and contextually" (Hendriks, 2007:1009). As a notion of biblical pastoral care, being incarnational is linked with visibility and relational as one seeks to address human situations. Jesus lived in a manner that displayed "grace and truth" which John still recalls when he penned the fourth gospel. This means another aspect of incarnational pastoral care is the commitment to live out the "theological beliefs and values" (Magezi, 2018: 6; De Villiers, 2005:530) in and outside the church context by the community of faith. Jesus adapted to the human situation through his incarnational ministry. This is one of the key elements that makes pastoral care public. Without the incarnational aspect, pastoral public care ceases to be public and fails to address public issues affecting the community. This means public pastoral care must be incarnational through adapting to the current human situation (Juma, 2015; Magezi, 2018:128). Incarnational pastoral care also means that the pastor engages language that is understood by his audience (Magezi, 2018:6). Incarnational public pastoral care, must be "a representation of the living presence of the Lord" (Louw, 1998:24) among his people. The beginning of Jesus's ministry further displays the biblical notion of public pastoral care in Luke 4:16-19.

7.6.2.2. *The public pastoral care ministry of Jesus in Luke 4:16-19*

Masango in his article: *Is prophetic witness the appropriate mode of public discourse on the global community?* comments on Jesus's words in Luke 4:18 (Isa.61:1-2) as marking the beginning of Jesus's public ministry (Masango, 2010:1). After completing the Jewish rites Jesus makes a public announcement in Nazareth of such public ministry as follows (Lk.4:18-19) (Isaak, 2006:1239):

- to proclaim the good news to the poor
- to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
- to give sight to the blind
- to release the oppressed
- to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Jesus's approach to ministry in the text under consideration reflected a public pastoral care approach. He publicly challenged the existing religious beliefs that failed to liberate communities and social structures. Thus, theology (in particular public theology), "should be concerned with how Christian faith addresses matters in society at large. It is concerned with the 'public relevance' of Christian beliefs and doctrines" (Williams, 2014:159).

The five-fold public ministry in Luke 4:18-19 is summarised as a liberation message (Isaak, 2006:1239) and clearly identifies the public issues that warranted Jesus's public pastoral care. His public announcement or proclamation of his liberation message emerges from a heart of love and compassion for the poor, prisoners, blind, oppressed in need of God's favour; for the common good of society. The ministry of Christ in this passage both challenges and sets an example for pastoral care ministry to be public (Masango, 2010:1) through identifying social problems that oppress people. Motivated by love for the suffering public and seeking to transform their living conditions is the public pastoral care we learn from Christ. In doing so, the truth claims we make about God must be relevant in that they satisfy the demands of public discourse (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:12).

He ministered to and cared for those in degrading human conditions such as the poor, captives, blind and oppressed. This echoes Isaiah 61:1-2. Public pastoral care should be able to speak for the voiceless and marginalised in our communities (Fiorenza, 1990:131). Examples of the marginalised and despised people during Jesus's ministry included the Samaritan woman (John

4), widows (Luke 7:11-17), healing of a woman with issue of blood for 12 years (Luke 8:43ff), healing of a woman with a disabling spirit (Luke 13:10ff) *et cetera*.

Seeking to satisfy the public demands comes with complexities of opposition and rejection from the public audience. Jesus was not spared from opposition in his confrontation of oppressive situations in society. To navigate through unwelcome situations in public pastoral care demands wisdom as seen in Jesus's life as he grew in wisdom, stature and in favour with men and God (Lk. 2:52). What is this wisdom in public pastoral care? McLemore provides a clear and concise explanation of such wisdom. She states, "Wisdom here refers to the deep or insightful understanding of life and people achieved through reflective and integrated experience" (McLemore, 2012:274-275). Thus, in addition to love and compassion that Jesus had for the marginalised, the utilisation of wisdom in interacting with each situation played an important role.

Jesus began his ministry by participating in the public sphere and he clearly outlined what he would do about public issues that affected individuals and society (Masango, 2010:2). Masango further advances that, Jesus started by addressing the people's situation and then challenged the system that oppressed them (Masango, 2010:2). This means clear conceptualisation of the situation takes precedence in public pastoral care before framing of pastoral care ministries (Koppel, 2015:151-152). The soul care aspect and physical transformation is also an aspect of Jesus's public pastoral care ministry. Citing Greider, McLemore notes that we need to cultivate the soul's care aspect in pastoral care "in contextually appropriate ways" with emphasis on human well-being as the goal of public pastoral care (McLemore, 2012:319; McClure, 2008:199).

Above all the notion public pastoral care in the Luke passage by Jesus was dependent on the empowering Spirit of the Lord (Lk.4:18) and seeking to liberate the marginalised and oppressed in society by existing community structures. Hendriks (2007:1002) states that the Holy Spirit is the power of faith communities that leads to conversion, which is a form of transformation that changes attitudes and intentions. Jesus proclaimed that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. The role of the Spirit allows public pastoral givers to accord a voice to the speechless, give eyes to see and understand things better, liberate the oppressed and restore back to the community the marginalised.

7.6.2.3. *Compassion stories as public pastoral care in Matthew, Mark and Luke*

The public nature of God in public pastoral care is further demonstrated in what I have termed compassion stories in the synoptic gospels. In discussing these stories, I will focus mainly on the theme of compassion in selected passages. I also would like to clarify that though I am focusing on compassion, we need to bear in mind that compassion springs from a sacrificial type of love for people. Hence, the controlling lens for compassion is love.

The word ‘compassion’ means “to have pity, a feeling of distress through the ills of others or to be moved as to one’s inwards (*splanchna*), to be moved with compassion, to yearn with compassion” (Vine, Unger & White, 1985:116). The word is used often in connection with Jesus’s ministry to the multitude and individuals (Vine, Unger & White 1985: 116) with socially, physically and spiritually depressing public conditions. The following chosen passages reveal the public compassionate nature of Jesus’s public pastoral care.

First, in Matthew 9:35-36, Jesus dealt with public issues like liberating people from demon oppression, healing different diseases and public oppressing issues. When he set his eyes on the crowds of people, “...he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36 cf. Matt.14:14; 15:32; Mk. 6:34; Mk.8:2). Jesus knew from experience the human conditions that made the crowd (people) look like sheep without a shepherd (Kapolyo, 2006:1156), such that he was moved with compassion. The passage is suggestive of socially oppressing structures affecting the crowd and their inability to emerge victorious from the oppression. Kapolyo further states that,

...politically, they bore the burden of heavy taxes, servitude and human rights violations. Their religious leaders were not providing teaching, pastoral care or help with material needs. They endured leprosy, fevers, chronic illnesses, demon possession, blindness, paralysis and many other troubles (Kapolyo, 2006:1156).

In this situation through compassion, Jesus provided public pastoral care through restoring, healing and challenging oppressive political and religious structures. God’s public nature is demonstrated not only in identifying the social, physical and political ills affecting the crowd, but also by further showing compassionate care to the suffering. Citing Heitink, Louw states that, “pastoral care can be typified as an encounter with the Gospel in these four biblical areas: compassion, grace, living care, salvation and service” (Louw, 1998:24). In his article: *On facing the God-question in pastoral theology of compassion: From imperialistic omni-categories to*

theopaschitic pathos-categories, Louw argues for a sustainable God to reframe a compassionate presence against ‘zombie categories’ of Christian spirituality (Louw, 2011:1). Instead of being passive, pastoral care should actively detect social ills and imagine ways of addressing the inhumane conditions facing mankind.

The second chosen passage that demonstrates public pastoral care through compassion is Luke 10:33. This verse occurs in the context of the parable of the good Samaritan in which a man was attacked by robbers and, “left half dead” (v.30). Particularly the parable is told in response to a lawyer who had asked Jesus the following question, “Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” The parable illustrates what it means for one to love his neighbour through compassionate care. To teach his audience about compassionate care Jesus utilised three characters in this parable.

The priest and Levite did not show compassion for the man. Jesus deliberately made the socially despised Samaritan a hero in the parable. The Samaritan showed public pastoral care by feeling compassion, identifying the need and offered healing practical care to the victim. Isaak (2006: 1251) states that, “The Samaritan was moved with compassion that overcame religious and racial animosity and he treated the Jew with a sense of Ubuntu”. This means gender, race, creeds or societal classification should not impede the clergy and laity from demonstrating pastoral care but must be the reasons for pastoral care to be made public. The parable shows us what it means to be human and humane (Isaak, 2006:1251). On the other hand, the parable, through the priest and the Levite also challenges private religious understandings of the church which fail to impact those around us and our communities.

The attitude displayed by the Samaritan aligned very well with the public pastoral care ministry of Jesus. Particularly Jesus had compassion for the tax collectors (Matt. 11:19 cf. Mk 2:16; Lk.7:34; Mt.11:19), associated with them and strived for their holistic transformation. His pastoral care was primarily focused on the house of Israel (Matt 15:24), but this did not deter him from showing compassion to prostitutes and tax collectors (Matt. 21:31). The concern and broader mission (beyond the house of Israel) of Jesus was focused on the outcasts and poor of society whom he said would join the messianic banquet (Matt. 14:16-24; John 3:17) (Isaak, 2006:1251). Public pastoral care should seek to identify and address the needs of society so as “to promote a culture of human dignity and social justice” (Isaak, 2006:1221).

7.6.2.4. *Shepherding role of Jesus and the apostles as public pastoral care*

Apart from being compassionate, the nature of Jesus's ministry did not remain shrouded and undefined. Jesus used the shepherd metaphor for himself as the good shepherd and mentioned that he sacrificed his life for the sheep (John 10:11). The shepherd metaphor is a key concept utilised in Jesus's public pastoral care (Potgieter, 2015:1). The metaphor involves compassion (Mark 8:2) and suggests deep care as displayed in the public ministry of Jesus. Shepherding involves the concept of finding, nurturing and restoring back to the community of faith for growth (Masango, 2010:3). All the healings, rebukes, encouragement, miraculous provisions of food *et cetera* affirm the notion of public pastoral care by Jesus.

Jesus calls himself the good shepherd (John 10). The primary quality of a good shepherd is his willingness to sacrifice himself for the sheep. Jesus spoke about giving up his own life (Guthrie, 1994: 1047). We know very well we cannot literally die like Jesus, but we could certainly give sacrificial love and devotion in our pastoral care. The aspect of self-sacrifice as shepherding reaches its peak in Philippians 2:6-9 when we read that Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of humanity's salvation. This means in public pastoral care a shepherd (pastor) exists to serve the sheep (the marginalised) (Masango 2010:3). Shepherding also involves mutual knowledge of the shepherd and the sheep such that sheep know the voice of the shepherd (John 10: 3-4). In addition, the shepherd leads the sheep out, "...goes before them, and sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (John 10:4). Public pastoral care as shepherding looks out for the needs of the people and seeks to address them. Out of love and devotion, the shepherd carries the burden of the weak sheep (Matt.11:28-30). Carrying of the yoke as a shepherd demonstrates the public nature of God's pastoral care to the world.

The shepherding ministry/role of Jesus did not end with his ascension. Instead, he commissioned his disciples who later became apostles, to continue with his shepherding care ministry. Couched in the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20) are some attributes of public pastoral care. Such attributes include the willingness to minister, calling disciples and teaching people to observe Christ's commandments. The future ministry of apostles hinged on the attributes of this commissioning to minister. Jesus wanted these men to be shepherds as could be understood from John 21:15-19 when Simon Peter is repeatedly instructed to feed Jesus's sheep. Feeding of the sheep no doubt assumes a shepherding role, which could only be executed from a pastoral care perspective.

Standing on the shoulders of Jesus, the apostles exercised healings, encouragements, rebukes *et cetera* in their public pastoral care. In his farewell to Ephesian elders Paul entreats the elders to protect the sheep/flock from the enemy (Acts 20:20-30). The notion of public pastoral care involves defending and protecting from both internal and external harm. Once more, the shepherd notion that was prevalent in the ministry of Christ is still in sight. All the shepherds perform their public pastoral care as shepherds by obeying the chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:4; 2:25; Hebrews 13:20; Revelation 7:17).

The incarnation of Jesus remains a constant public reminder for the church that pastoral care is public and transcendent of socio-religious boundaries in caring for humanity. Humanity in this case refers to Jew and Gentile. The church needs to challenge oppressive institutional, religious and social structures that negatively exploit women in many ways. The church must look out for demeaning human situations even outside of its membership and respond as God would. The neighbour concept should act as a challenge for the church to be sensitive and respond to other's conditions. The underpinning point in public pastoral care is addressing human situations and pointing humanity to God who revealed himself in Jesus and is now present to liberate people (Cone, 2000:31). Finally, the NT teaching mandates the community of faith/congregants to practise public pastoral care.

7.7. What difference does public pastoral care make for the church?

The church exists in a society and has a public role to play. Its inception in the NT already suggests that it has a public role to play in society. The community of faith is encouraged to do so by bearing burdens for each other (Galatians 6:1), praying for one another (James 5:6), encouraging one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11) and caring for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25) (Potgieter, 2015:2).

The interdependent relationship among believers as a community of faith points to a clear notion of public pastoral care. Thus, God has gifted (Ephesians 4:12) each member of the community in a unique manner for the building up and strengthening of each other (Potgieter, 2015:3). The equipping role of pastor assists the congregants to reach their maximum potential in practising public pastoral care. Potgieter states that, "throughout the existence of the Church, believers have continued to encourage, care for, and challenge each other" (Potgieter, 2015:3).

Given the above discussion, the research poses the following questions in relation to public pastoral care: How could the pastor and the church make a difference through public pastoral care ministry in ministerial contexts affected with GBV? How could the church move from being private to public in its ministerial approaches in relation to GBV? What models could be proposed that are aimed at eradicating GBV?

7.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented a conception of the church within practical ministry arguing for operative ecclesiology through utilising public pastoral care by the church in a context of GBV. It emerged that the church is a subsystem of society in the world and as such, the church has a key role to play in mitigating against GBV. However, the problem is that the church is not vigorously intentional in practising its pastoral care. It emerged that church fellowship must cultivate a context in which pastoral encounters with physical and spiritual needs of humanity are met. This entails an intentional recognition of social ills and creation of space to address issues like GBV. It was also argued that the church must be incarnational through its approach to its ministry and that being incarnational means to be present, public, prophetic and interacting with public issues affecting society.

The research revealed that the local church alone cannot practise public theology apart from the immediate and global community. There is also an intersection between public theology and public pastoral care. Public theology is used as a bigger social lens that assists us to frame pastoral care ministries (Koppel, 2015:151; Magezi, 2017: 2) that encourage the common good of society through the pastor and the church.

A definition of pastoral care and its history was also established. Pastoral care finds its origin in the Bible where the biblical culture utilised the shepherding concept extensively. The historical understanding of pastoral care was traced through the early church in the works of the church fathers, the middle ages, the reformation and the 20th century. It emerged that through the ages the concept of care, healing, restoration and guiding remain the undergirding issues in various epochs though the public issues dealt with were different. This means context is fluid but the meaning of pastoral care remains the same. It follows that the church must reflect on what is happening in its context and frame public pastoral care ministries to address the human situation.

Finally, the chapter assessed the biblical notion of public pastoral care from the OT and NT. The study revealed that God has always been public and cared in a public pastoral manner about issues affecting His people. He challenges the religious, social and political institutions of society that negatively oppress people. He presents himself as a divine deliverer and that the shepherd metaphor like Him sets the stage on how public pastoral care ought to be practised. Compassionate love is the controlling factor for God's public pastoral care within Israel and beyond non-Israelite nations.

Public pastoral care by the church draws from and is dependent on the manner in which God practises pastoral care in both the OT and NT. Therefore, the church can only practise public pastoral care by saying what God is in Christ regarding GBV. The chapter concluded with questions about pastoral care models for the church in a context of GBV. This leads the research to the next chapter about a responsive church-focused pastoral care model.

Chapter 8: Towards a public pastoral care responsive model to GBV: a UBCZ and broader church proposition

8.1. Introduction

This chapter proposes a responsive model to GBV in UBCZ within Zimbabwe and the broader church to prevent and mitigate the effects of the scourge of GBV. It presupposes that it is possible for an individual or a church to have a highly polished theology, “that could talk but that could not walk” (Anderson, 2001: 12). Anderson’s statement begs the following questions: What difference does theological research make towards holistic transformation of human life, in particular, to GBV? What are the practical implications of what was discussed in chapters 1-7? The church is acknowledged as a subsystem of society that exists in a community with a transformative role to play. This means the church does not exist independent of other societal entities like family, community and state. Instead, the church should intentionally create synergies and partnerships with these institutions in its response to GBV. The church has been blamed for its silence and complicity in the manner it deals with GBV. This chapter draws from chapters 1-7 to establish a church-focused responsive model to GBV. The model entails suggested principles, which hinge on the fact that the church exists for mediating the kingdom of God in word and deed (Col.3:17⁶³). The suggested principles entail a proposition for an embodiment of what it practically means to be a church in a context of GBV.

8.2. Locating the church in a larger community for public pastoral role: model presupposition

The church has a key public role to play in society (Hendriks, 2007:1000) to address the plague of GBV within itself and beyond. To deal with GBV effectively the church should experience change within itself first. The outside communities can only believe and accept what the church says, when the church ceases to be an accomplice of the phenomenon. The church cannot reach a satisfactory transformation and reception unless it properly represents God in the manner it treats women. Louw (1998) rightly states that, “The pastoral encounter implies more than only offering comfort and consolation. Transformation also forms an important dynamic in the pastoral encounter. Pastoral care is indeed about change and growth” (Louw, 1998: 71; c.f.

⁶³ “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father and through him” (ESV).

Graham, 2000:16; Ganzevoort, 2009:6). This means the church needs to have rigorous introspection of itself regarding how it handled GBV before it considers practising care to others.

To elaborate further on the aspect of change/transformation, Louw (1998) suggests three important points that act as aides and promoters of change within the fellowship ‘*koinonia*’ of believers. The first point is repentance ‘*metanoia*’, which he says should bring a radical change. He refers back to Jeremiah 8:6 where the concept of change is couched in the Hebrew word *niham* with the meaning of “...repenting of something and regret certain events” (Louw 1998:71). This is not just a turning away from sin but calls for further action accompanied by transformation. Thus, the church needs to turn away and transform from being an accomplice in fanning GBV. Second, he mentions the change of the person’s inner framework through pastoral care. This is a process in transformation with a new goal to be achieved. He calls this ‘influence’ or ‘*agogic*’. Third, he mentions the ongoing impact that pastoral care has on a person’s future lifestyle. This he calls sanctification (Louw, 1998:71-72; Heitink, 1993: 205). In light of public pastoral care in the context of GBV, the church could do better ministry if it admits and repents ‘*metanoia*’ its shortcomings on GBV as a community of faith. This allows for the process of transformation within the individuals of the community of faith. Once this happens, the achieved transformation would transform attitudes and behaviour, such that the newly acquired change becomes a lifestyle. This forms the major foundation of public pastoral care by the church in the context of GBV.

In our context, such transformation by the church as a community of faith for public pastoral care in the context of GBV is mandatory. Change is possible if the church’s theology is focused on God and His ideal desire for gender relations between men and women. Theologically, it is imperative for the church to understand God as sovereign and creator of humankind in his image (Hendriks, 2007:100; Magezi & Magezi, 2018:4-6). Theology must underpin the understanding that esteems humans “as created in the image of God” (Juma, 2015:5; Kim, 2017:56). This means the sovereign God, in his image created both man and woman and they should therefore both enjoy good gender relations as God intended.

An appreciation of God’s image in both men and women leads faith communities to theologically have better dialogue with their context(s) of GBV. The dialoguing with context would allow, “...a discernment process that takes place when we obediently participate in

transformative action and service at different levels...” (Hendriks, 2007:1004). Thus, the church is called to view and treat women as God intended and this allows public pastoral care to be appropriately practised in contexts of GBV from God’s perspective. Louw advances the fact that, “...pastoral care must be based on the Trinity. The theological principle of pastoral care resides in the care of God our Father, the mediatory work of the Son, and the comforting work of the Holy Spirit” (Louw, 1994:40).

This implies the understanding that the church should practise pastoral care, because the Trinitarian God cares; as demonstrated in care roles played by each member of the Trinity. Also, “God loved this world and gave his Son to save it” (John 3:16) (Hendriks, 2007:1004; Juma, 2015:1). The salvation he offered no doubt includes men and women. His love through his Son is demonstrated to both.

Finally, the theology of the church should certainly speak (theoretical), but it must also change attitudes and lives (practical). Anderson (2001:23) advises that “theology is not simply something to be known; theology is something lived and experienced by a particular community”. Otherwise, the meaning of love and compassion that underpins theology can never be realised or revealed to the marginalised of society (Pattison & Woodward, 1994:32). Anderson cites the influential Systematic Theologian, Torrance, who advocates for a living theology as seen in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ (Anderson, 2001:24; Pattison, 1994).

Thus, the church through its leadership should act as the primary conduit of that living theology in addressing GBV. This indispensable foundational point of departure forms the basis from which the church could frame ministries (Koppel, 2015:151) that transform the church and communities that surround it. Informed by this foundational point of God’s care and love and compassion for his people; principles could be framed that prevent and mitigate the effects of GBV. The following sections discuss responsive principles that should influence public pastoral care by the church.

8.3. Guiding responsive principles for the church’s public pastoral care

The public pastoral care principles will be advanced in 10 thesis points emerging from previous chapters of the study.

8.3.1. The church should be conscious of and understand the subtleties, violence and manifestations (dimensions) of GBV

The need for the church to consciously understand the subtle and violent nature of GBV arises from the elusive and complicated nature of GBV. Understanding entails hermeneutical analysis of systemic situations and the complex web of interconnected social issues. GBV as a phenomenon is subtle (hidden) because it can be psychological; manifesting in systematic humiliation of the victim, controlling behaviour, verbal abuse *et cetera*. It is violent (visible) in that women are beaten, kicked and ultimately experience outright cold-blooded murder. The clergy and laity are usually in a state of shock and mostly ill prepared to handle issues related to GBV in the church. If there is a deficiency in responding to what is evidently visible; it means the physiological aspects of GBV find, “fertile ground” (Chisale, 2020:1) in the church. The fact that notions of GBV remain hidden in the church has incapacitated the church’s public pastoral response. The Systematic Theologian, Smit (2003:476) advised that the church needs to learn to see. Learning to see means that Christian public, practical, ethical response starts with an act of seeing. This entails perceiving the problem, accepting the challenge and interpreting ways of responding.

As a responsive measure to this public pastoral care gap, the church needs to vigilantly interact with issues happening among members and its community (McIntosh, 2017:308). This entails the church should intentionally plan to understand the subtle and visible issues involved in GBV existing among congregants through teaching programmes; i.e. teaching people to see and hear what is happening in the community. For example, over the years the UBCZ has intentionally put on the church national calendar one Sunday devoted to teaching about HIV and AIDS. This has helped to raise awareness among members and the larger community to prevent the spread of HIV. In the same vein, the church retains the potential, for instance, to intentionally include at least two national Sundays aimed at understanding the subtle and visible nature of GBV. This paves the way for the congregations in UBCZ ministerial spaces across the country to engage in congregational response through understanding the complexity of GBV. This would build awareness and consciousness of GBV issues among members. This conscious responsive approach by the church is critical and indispensable. Unless the congregants are able to identify, point out and name the subtle and invisible issues around GBV, the church will not be ready for public pastoral ministry to the wider community. A conscious understanding of GBV unleashes the church’s ability to publicly fulfil what it means to be a

church in a community by fulfilling its performative actions within a concrete context (Magezi, 2017:234; Magezi & Magezi, 2018:7).

8.3.2. Understand and wisely change cultural practices that are stubbornly resistant and provide fertile ground for gender-based violence

Cultural practices remain some of the key structures that fan GBV in the church and community. Cultural practices emanate from the socio-cultural worldviews on the position of women in society (Magezi & Manzanga, 2019: 6). The predominant traditional cultural practices and attitudes about women find inroads into the church such that there is a thin line between how women are treated at home and at church. In UBCZ, key leadership positions are dominated by males without female representation. For example, close to 80% of the members in UBCZ are women and they do not sit on the most influential committees of the church apart from the NA where they are also outnumbered by men. Their voices are muffled by male dominance. In view of GBV, women have limited options and channels to appeal their grievances because men preside over their issues as the final authority. This means there are Christians who subtly hold on to negative traditional cultural beliefs that keep women subservient. Apart from male dominance practices, the church also suffers from incidences of matriarchal practices. The elderly women teach the young generation of women to accept certain male behaviours as normal in every way. More so, the aunts stand in the way of daughters-in-law that suffer GBV. The daughters-in-law are labelled as stubborn, uncultured and not submissive to their husbands.

As a responsive measure, the church could critically analyse how it does things in relation to women. The socio-cultural practices that negatively affect women in the church should not be understood in an entirely negative light or demonised. Instead, they serve as a launch pad towards examining and re-thinking public pastoral care to transforming the manner in which things occur. Graham rightly advised that

The public theologian like all who seek to interpret and influence the public order, draws from tradition as resource, but not as universal authority, and offers for the debate in a publicly accountable context new options for understanding and configuring our common life (Graham, 2000:8).

The church should be able to see things in the church critically through its leadership. As indicated earlier, Smit (2003) maintained that Christian ethics start with seeing. This entails

perceiving the problem, accepting the challenge and interpreting ways of responding. Magezi (2018:8) further posits that, “Practical seeing overcomes apathy by challenging congregations to practically act.” This means the church needs to be actively and critically analysed and understand cultural practices at church and community that negatively affect women. Graham (2000:8) advised that public pastoral care does not confine “the study of religion and theology to the examination of texts and documents of traditions but examine the actual practices of religious communities’ over time.”

The means the church needs to carefully see what is happening in the church and the contexts of the members in order to discern cultural practices to keep, amend and do away with. While engaging in this, it is critical that the authority of scripture should influence and lead (Magezi & Manzanga, 2019:7) in illuminating areas where transformation is needed. All the congregants need to be involved as a community of faith in examining traditional practices both at church and in their contexts. Practising public pastoral care in this manner allows for “transformative challenge to systems of power, authority and domination that oppress individuals and communities” (Muller-McLemore, 2018:315). This should lead the church to frame decisions that encourage human growth at individual, church and communal levels as the “purpose and normative vision of pastoral theology” (McClure, 2008:189).

8.3.3. Pursuing an integrated approach through partnerships – the need for religious, community, traditional leadership and legal bodies to partner and join efforts in addressing gender-based violence

The church is limited in certain GBV areas. For instance, churches and their leaders are less knowledgeable about the traditional and legal structures regarding GBV. The state has drafted laws and policies about GBV in Zimbabwe. The churches need to be immersed in understanding how these apply to people. At the same time, the churches need to strive to understand how the traditional leaders (chiefs and kraal heads) deal with issues of GBV in communities. While the government and other secular implementing partners such as NGOs are making efforts to address GBV, the churches need to practically do more instead of just being theoretical (Chisale, 2020:1). In view of this peripheral involvement by churches, the following three responses could be suggested:

- First, the church needs to understand that it is part of the larger universal body of Christ, but has a local role to play in its context of ministry to bring transformation (Magezi and Manzanga, 2019:7). The church does not exist as a stand-alone entity in society but as a key stakeholder with the most penetrating influence. As such, its role in society is clearly alluded to in Matthew 5:13-14 as the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world”. Its preservation and transformation of society as ‘salt’ and constant witness in truth and righteousness as ‘light’ must remain public. This clearly assumes the church’s need to integrate with the wider community in addressing GBV. In his article, *Death together: Dietrich Bonhoeffer on becoming the church for others*, Lawrence (2013: 113) posits that, “The church is church only when it is there for others.” This means the church needs to always reimagine what it means to follow Jesus in “being for others” (Lawrence, 2013:114). “Being for others” denotes presence, actuality and meaningful action. This is only possible if the church begins to ask questions such as: “How is God interfacing with the human condition of the moment?” (Juma, 2015:3), i.e. GBV. This also calls for what Louw terms an ‘encounter’. In his own words, encounter means, “...the communication process that takes place between God and humanity within a real situation where they discover meaning through faith and guided by the Scriptures” (Louw, 1998:70). The church should be able to share what God is communicating to it about GBV as stated in the Scriptures. This could be demonstrated through care because most religious values and beliefs are communicated through care (Browning, 1991:253).
- Second, the church should strategically create partnerships with traditional leaders (kraal heads, headmen, chiefs) and local government offices in its ministerial contexts and work together towards addressing GBV in communities. The synergies and partnerships create a bigger and much wider human web that is able to work in one context, with collaboration and diversity (McLemore, 2018:312) in fighting GBV.
- Third, the church should intentionally create time and space to have conversations about the country laws, government structures and policies regarding GBV. In doing so, the church will be able to map out where victims should go for assistance if the matter is beyond what the church could do to alleviate the situation. For example, the church may be limited in dealing with a husband who is constantly beating his wife. Instead of

having the woman suffering at the hands of her husband, the matter could be reported to the chief and if it is beyond him, the victim may refer the issue to the police and eventually the judiciary. This helps the church to remain as a reservoir of help in a wider community and this removes the ambivalent nature of the church about the phenomenon. The church should also consider collaborating with other supportive structures (Police, NGOs and CSOs) that work alongside the government as implementing partners of the laws and policies of the country on GBV. This allows the church to play a conciliatory role and be a referee between communities and the state in society instead of being a perpetrator. Currently many GBV cases in the church are swept under the carpet because the church is limited in knowledge on what it can do to address GBV issues.

8.3.4. Changing and improving its own house –the church needs to challenge religious stereotypes that infringe on the dignity of women

There are religious stereotypes that the church needs to systematically confront in its public pastoral role. From a religious perspective, the stereotype that women were created inferior to men and are gullible needs to be publicly challenged from Scripture. The stereotype keeps women negatively subservient to men both at church and at home. Constant reference to the inferiority of women by men has even resulted in having them kept silent and not occupying influential positions in church.

The public pastoral approach and focus of the church should seek to uphold human dignity and respect regardless of gender. Scripture attests with high esteem to the wonderful and fearful creation of men and women by God (Ps. 139:14). Men are further challenged to treat women with honour, "...they are heirs with you of the grace of life..." and mistreating them makes God unhappy towards men, "...so that your prayers may not be hindered" (I Pet.3:7). The value and attitude that one places on women when practising pastoral care affects that care. It is important that the church in its leadership structures and congregations understand that men and women were created in the image of God as stated in Genesis 1 and 2. The understanding that men and women were both created as moral, relational and capable of representing God regardless of gender needs to challenge the existing stereotypes ingrained in men. Juma (2015: 5) cites Erickson (1983) who argues that,

The universality of the human means that there is a dignity to being human... We should not be disdainful of any human being. They are all something beautiful even though they are distortions of what God originally intended humankind to be. The potential to likeness to the creator is there... The universality of the image also means that all persons have points of sensitivity to spiritual things.

This needs to be addressed from the pulpit with a clear delineation of what it means to be created in the image of God. Magezi and Manzanga (2019) state that, “If the theology of the church treats women in an oppressive manner, it misrepresents God and cannot change these social injustices against women.” This means the church has a role to play through its Sunday school lessons, youth seminars and sermons to unmask wrong theological assumptions that negatively impact women. The goal of public pastoral care is to be concerned and interact with inhumane aspects of human life and all oppressing social experiences (Day and Kim, 2017:11). Thus, if the church leadership and congregants subscribe to inferiority of women it hampers its pastoral care. The church should learn from Jesus who confronted the social injustices of his day by publicly upholding the dignity and importance of women in society (John 4:1-42; John 8:1-11). The church’s attitude towards women should originate from God’s attitude of love and compassion for the marginalised and oppressed of society (Louw, 2015:1).

8.3.5. Competence⁶⁴ and the pastor’s understanding of his role in public pastoral care

During the KIIs and FGDs, participants registered concern about the competence and role of the pastors in handling GBV issues within the church. There is limited knowledge among the clergy about the phenomenon and this hampers the public pastoral care role. GBV issues are prayed for or treated as domestic issues without further church interventions to assist the victim, or sometimes discipline is exercised. According to Patton (1983:49), “How a minister is seen and what he does in ministry contribute significantly to the sense of being a pastor”.

⁶⁴ In his own calling, a pastor need to understand that being a shepherd is a profession, but the problem lies in that some of the pastors do not know what they should be doing (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:9; Patton, 1983:37). Therefore, the pastor as shepherd identity suggests a lot about the public pastoral role of a pastor in the context of gender based violence. It is the role of the pastor as shepherd to listen to his congregants and craft ways of dealing with gender based violence. The shepherd sheep relationship as detailed in Palm 23:1-6 is critical in dispensing public pastoral care. In this Psalm the shepherd takes leading, caring responsibilities and this sometimes in the face of danger. Being a shepherd denotes being present for public pastoral care to be more meaningful. This means the pastor is there for the affected and oppressed in context of gender based violence. His presence should be to represent God who has called him and be available for God’s people, “beyond normal associations... Presence in central to all forms of ministry. Being and doing are inseparable. It is being which authenticates doing, doing which demonstrates being” (Augsburger, 1986: 37).

Consequently, this has made congregants feel hesitant to share their experiences with clergy and they eventually perceive the church to not be concerned about GBV.

It is important that in creating synergies with traditional leaders, other structures and arms of the government concerned with GBV, pastors should be involved. Pastors should be aware of various legal structures that are available as referrals in case of issues that need to be escalated to further assist victims of GBV. The national leadership of the church should intentionally plan to outsource an expert on the phenomenon to conduct a seminar(s) about GBV. This will help to broaden the clergy's understanding of the phenomenon and eventually pave the way for new partnerships with likeminded organisations on GBV. At the same time, it is crucial that the church holds independent seminars that biblically examine how God deals with GBV. Such seminars should discern the role of the pastor in confronting with good knowledge and tact the social evils of society and GBV is certainly one of them. Understanding the term 'pastor' is paramount to conceptualise what is involved in his role. As stated earlier, the term shepherd or pastor assumes the idea of looking out and caring for the needs of the vulnerable (McClure, 2012:269). This means pastoral care becomes, "...the practical outworking of the church's concern for the everyday and ultimate needs of its members and wider community" (Hurding, 1995:78). Therefore, it is improper for the sheep to perceive the shepherd's lack of knowledge about the circumstances of the sheep. The church through the pastor should be the link between the community and the state on being resourceful about GBV issues.

The pastor as a shepherd should draw on and learn from God himself as the ultimate shepherd in the context of grace, love, faithfulness and security in God's shepherding (Louw, 1998:40; Augsburg, 1986: 38). Following Jesus's model, the shepherd should deal with life threatening issues that would seek to harm the sheep. The shepherd led and the sheep listened to the voice of the shepherd (John 10:4). This no doubt was a clear demonstration of a well- developed relationship between the sheep and the shepherd. In a like manner, the pastor's identity in the context of GBV should remain unmistakably that of a shepherd. A shepherd that develops a relationship and knows his sheep has better knowledge about the social ills that affect his congregants. Louw (1998:84) advises that

This means that the mode of pastoral care is not limited to human sympathy alone, but also includes the compassion of God himself. The defenceless sheep of God's flock need to be guided, cherished and protected. These ministering functions clearly apply automatically to the congregation and flock.

A pastor that understands his identity both in private and the public arenas has better potential to be able to interpret his discipline for the people in a transforming manner (Leslie, 2008:84).

8.3.6. Creating spaces for women and men to intentionally have conversations about gender- based violence

This arises out of lack of space for women to openly talk about and share their GBV experiences. Even women that may experience GBV and emerge victorious; they feel inhibited to assist others going through the same experiences.

Women have other spaces in the church like Tuesday meetings and a national annual fellowship led by women once a year, which lasts for five days. The church should introduce sessions at the national annual women's fellowship that allow women to speak about GBV. Initially other women might be slow to share their experiences but the more it is done, the more people stop to hide behind masks. The sharing of such knowledge and experiences strengthens, advises and encourages others to find solutions to their GBV experiences. The creation of such spaces further needs to be introduced in ministerial contexts across the country so that women and men also begin to talk about GBV issues affecting their particular contexts. This is important since there are slight socio-cultural differences across the nation where the local churches are established. Chisale (2020:7) argues that, "Pastoral care should be liberative for all congregants, both male and female." This accounts for a need to include men as participants when spaces to discuss and share experiences are created.

Church discussions on GBV should be open to all women, pastors, leadership of the denomination and other men as well. This helps pastors and the leadership of the denomination to learn first-hand what women are going through in the church regarding GBV (Magezi & Manzanga, 2019: 9). In these discussions, it is important that women take the lead in facilitating GBV issues. The denomination has widows and single parents experiencing serious atrocities. These congregants are the marginalised, voiceless and oppressed in society whom God cares about (Masango, 2010:3).

The greater effect of creating such spaces is that women from other denominations may come and find space to share their experiences too. This will in turn widen the human web whereby individuals and communities learn to depend on each other to address an issue affecting society.

Muller-McLemore (2018:311) calls this a movement from living human document (individual) to living human web (community). The living human web approach promotes flourishing of persons and their communities by moving towards context and more collaboration (McClure, 2008:189; Muller-McLemore, 2018:311). This means to address GBV effectively as it takes transformed individuals to translate into a bigger community ready to confront one enemy. The Shona proverb, “*Rume rimwe hairikombi churu*” (literally meaning, “One man cannot round an anthill with a life threatening danger alone, he needs other men”) comes alive in relation to the concept of the human web. Therefore, creating spaces for women and men to critically talk about GBV issues catapults the church from being private to a public space (Magezi, 2018:2).

8.3.7. Confronting problematic texts and seeking understanding and life affirmation – the church cannot be exonerated from avoiding problematic biblical passages

Difficult texts tend to be swept under the carpet or circumvented in the church. Preaching must not be selective if the clergy believe in the authority and finality of the Word of God. Such passages must be rigorously studied and looked at squarely. God intentionally allowed such passages to be part of scripture and he communicates through them in his own way regarding GBV. In particular, passages such as Genesis 34; Judges 19; 2 Samuel 13:1-22; 1 Corinthians 11:12-16; 1 Timothy 2:8-15 *et cetera* could be circumvented because of their difficult nature or simply paraphrased without yielding the core implications of the passages. These are hard and confusing passages that should be read prayerfully and with caution (Magezi & Manzanga, 2019: 8). The church should understand that the Bible does not hide things. The biblical passages publicly present the force of the sin of GBV and how God works behind the scenes to demonstrate his displeasure about it. It follows that the church as the under-shepherd has a public role to play.

The church leadership has a public pastoral role to play in ensuring capacity development in biblical interpretation (Magezi & Manzanga, 2019:8) for its pastors nationwide. Many years after finishing bible college training, it is normal for most pastors to wane in their biblical interpretation skills. Therefore, annual seminars and refresher courses on biblical interpretation should be among the events on the yearly national calendar of the church. It is also important for pastors to deliberately organise bible studies on these seemingly difficult passages with their congregants. Congregants should be encouraged with guidance to converse on such passages to discern the intended meaning and find their (passages) relevance in their own contexts.

The key question in such discussions should be the following question from Williams (2014: 160), “How is God interfacing with the human condition of the moment?” It is a question that challenges the church to critically examine GBV (among other issues of society) and frame ministerial solutions to the current human condition. The passages should lead congregants to understand GBV from God’s perspective of women and encourage, “...faith development and understanding of Christian beliefs” (Juma, 2015:6). Juma (2015:11) further states that our understanding and interpretation of biblical passages exposes contextual factors. Ultimately, the re-reading of these passages could help with softening some cultural beliefs about women and even subdue invalid interpretations of biblical passages by clergy and congregants. With a better understanding of the seemingly difficult passages, the church should be able to confidently practise its public pastoral care without ambivalence on GBV issues.

8.3.8. Developing skills for ministerial contextual analysis and applying biblical text in public pastoral care

The many local churches across the nation necessitate that every pastor⁶⁵, say in the UBCZ, should develop skills to engage in ministerial contextual analysis. This will assist in applying the biblical passages with relevance to GBV issues found in a particular context. Understanding of the contextual location of the congregation(s) and community(s) in which one serves is understood as, “the heart of pastoral care rather than the expert pastor” (Miller-McLemore, 2018:316). Garner (2015:21), in his article, *Contextual and public theology: Passing fads or theological imperatives*, states that “contextual theology enables us to make sense of God and ourselves in and through the world in which we find ourselves embedded, in a particular time and place.” This is important because human experience is couched in the context where theological dialogue and reflection takes place (Garner, 2015:21).

The task of pastoral care by the church must be considered within its context and the implications of our theological reflections would be more relevant (Bosch, 1995:35). This means the pastor in his public pastoral care approach should be asking the right and relevant questions and his reflections on context would change as well (Day & Kim, 2017:17). Smit contends that one aspect of public theology is that it is contextual in nature (Smit, 2017:75).

⁶⁵ I am writing from the understanding that pastors in my denomination are transferred to a new place after every four years (minimum) or eight years (maximum). Some pastors are transferred to new places with different cultural norms and without them understanding the philosophy of the context it might be difficult to address gender based violence in new places. GBV stubbornly hides in cultural norms.

GBV happens among congregants in specific church contexts (which are public) hence, the context cannot be ignored in pastoral care. This calls for the pastor to be equipped in the church and for his church to be able to engage meaningfully with his public context of ministry (Day & Kim, 2017:5, 9).

The pastor should intentionally analyse the field of public pastoral care, which he shares with the congregants. Louw (1998:75) advises that,

In pastoral care one should always reckon with the fact that human problems are embedded within a socio-cultural context...People's reactions are often a reflection of the values, norms and taboos as shaped by their cultural environment. Contextuality, therefore, refers to the ethos, undergirding philosophy of life, structural components, religious convictions and belief systems.

Louw further lists the following four important basic components that could assist a pastor towards contextual analysis in pastoral care (Louw, 1998:75). I have summarised the essence of each point that Louw suggests.

- The first point is that people have *needs* in life. He states that the extent or level to which people have needs will determine the impact of their emotional and immediate frustrations. The needs people have in life include safety, experiencing value, self-actualisation and love.
- Second, the community has its *social structures*. The structural context of the community has an effect on violence and sharing of power.
- Third, *meaningful relationships*. Such relationships include marriage, family, social environment *et cetera*. The level at which people experience safety in a relationship impacts whether they feel estranged or separated.
- Fourth, *philosophical perspectives*. People's viewpoint of life controls how they behave. Undergirded in this component is the fact people's norms and values impact their philosophical thinking and attitudes.

The pastor in his pastoral role may consider assessing his context and seeing if all or some of the points summarised above may not be the reason why GBV exists in the church. Understanding needs, social structures, relationships and philosophical issues in ministerial context could assist towards resolving GBV in the church. This is crucial because, "...pastoral care is not practiced in a vacuum, thus a context analysis is necessary for effectiveness of a pastoral diagnosis" (Louw, 1998:76). In his response to a paper presented by William Storrar,

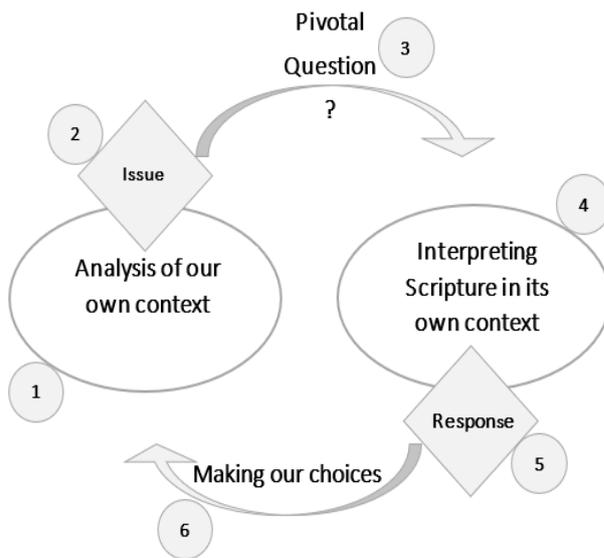
Nico Koopman locates contexts as the determining factor in doing public theology (Koopman, 2011:95; Bosch, 1993:93-95). It is crucial in public pastoral care that communities in different contexts decide on how best they could implement national, regional, global resolutions and the biblical passages on GBV for “...human flourishing” (Koopman, 2011:97).

Public pastoral care is contextual and remains “in suspension, moving” (Hendriks, 2007:1002). If context is fluid, what is the role of the biblical text in any given ministerial context? To respond to this question, the theologian needs to understand that the biblical text is the Word of God and that context is a specific human situation like GBV. This means there should be an interaction between the human situation and the biblical text. The biblical text retains the normative authority that controls and influences responses that arise from human situations. The ministerial context in public pastoral care remains subservient to the biblical text as a normative source for framing responses and attitudes in pastoral care communities (Koppel, 2015: 151).

In his reflection on the ministerial context, the pastor is “...restricted to the faithful and relevant communication of the unchanging message (biblical text) in the language and cultural thought forms of those to whom it is communicated” (Nicholls, 1996: 165). For instance, the biblical text, through valid interpretation should evoke positive responses in a context where cultural and religious practices fan GBV. Leslie, quoting Gerkin, notes that Christians conceptualise pastoral care as an inherent act of love towards one another of the love of God and Jesus Christ in a Christian context (Leslie, 2008:95).

If the premise for practising public pastoral care is love for God and one’s neighbour, it follows that the biblical text remains the demarcating factor in ministerial context. God has revealed himself through the biblical text in specific life transforming ways both spiritually and physically. Likewise, the pastor has a task to study the text and draw on principles that speak to the ministerial context to evoke transformation on GBV.

The following diagram by Darragh (2007:4) on how to do practical theology helps to shed more light on the role of the biblical text in a context of public pastoral care.



The following explanation⁶⁶ is an attempt to make sense of the above diagram on context analysis in practical theology (Darragh, 2007:4). The process towards utilising the above diagram commences with analysing the pastor’s context (stage 1). The pastor analysing the context must be part of the context and serving, “...the people of God by building them up in the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:16). After analysing the context, the pastor decides on the ethical issue of interest (stage 2), which he should be able to describe and formulate into a pivotal question (stage 3). Scripture using sound hermeneutical principles and Christian sources must address the pivotal question in its context. The interpretation (stage 4) of scripture based on the context should be able to evoke response(s) (stage 5) which would then lead the pastor and audience to make their own choices (stage 6). The response(s) made should be applicable to the contemporary situation of the audience (Darragh, 2007:4). This is important because context and audience are both dynamic as mentioned above. This means responses that were valid and suitable for a context 20⁶⁷ years ago may not be valid now but the essence of scripture remains normative. Thus, the pastor is compelled always to utilise the above process to ensure relevance and accuracy in his public pastoral care. Finally, while the diagram is not ultimate and appears mechanical (using

⁶⁶ The explanation of the diagram is dependent on Darragh (2007:4).

⁶⁷ Concurring with Tite Tienou and Bowers, Magezi, Sichula and De Klerk (2009-183) in, *Communalism and hospitality in African Urban congregations: Pastoral care challenges and possible response*, advance that, “ the present African theological practice should not be measured based on Africa’s modern intellectual quest, nor Africa’s cultural context, nor Africa’s traditional religions, though they are important, but proposes that the nature of the enterprise requires that the defining matrix should be the present Christian community of Africa, with the full range of its needs and expectations, its requirements and preoccupations.” This has been occasioned by the ever-changing context and studying the present Christian community in our public pastoral care ministry is appropriate as suggested by these three authors.

the author's own words) (Darragh, 2007:4), it definitely provides a good starting point towards contextual analysis.

8.3.9. Pursuing systematic linkages of church and community structures

As mentioned earlier the church is a subsystem of the society in which it exists and has a public role to play. To play a role, the church must show its salt and light (Matt. 5:13-14) roles by attending to the spiritual and social needs of the larger community⁶⁸ will trust the church with its GBV issues. Under this, the research suggests three ways in which the church could integrate with the surrounding community to demonstrate its salt and light effects to others. Change and help with GBV takes place in the context of relationships with people and other institutions in ministerial context.

- First, church leaders (pastors or elders) in ministerial contexts across the country should intentionally seek to create meaningful relationships with the community structures. Therefore, the communal-based (Tarus & Lowery, 2017:317) life of the church in Zimbabwe could assist in dealing with GBV. There are life-giving values and ethics that bind the church and community together in the context of GBV. The church leaders could certainly identify and utilise the values and ethics that bind a community into practising public pastoral care. Values that are not life-giving in a community and discredit the image of God in women, should be modified or discredited communally.

⁶⁸ Graham (citing Cady) states, "...to be human is to be unique and socially located in particular local communities of tradition and practices. At the same time, to be human is to be interconnected with other individuals and communities, and to be shaped and changed by this interconnection" (Graham, 2000:9). The only difference between the connections could be that the understanding of community in the living human web radiates from a local to a global community. In the Zimbabwean setting community is understood within the parameters of tribe, clan or race as defined by the treasured values, practices and ethics. On a broader understanding, the concept of communal living in Africa is well known. However, what unites a community and how that communal life is lived out varies from country to country in the African continent. The widely known word that encapsulates communal life in Africa is 'ubuntu'. The word, "designates human beings as individuals-in-community" (Tarus & Lowery, 2017:36). In the Zimbabwean context, the word used in Shona language is 'unhu', which is suggestive of "mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, trust, reciprocity, caring and respect for others among other ethical responsibilities" (Doval, 2018). In other words, whatever a person does as an individual must subscribe to or adorn the values and ethics of the community. To exist independent of the community through disregarding the values and ethics diminishes ones *unhu* (Manyonganise, 2015:1). The idea of community as understood in a Zimbabwean (African) setting shares important connections with metaphors "the living human web" (Miller-McLemore, 2018:307).

This means the church should chart ways to create a good rapport with leadership such as local community heads, chiefs, GBV policymakers⁶⁹, local government, the police and local organisations that deal with GBV in the area. This helps the church to be knowledgeable about its community, culture and structures that exist through which they could fight the GBV together. As one force, the church and community structures could identify issues that trigger GBV, challenge negative responses to GBV such as marginalisation of women and rejection by society. Ways through which women's dignity, rights and honour could be restored may be discerned together by the church and communities. Eventually the role of the church on GBV will shift from being ambivalent to public pastoral care through this integration. Writing on the importance of community towards human healing, Augsburgers state that,

The power of healing is owned by the community. It is the community which can guarantee justice where one has been oppressed or exploited...It is the community which must receive, support and integrate the ill back into healthful roles and relationships (Augsburger, 1986:365).

Guided by scripture, the church has a great influence to ensure that the community lives in a manner that reflects the image of God by transforming its attitude towards women.

- Second, the church should learn to 'attend' with deep concern to the needs of society. The church has been blamed for not doing better in responding to GBV. McClure (2008:190) states that 'attention' is not a central concept in pastoral theology. However, it is a word that nicely captures the concerns of pastoral theology...attending is more than just listening." McClure (2008:190) further supplies the meaning of 'attention' from the Oxford English Dictionary as "to be present, to minister, to wait, to listen and to be open." This means the church through its leaders (pastors, elders and women leaders) should play a prophetic role by being ever present to minister, listen and be readily available for the community. For this to happen integration with the community must be a success. Together with the community, the church could challenge the status quo when it does not promote human flourishing (McClure, 2008:189). In addition, the church could maintain the status quo with the community when it achieves God's intention for the Word (McClure, 2008:189). The ability to care by the church expressed

⁶⁹ Koopman (2009:128-129) suggests that, "Churches, however, need also to participate more directly and institutionally in public policy processes." Regarding the National Gender Based Violence Policy the church needs to pave ways of integrating with the government arm responsible to be considered a key contributing stakeholder in the policy making.

in different structures of the community is rooted in the theological understanding of God who attends to us (McClure, 2008:191). Attention is at the core of the public ministry of Jesus as seen in the healing of the paralytic Mark 2:1-13; feeding of the 5,000 6:33-44; the good Samaritan Luke 10:30-37; the lost son 15:11-32; the woman with the issue of blood Luke 8:43-48.

- Third, the church should open its facilities for the community as point of meetings and counselling for people experiencing GBV. This would help the community to see the church as part of it and unfreeze (Magezi, 2020:7) some attitudes about the church held by the community. Muller-McLemore (2018: 313) advises that much care takes place through informal gatherings such as women's circles, coffee hour, diverse congregational activities; even without the pastor. Church buildings should be available for things such as community seminars, talks between the church and traditional chiefs, local governments, police and so forth. Community talks should be conducted at the church because church buildings are readily available. Eventually GBV victims will begin to acknowledge the church as a safe haven in case of mild and extreme GBV. In this manner, the church fulfils what it means to be a church in the community in a spiritual and physical sense.

8.3.10. Equipping and investing in congregants as agents of care and change

The notion of equipping and investing in the congregants by those that exercise pastoral care is a biblical notion. Ephesians 4:11 states, "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up of the body of Christ...". The notion of equipping and investing in the congregants is focused on unity and maturity as one community of faith (Eph.4:13ff).

Potgieter (2015:1) underscores that, "pastoral care is a biblical mandate to the Church to be involved in the lives of God's people." While the pastor's public pastoral role remains pertinent in GBV, the congregant's role cannot be overlooked or treated as insignificant. Key among GBV victims in and outside the church is the silence of women, religious practices that disadvantage women, invalid interpretation of scripture, and language that subdues women. The congregation should be encouraged to tap into its potential that encourages "human care" and "rich conversation" (Koppel, 2015: 151). Since the church/congregants exist as part of the

community, public theology aims at engaging with issues that affect groups of people instead of individuals in isolation (Koppel, 2015:151). The pastor should create an environment among the congregants that encourages conversation about GBV and eventually create transformative ministries that confront GBV. Knowledge about what to do regarding GBV among the congregants should lead to human care for the wider community in ministerial pockets. However, the church should equip and invest in the congregants through teachings and various social interactions on GBV related issues.

Congregants share some good religious traditions and practices that already serve as unifying factors among themselves. Such common and known factors could be utilised among them to, “contribute to social solidarity and normative awareness” (Dreyer & Pieterse, 2010:4). For instance, the congregants already have a shared traditional view about the authority and role of scripture in shaping and transforming human life. Together they could revisit certain scriptural teachings that seem to oppress women and transform their GBV context through proper hermeneutics. Pastors should invest and equip congregants with a view to have them (congregants) practise care among each other and in society (Hendriks, 2007:1000).

Hendriks further states two important advantages that the church/congregants already have towards transforming communities into a community of faith. First, he notes that the church has a great potential of reaching more people on a weekly basis than any other organisation (Hendriks, 2007:1000). In our contemporary world people speak of ‘mega’ churches as a reference to churches with the highest numbers of congregants. If such ‘mega’ churches are taught and well equipped to address GBV, the impact could be invaluable. Finally, Hendriks states that the church already has stronger infrastructure, which serves better by “connecting, serving and influencing people” (Hendriks, 2007:1000).

8.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter made some suggestions through which the church could practise public pastoral care in a context of GBV. The chapter argued persistently that the church has a major role to play in conjunction with communities to mitigate against GBV. Before suggesting principles that should guide the church, the chapter located the public pastoral care of the church within the community. It emerged that the church should transform its attitude towards women before it practises care to the community. This calls for repentance (*metanoia*) on the

church's part of negative things that perpetuate GBV. Such *metanoia* should be focused on God and his desire for gender relations between men and women. The church must also understand that men and women are created in the image of God. Both are able to equally relate to God and to one another without inequality. This means the church should be the primary conduit of a living theology in seeking to address GBV. The church is not of the world but it is in the world. Therefore, it should represent God. If the community should know that God cares about GBV, it should learn this from the church through its public pastoral care ministries. Following the location of the church within the community, some responsive principles were suggested.

It emerged that the church should be conscious of the subtle and violent nature of GBV. GBV manifested in two broad categories as psychological and physical. The church needs to fully understand this by intentionally teaching congregants through qualified personnel about the phenomenon. This is important because a good conceptualisation of GBV is a starting point to dispel the ambivalent nature of the church about GBV.

The chapter revealed the well-known nature of cultural practices that fan GBV. It emerged that cultural practices act as accessories to GBV and eventually make inroads into the church. For example, it was noted that male dominance is one of the key practices that allows 20% of men in the entire denomination to dominate 80% of the women. This means women remain silenced, voiceless and marginalised. It also emerged that matriarchy by the older generation sustains male dominance by endorsing this behaviour as being normal. The church is challenged from a leadership level to congregants to critically analyse how it does things in relation to women. Participation by all congregants in the analyses should be able to lead the church to discern where transformation is needed to improve gender relations in the church.

A systematic religious, traditional and legal navigation is needed by the church to mitigate against GBV. It emerged that the church is less informed about how the traditional and legal institutions deal with GBV. Thus, the church needs to be intentionally educated on how the traditional and legal structures mitigate against GBV. A continued chasm between the church and these entities means the church remains incapacitated to practise its public pastoral roles in the community. Navigating through the traditional and legal structures on GBV issues assists the church to understand better and fulfil what it means to be a church in society. In this navigation, the church must reimagine what it means to follow Christ and being there for others (Lawrence, 2013:14). This means clear intentional efforts are needed by the church to

understand the laws and policies as they relate to GBV. The church may also consider collaborating with NGOs that implement the laws and policies of the state on GBV. This improves the church's awareness on GBV and capacity in its pastoral care ministries.

There are religious stereotypes that infringe on the dignity of women in the church. Through its preaching (from the pulpit) and teaching (seminars, Sunday schools, camps) the church should uphold the dignity of women; teaching the congregants that men and women were equally created in the image of God (Gen.1-2). This should improve gender relations by emphasising that both exist to glorify God and relate to one another without inferiority of the one to the other.

The chapter revealed that congregants alluded to the lack of competence by pastors in addressing GBV issues. Consequently, this even hampers their role in pastoral care. The chapter suggested that the leadership of the church should purposefully plan to hold seminars on GBV, which pastors would attend as delegates. This would help them to reflect better on the phenomenon and eventually be able to respond with better understanding to GBV issues among congregants. It was also suggested that the church could plan other seminars where the clergy examine how God deals with GBV in the Bible. A pastor who makes an effort to understand the experiences of the sheep is able to discern and frame better public pastoral care ministries.

It emerged that women in the church need more spaces to share their experiences and ideas about GBV. Lack of spaces to interact about the phenomenon could continue to act as a way of keeping women marginalised and voiceless. Apart from the existing weekly Tuesday women's fellowship more spaces are needed at local church level and national fellowship level. Women should take the lead to facilitate on various topics on GBV with men in attendance as participants. This provides an opportunity for some women to understand better what they might be experiencing and for men to learn first-hand about women's GBV experiences. Together as a community of faith, they should be able to frame ways in which they could mitigate against GBV in the church and eventually in the wider community.

Further, the chapter revealed that certain biblical passages are difficult to understand. The passages are rarely read or are simply swept under the carpet. The chapter suggested that the leadership of the church should plan to have capacity development on biblical interpretation among congregants. The clergy may further need refresher courses from time to time on biblical

interpretation in which they would re-read the seemingly tough passages together. Re-reading means to read critically and engage rigorous hermeneutical principles to arrive at the meaning and discern what the passages mean in the present context of GBV. Further local contextual bible studies should be implemented in which men and women examine the biblical passages together. The more congregants do this together, it helps soften and remedy some oppressive cultural and religious practices that negatively affect women. Ultimately, a transformed community of faith has better people to influence the wider community about what God says regarding GBV. In this manner, the church reclaims its salt and light nature in the context of GBV. Finally, the role of the pastors on public pastoral care is pertinent, but that of the congregants is also important. Constant equipping and investing in the congregants on GBV and what God would expect from the church in society; increases the web of human care and transforms communities with rich conversations.

The entire study has underscored that GBV is a social ill of every human society. Efforts to mitigate against it by various institutions are noticeable, but the phenomenon remains evasive. The question that emerges as the research comes to an end is: What findings, conclusion and recommendations for further study could be made for this research?

Chapter 9: Findings, conclusion and recommendations of the research

9.1. Introduction

The key objective of the study was to investigate how the church responds to and fans GBV from a public pastoral care theological standpoint with a view to foster the public pastoral care role of the church in society. The research applied the public theological framework using a public pastoral care nexus, which is guided by Osmer's (2008:11) method where the descriptive, normative, interpretive and pragmatic questions also influenced the SRA as a gender theoretical framework. Guided by Osmer's framework the study explored the global trends on GBV, established the reasons GBV is persistent, analysed possible interventions and finally drafted some proposed responsive principles for a church-focused model to practise public pastoral care in real contexts of GBV. This chapter has four sections namely: the introduction, summaries of important findings of the research, the conclusion, and finally suggested recommendations for further study.

9.2. Research findings

9.2.1 It emerged that GBV is a persistent global phenomenon. Contextual issues like socio-cultural beliefs, religion, politics, economy, migration, and many others determine the nature of GBV across the globe. Globally many women continue to be subjected to various forms of GBV with men as the major perpetrators. Hence, GBV is seriously acknowledged as a real human rights abuse, which manifests as an infringement of the freedom and participation of women in society. Such infringement of women's rights is caused by gender inequality and parity that exist between women and men in local, regional and global institutions of society.

The study revealed that men suffer GBV too, but women are disproportionately affected as compared to their male counterparts. GBV has a proliferating nature against women regardless of their geographical location. As such, its manifestation differs from country to country. For example, in Asia and the Middle East women are killed in the name of honour, in West Africa women undergo genital mutilation in the name of customs, in South Africa a young woman is kicked for talking to another man on the phone, raped and ultimately murdered, in the United Kingdom a woman is locked in the house, in DRC a knife is inserted in a woman's vagina by war militants, in Malawi a woman is beaten for bad cooking and in Zimbabwe a woman is

beaten and raped as humiliation for supporting the opposition political party (Amnesty International, 2004: iii-iv). The list is endless but the finding demonstrated is that GBV is a serious global scourge. In times of peace and war, women continue to face various forms of GBV. However, the church has not yet spoken publicly and convincingly, as it should, about the phenomenon.

It also emerged that GBV ranges from being stubbornly subtle to extreme violence in the form of callous femicide. This means it has physical and psychological aspects. There is a temptation to focus on the visible effects of GBV and neglect the invisible aspects. Thus, to conceptualise the phenomenon as in the above two broad categories causes interventions to be more accurate and helpful. The study further revealed that socio-cultural factors contribute to perpetration of GBV. Most women occupy subservient positions as sanctioned by society and culture. This affects women in that they are not free to share their experiences because their socio-cultural beliefs restrict them. To report abuses could mean becoming unpopular and sometimes liable to further punishment by the abuser.

The study revealed that GBV occurs in the following key sites around the globe. The first site is family. This is considered one of the key sites of GBV. Social life preparation and gender stereotypes occur in the family context. A child is able to learn or witness physical and psychological GBV within the home before proper integration with larger society. Attitudes, treatment and positioning of women in society are first learnt within the family. Second, the community/society shares collective social, cultural or ethnic bonding. Further, it strengthens or supports the prevailing family structure and this is extended to workplaces where there is segregation of women in various ways such that they remain inferior to men. Third, the state has the capacity to legitimise power inequalities that exist in the family and community/society by sustaining unequal structural relationships. The state could also do this by enactment of discriminatory laws and policies or through a discriminatory application of the law in favour of men. This becomes unofficial GBV. Conclusively, none of the mentioned key sites operates independent of the other. Instead, there is a discernible interplay among the sites, but the family site remains the foundational site.

The study revealed that IPV is one of the most widespread forms of GBV that has caught scholarly attention. Male adults inflicting IPV adopt a patterned abusive and imposed behaviour, which includes physical, sexual, economical and psychological attacks. It emerged

that IPV is subtle and as such it is difficult to identify it. IPV calls for rigorous study to master its multi-layered intricacies against women. Cases abound of men that inspiringly participate at church but behind the scenes, they are perpetrators of GBV against their partners. Consequently, women remain subject to depression, suppression and murdered by the same hands that used to embrace them. It emerged that 40-70% of global homicides are perpetrated by intimate partners. Abused partners find it difficult to leave because various factors such as fear, being economically dependent, concern for children, stigmatisation by the society and other factors keep them bound to the abuser.

The normative role expectations of society define and sanction the position and role of women in society. Such expectations eventually have an interplay with church teachings about women, economy, politics and other institutions that entrench structural relationships. This suggested that analysis of various cultural contexts and institutions could be key to understanding the dynamics of GBV. Such analysis should target the root causes of GBV.

9.2.2 The study revealed that Zimbabwe is persistent and committed to eradicate GBV as evidenced in its consent to regional and global instruments that seek to eradicate GBV. Apart from the regional and global instruments, Zimbabwe has put in place domestic instruments, which include a constitution that promotes the dignity and rights of women, the NGP, the ZNGBVS and the creation of the MWAGCD which oversees (among others) issues like GBV. The nation also collaborates with NGOs and CSOs as implementing partners of the laws and policies of the state that promote awareness and propose interventions to mitigate against GBV.

It emerged that in spite of the significant interventions by the state, the scourge of GBV persists in the country. The ZDHS specified that nearly 40% of women aged 15-19 have experienced physical or sexual violence, 37% reported their GBV experiences to their husband's family and 21% sought help from the police. GBV remains a national challenge because there is need for a more robust, synchronised and watertight multi-sectorial approach in the fight against GBV. The church is one of the major sectors in Zimbabwean society, and it has not been on the front line or part of the GBV laws, policies and other instruments designed and implemented by the state to fight GBV. The church predominantly adopts a spectator role and remains unsure of its involvement. There is an implementation gap between the church and state caused by the church's limited knowledge on the GBV laws and policies of the country. Since 84.5% of the

national population is Christian, it logically follows that the role of the church remains critical in integrating with the state.

The study also revealed that representation of women in the highest positions in government, cooperative sectors, economic institutions and social institutions reflect elements of male domination as a form of GBV. If a few women occupy some 'influential' positions, the problem that remains is that they serve the interests of those (men) who made it possible for them to be in those positions. Thus, their appointment to positions comes without authority and power that is independent of male influence. For instance, a woman serving as minister of defence is likely to serve the interests of the male-dominated national army. She might not be influential in attending to issues of GBV instigated by men against women in the sector because she is overwhelmed by male dominance. This is possible in any institution. The study revealed that in legal proceedings, the judiciary is able to rightly identify and name GBV. This is evidence of great awareness and concern for the phenomenon. Nevertheless, the national context is inundated with GBV issues. Some women in the national context rarely disclose their GBV experiences because socio-cultural mores, religious beliefs and loopholes in the judiciary processes weaken their will to do so as men in the processes twist the law to protect other men and disadvantage women.

It further emerged that no single factor could stand alone as the cause of GBV in the country. Rather, an interplay of factors come together as accessories to GBV in the country and these factors have left the nation in a quandary. The study revealed that inequalities and inequities in the country have an interplay with social, cultural, economic and political issues. For instance, patriarchy is one of the factors that interplays with other factors resulting in GBV. To better understand the interplay of GBV factors, research is progressively using an ecological framework approach. The framework distinguishes risk factors at four levels namely: the individual, relationship, community and structural level with an aim to understand how they influence each other. Instead of only differentiating risk factors, the framework could be utilised to positively mitigate against GBV. In this way, the framework focuses on the communal aspect of dealing with GBV as opposed to an individual approach.

Some prominent drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe also emerged. The family structure was identified as the first key driver of GBV because in the family a child learns about norms and values of the outside world. Within the family men maintain a position of control and

Zimbabwean families are predominantly patriarchal. Further, the following drivers were identified namely: marriage customs, bride wealth (*Rooro*), subordination of women to men, vulnerability of housemaids, religious teachings and beliefs, migration, the economic collapse, politics and media; act as drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe.

To better understand how these drivers can fan GBV the study utilised the SRA as a gender theoretical framework. It assisted the researcher to understand how gender social relations operate in the national context. The SRA has five aspects that are shared by social institutions. The first aspect is rules. These could be official and unofficial and through rules people determine what is done, how it is done, by who, and who should benefit. In the national context, people who set the rules that govern the country are predominantly men who decide how the rules should apply. In a situation where women are marginalised, they continue to survive at the peripherals of the rules. The second aspect is resources. Men have more access to the resources in the country and they decide what is used and produced. The third aspect is people. This aspect considers the class, gender and other social responsibilities. As such, it decides who is in, who is out, and who does what. Men are usually at the front and controlling end to the detriment of women. The fourth aspect is activities. Certain activities are attached to a certain social group. In this aspect people who continue to do certain activities become more proficient and are more preferred for certain tasks. Therefore, the aspect considers who does what, gets what, and claims what. This means women are mostly confined to the home environment while men participate in the job market. This also means women remain financially dependent on men in society. The fifth aspect is power. Institutions thrive on relations of authority and control such that those in control make decisions and figure out whose interests should be served.

The study revealed that the SRA entails institutions like the state, community, church and family creating and reproducing inequalities. The justification for choosing the SRA among other frameworks is that it has human well-being, dignity, survival, autonomy, security and communal well-being as its premise. This blends well with a public practical theological approach since it also has its point of departure as human well-being leading to communal transformation.

9.2.3 The study revealed that there are efforts to curb GBV through legal and national policies by utilising a multi-sectorial approach by government. The study discussed the legal framework of the nation on GBV and its importance in that it is the basis on which all the policies on GBV

spring from. However, the respect and dignity of the majority of women as equal citizens is trampled on by men in secular and religious society. As a result, the participation and parity of women in spaces within society and their access to means of survival and security remain compromised.

It emerged that a number of amendments to the constitution have been made on gender issues. This is a demonstration of effort by the government to fight GBV. Further, dovetailed with the constitution, the NGP on GBV was drafted and implemented as a more focused and elaborate document on GBV. The study pointed out that policies are crucial in that they help to raise awareness about the phenomenon. Not only that, they also encourage advocacy from community to national level. Thus, the NGP targets curbing gender inequalities in various spheres of life through eight thematic areas. In view of these instruments and others, it emerged that workplaces, women's disempowerment, unemployment, cultural practices and religious practices continue to hinder efforts to eliminate GBV.

The government further drafted and implemented the ZNGBVS, which targets people at grassroots level like families and community leaders. People at grassroots level are educated to challenge their negative social, cultural and religious gender relations towards women. The study revealed that the drafted legal frameworks, amendments and policies are highly polished and clear but how to effectively implement them remains a major challenge. Those seeking to implement targets in grassroots communities face challenges that include resistant attitudes, more tolerance of abuse, low male involvement, lack of knowledge and awareness; as well as other factors. To increase the number of implementers and advocates on GBV, the government finds its expression in NGOs and CSOs to fight GBV. This allows for a multi-layered and interlinked community-centred approach and the church should be part of this effort. As of now, the increase in GBV points to a lack of maximum cooperation among public and private sectors of society.

The study further revealed that the church as a subsystem of society across the country needs to be systematically integrated as one of the key implementers. The church has the advantage of being permanently rooted in the community as compared to implementers that come in on a temporary basis. The church also needs to be more vigorous in seeking to comprehend the interplay between GBV's national drivers and how the church could be fanning GBV. As noted

already, because of the fact that 84.5% of the population is Christian, the influence on the national contextual GBV drivers finds access, influence and are nurtured in the church.

From the SRA framework, it emerged that, though efforts are discernible to reduce GBV, institutions continue to sustain structural social relations and this hinders gender equality and parity. Until social relations are transformed starting with family to state level, it remains difficult to curb the phenomenon. The role of the church needs to be visibly discerned as a transformative institution of society. The church needs to design systematic relationships with community leaders, local government, NGOs, CSOs, police *et cetera* to make an impact in society.

9.2.4 To assist with the research 10 KIIs were conducted separately and nine FGDs were approached as participants. Each FGD had 12 participants. Data gathered was processed through coding. Major themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes were generated from data corpus coding.

The study identified seven key themes from both KIIs and FGDs. The first key theme was about participants' awareness of GBV through identifying and defining it. The study revealed that some participants understood GBV predominantly as physical and attributed it to the home environment. In their understanding of the notion, they noted that women always take a subservient role. Further interaction with participants revealed that the younger generation of participants from both KIIs and FGDs revealed an understanding that GBV is both physical and psychological. This alerted the researcher to the gap that exists in age groups towards understanding the phenomenon. This further generated sub-themes in an attempt to pursue the variances in their understanding of the notion. The younger generation attributed their understanding to the media and NGOs that sometimes work in their communities. This implicated the church as the least source towards their understanding of the notion.

The second key theme extracted was GBV associated with male dominance. Across the KIIs and FGDs, participants commented that women are major victims of male dominance at church and at home. This revealed that there is an intersection between male dominance at home and at church. This means traditional cultural mores find a productive environment in the church where men exercise dominance in key leadership positions and continue to keep women subservient. It also emerged that male dominance should not necessarily be viewed negatively.

Sometimes it is understood as love and protection of the family. This means, understanding the theme of male domination must be a contextual issue. However, the key question to keep in mind is: When does male dominance become GBV in any given context? Finding an answer to this question assists in framing a transformed understanding of male dominance.

The third key theme that emerged is invalid interpretation of the Bible verses associated with GBV. Participants revealed that their church does not encourage GBV. However, congregants misinterpret certain passages in a manner that fans GBV. Key among the passages cited was Genesis 3. Through misunderstanding this chapter, men in the church treat women as sinners, gullible, inferior, unstable and deserving of their subservient position to men. Because of such wrong biblical hermeneutics playing in the background some clergy were cited as having a negative attitude towards women such that they instruct them to be quiet; especially in church meetings. These are the attitudes that the church should seek to address upon realising its public pastoral role of care in its spaces of ministry. Thus, sound hermeneutical principles remain pertinent towards discerning the meaning of the misunderstood biblical passages for transformation of the negative perception of women by both congregants and clergy.

The fourth key theme identified was church experiences that sustain GBV. The experiences that emerged were: subordination of women, male domination, culture of silence, limitations of women in service and experiences of single mothers and widows. Male dominance is one of the ways in which UBCZ fans GBV. In addition, cultural constructs on gender relations influence how gender roles play out in the church and which cultural constructs about women encourage GBV. If this is done collectively, a sense of community and ownership of discoveries helps foster a collective sense of implementation of the discoveries. Without proper approaches by the church, participants expressed a sense of oppression, fear, powerlessness and marginalisation that continue to drive women into a cycle of silence.

The fifth key theme was lack of competency by clergy to address GBV issues in the church. Participants expressed that clergy seem not to know what to do even with explicit GBV in the church. This entails that GBV issues are not properly addressed and are swept under the carpet. This has kept most women in the church from approaching the clergy for help with their GBV experiences. It emerged that the leadership of the church needs to engage in capacity building towards understanding and handling of GBV.

The sixth theme was about limitation of spaces in the church for women to express their GBV experiences. Lack of space was attributed to patriarchal elements that are nurtured in the church. Hence, women are limited and controlled in the manner in which they express themselves even if they are the majority in the church. Influential committees of the church are male-dominated and this shrinks women's space in the church. Awareness campaigns by the church about GBV were proposed as a way of starting to create spaces for women to speak about GBV in the church. There is a need for the church to ensure that there are credible and clear structures in the church that encourage women to speak.

The last theme identified was the approaches used by the church to respond to GBV. The chapter revealed that participants are aware of church discipline where GBV reaches fever pitch. There are no other known further interventions like counselling, shelters, legal support structures, referrals of victims *et cetera*. Participants noted that sometimes dichotomising of GBV issues between family affairs and church has subjected some women to extreme GBV. If the church rules out a GBV issue as being a domestic affair, it means the victim is alone without public pastoral involvement by the church. The church is ambivalent about how it should respond to GBV. The question that emerged was: How can the church join with families in the fight against GBV? Above all, it also emerged that the church needs to improve its public pastoral care on how it responds to and addresses GBV within and outside the church.

9.2.5 The study found that GBV is not a term that is found in the Bible. Rather, certain incidents, attitudes and socio-cultural concepts reflect the notion of GBV from biblical passages. The study considered an understanding of gender relations from Genesis 1-2 as foundational. It emerged that man and woman were both created in the image of God. Four key interpretational views on the image of God were analysed namely: the moral (spiritual), relational, representative and physical view of the image of God in man and woman. The study discarded the physical view of the image of God based on the fact God cannot manifest himself in physical form since He is Spirit (John 4:24; Ps. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24). Hence, the moral, rational and representative views best support what it means to be created in the image of God. Adam and Eve were able to reflect all three views to God (vertically) and to each other (horizontally) without conflict. This is what it means to be truly human to God and to one another. Thus, Genesis 1-2 is a model of perfect and ideal gender relations that should exist between men and women. Further, Adam and Eve were created equal such that neither was inferior to the other. Rather they mutually complemented each other by being human to each other. Neither was self-

sufficient, but as helper and the one to be helped, they both reflected the image of God in their gender relations. There was a distinction in sex but they were able to live in unity and ideal understanding of each other in perfect love and union. The image of God in both was marred or disrupted in Genesis 3 such that Adam and Eve could not relate perfectly to God and to each other independent of wilful selfishness and negatively exploiting each other as human beings.

A literal reading of the OT revealed the disrupted gender relations between men and women as expressed in the social cultural position of women in the OT. The study revealed that women were generally dependent and treated as inferior to men. The socio-cultural context of the biblical times expected a wife to treat her husband with honour (Gen.18:12; Judg. 19:26; Amos 4:21). The social position of women was limited to the home environment, which included childbearing, and raising children. The birth of a boy brought enormous joy as compared to the birth of a girl (Gen. 16:4 and Gen. 29:31-30:24). However, women were also treated with honour and respect. A son that disobeyed his mother faced dire consequences. In times of war, most women were spared from slaughter and taken as plunder while men were killed. God instructed Israel to take care of widows and not deprive them in society (Deut. 10:18; 14:29; Job 22:9; 24:3; 31:16; Ps. 94:6; Isa. I: 1, 23; 10: 1 ff.). Above all, gender relations in the OT reveal that humanity lived in exploitation of each other such that the moral, relational and representative aspects of the image of God in men and women were tainted.

The greater section of the chapter was devoted to analysis of OT and NT selected biblical passages. The following biblical passages were analysed in the OT: Gen. 34:1-34; Gen. 38:130; Judg. 19:1-30 and 1 Kings 11:1-8. It emerged that where rape is involved the word 'rape' is not used in the Bible. Rather words like, "violated, humiliated or defiled" are used. This does not mean that God and society condoned the rape of women. Rather the actions of some characters in biblical rape accounts reveal their displeasure and extreme retributive actions where women are raped (Gen. 34; 2 Sam. 13). Men could perform the retributive actions, but they further reflect God's displeasure. For instance, the raping, murder and decapitation of the Levite widow was followed by tribal war. Not only was tribal war involved but forcible capture and killing of some women (and men) ensued. This means God did not remain silent when GBV occurred. He spoke. It is the role of the interpreter of the biblical passage to discern how God disapproved and spoke against such acts. By implication if God responded to GBV the church must respond to GBV issues in the church and society. Men should view women as complete human beings that are fully created in the image God.

An understanding of the socio-cultural position of women in the NT was also crucial towards understanding gender relations in the NT. The NT was written against the Greco-Roman socio-cultural background. There was a strong influence of male dominance such that the head of the family was called *paterfamilias*. He had absolute control over the lives of those who lived in his house, including slaves. Households were arranged hierarchically with the husband as the master and father over the entire household (De Silva, 2000:18). To better understand the NT and GBV the following passages were analysed: Jon. 7:53-8; 11; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-14 and Eph.5:21-33. It emerged that the position of a woman was subservient to her husband. The biblical injunction is that men should treat their wives with understanding. This implies loving and cherishing them as co-heirs of the grace of God (1 Pet. 3:7). Our newfound faith in Christ should transform the manner in which men and women relate to each other. This entails seeing and treating each other as created in the image of God and treating each other with dignity. This should eventually lead to transformation of gender and socio-cultural norms that negatively oppress women in society. Wives should obey the biblical injunction to willingly submit to their husbands. Husbands must honour the injunction to love their wives as they would love their own bodies. In these biblical injunctions, both (men and women) work towards restoration of lopsided gender relations that exist in the church and communities. The relationship between men and women in the church and society should mirror the attitude of Christ towards women.

9.2.6 The study revealed that understanding how the church should operate in the context of GBV is important for transformation of society. The church must engage with public issues within real life instead of theorising and circumventing social ills confronting society. What the church cherishes as doctrine must be practically expressed in a manner that confronts GBV as a social ill in ministerial contexts. The church should model the image of God in the way it relates to its Creator, surrounding communities and a practice of care for humanity subjected under GBV. This is also, what it means to be incarnational in public pastoral care.

The study revealed that the importance of public theology remains pertinent in the context of GBV. Definitions of public theology share shades of meanings such as it reflects on and living out our Christian faith, it goes beyond the implicit (or parochial) nature of the church to a more explicit outlook, it is intentional and contextual and it seeks to publicly address social ills for the common good of humanity in society. The key questions (among others) that should undergird doing public theology is God's attitude and concern for the human situation in any

given context of ministry by the church. This means theology of the church needs to practically challenge situations like GBV and aim for transformed spaces of ministry through the church.

It further emerged that public theology assists the church to enlarge its theoretical lens of care ranging from communities of faith to difficult issues affecting society like GBV. This forms the basis of the intersection between public theology and pastoral care. Consequently, pastoral care must be theological and focus on discerning the distinctive care that the pastor should give to this community (Vanhoozer & Strachan, 2015:9). Thus, in the context of GBV: What definitive help is the church prepared to give by engaging itself as salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt.5:13-14)? Influenced by public theology as theoretical lens, the church should be guided to design pastoral care ministries that mitigate against GBV.

Pastoral care and its elements are rooted in the OT. It originates with God's public pastoral care for humanity as demonstrated in the Exodus, Judges, prophets, life and ministry of Jesus and the ministry of the Apostles. A reflection on the biblical history of pastoral care reveals that pastoral care was sometimes radical but tempered with the love and compassion of God. When God sent the Assyrians and Babylonians to inflict punishment on Israel, He did so with a loving restorative and compassionate attitude. Public pastoral care is fulfilled and modelled on Christ (John 10:7-11) as the best shepherd that ever lived. The study also revealed that pastoral care takes place within community structures. As such, the church must be conscious of the structures that exist in its ministerial contexts. This means public pastoral care does not focus on individuals alone but embodies the community to form a living human web (Muller-McLemore, 2018:311). The living human web promotes human flourishing of people in the community by opening avenues for more collaboration. In the context of GBV, the church needs to expand and integrate more with community in the fight against GBV. A systematic integration of local congregations with the community increases the church's public pastoral care space for transformation of human life. The church and community could challenge socio-cultural norms, attitudes, oppressive institutions that act as accessories to GBV in church and community.

It further emerged that that the church should also start with congregational or communal pastoral care before it moves outward as could be discerned from the early church (Acts 2:42-47; James 2; 2 Cor. 8) where we learn about fellowship *koinonia* as a form of human care. Congregants in the church should display holistic caring relationships for one another in the

context of GBV. In practising pastoral care, the church must be aware of its own limitations sometimes. Where it feels limited, it can influence the right people in the community or legal structures as a method of advancing its pastoral care ministries in the face of GBV.

Notions of pastoral care were discussed on both OT and NT. The research found that God publicly cared for the Israelites and non-Israelite people in the OT. His scope of care was broad and inclusive. The implication of this is that oppression, marginalisation, exploitation and issues of society indiscriminately need public pastoral care by the church in society. Love, compassion and care should be at the core of the church in practising public pastoral care as discerned from God in both the OT and NT. Thus, the church in the context of GBV can only say what God says in Christ about GBV.

9.2.7 The study revealed that the theology of the church must lead to action that should transform its communities. In the quest to play its role in society, the church must represent God in the manner it treats women in church and society. Its ambassadorial role is indispensable (2 Cor. 5:20) by fulfilling the interests of the one it is accountable to. Congregation or communal fellowship of congregants plays a primary role by assisting them to move from individual experiences of GBV to communal sharing of experiences. This helps the church to stand as one force and face the enemy together and for each other. This implies that the community of faith must acknowledge and be conscious that it has a problem within itself of GBV. From this conscious acknowledgement, it should be able to make communal efforts to be the church in society.

The church needs to intentionally invest in capacity building on two key issues. First, the church should intensify on biblical interpretation capacity building for the clergy. Difficult biblical passages with GBV notions are avoided in preaching and teaching yet God does not hide things in the Bible. Empowering the clergy constantly on this matter could in turn enrich the congregants in their understanding of such passages. Second, the church should be constantly on the lookout for social ills that affect the church and society. GBV is one of the social ills that has been nursed for too long without proper public pastoral care interventions. As it stands, most clergy display a clumsy understanding of GBV and this explains why ambivalence is very high in the manner in which they respond to the phenomenon.

The study revealed that the church must be the hub for the restoration and healing of the communities on GBV issues. Such a reputation of the church by the community is only possible if the church is able to be present, to minister, to care and to be available for the GBV needs of the communities around it. By so doing, the church reflects what it means to treat humanity as people created in the image of God.

The study further revealed that GBV is very persistent and potentially difficult to eradicate. Its stubbornness is entrenched in patriarchy, matriarchy, socio-cultural and religious practices that tolerate the structural relationship. To overcome the complicities involved in curbing GBV the church needs to engage a systematic approach. The interventions should aim at collaborating with communities in ministerial contexts such as local community leadership, police, local government, NGOs, CSOs and the ministry responsible for gender issues in the country. This helps to increase awareness and advocacy by the church on GBV. Such awareness includes being conversant with the legislative laws and policies of the government on GBV. Working with community leaders helps the church to challenge and weaken tendencies that suppress women in both church and community. Taking this approach would enable the church to also deal with stubborn social-cultural mores and attitudes that make inroads into the church and fan GBV. This also further enlarges the church's living human web in its exercise of public pastoral care.

9.3. Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the UBCZ's response to GBV. The key question posed to guide the research was: What is the public pastoral role of the UBCZ in responding to GBV within its community ministerial spaces in Zimbabwe? The key question was supported by the following five elucidating questions.

- What is the prevailing situation, nature, extent and drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe?
- What is the current role of the church (i.e. implicit or explicit) in encouraging or discouraging GBV in Zimbabwean communities?
- Using the case of the UBCZ, how could the church constructively engage and intervene to address the challenge of GBV in Zimbabwe?
- How should the role of the UBCZ in responding to GBV in the community be considered as public pastoral care to the communities where it is located?

- How can such care be understood as church pastoral care ministry and theological to encourage a meaningful church intervention, theologically grounded and balanced GBV ministry?

In response to the above sub-questions, the following conclusions could be made:

9.3.1 What is the prevailing situation, nature, extent and drivers of GBV in Zimbabwe?

Evidence from research shows the high prevalence of GBV in different countries across the globe, and Zimbabwe is no exception. In times of war and peace, women continue to be disproportionately affected by GBV. This is due to multiple power structures that exist in society which persist in reproducing gender inequalities. GBV in Zimbabwe, as the national context of the UBCZ, remains a cause of concern. GBV manifests from being subtle, to cold-blooded murder of predominantly women. A complex interplay of factors embedded in patriarchal structures of power, which include socio-cultural, economic, religious, breakdown of law and order, political *et cetera* continue to act as accessories to GBV. The snail's pace of empowerment of women encourages a culture of silence and marginalisation in the country. In addition, society cherishes cultural norms and religious stereotypes about women that need to be challenged systematically from individual, family, community and state level. There are discernible multifaceted GBV drivers that continue to negatively affect women. In this situation, the church is an accomplice through its religious beliefs and practices, compounded with top church officials implicated in GBV. The church needs to play a meaningful public pastoral role to address the challenge of GBV, but first from within itself.

9.3.2 What is the current role of the church (i.e. implicit or explicit) in encouraging or discouraging GBV in Zimbabwean communities?

Albeit inadequate, the church in Zimbabwe is making an effort to address GBV through teachings like transforming masculinity, Tamar Campaign and sporadic condemnation of GBV through media, aimed at raising awareness of GBV within the church. While these awareness interventions are a good starting point, at the core they need to be more public pastoral care in their approach. This means, the church, through its credible leadership structures has a challenge to frame ministry interventions that fight GBV. As such, the role of the church remains less involved in dealing with GBV. It has been blamed for its silence, religious beliefs and practices that continue to marginalise and oppress women. It is existing in murky circumstances within and from without. The theological convictions of the church need to cease

to be theoretical and translate into incarnational actions that address the GBV issues within and outside the church. Its complicity remains a problem.

The church remains less knowledgeable about how to identify and systematically respond to GBV. Hence, this has hampered meaningful efforts and interventions by the church to be the church in society. This has even created ambivalence and even eclipsed its public pastoral care roles. For the church to be the church in society, it should be able to identify social ills of society like GBV and frame public pastoral care ministerial interventions in contexts of GBV.

9.3.3 Using the case of the UBCZ, how could the church constructively engage and intervene to address the challenge of GBV in Zimbabwe?

The church should intentionally seek to confess *metanoia* (repentance) that it has a problem of GBV within itself before it extends its ministry to the wider community. The church should understand that it is part of society with a key role to play. It is the dwelling of God among his people (John 1:14). This means God expresses his care to people through the church. Thus, the UBCZ should frame public pastoral care ministries in the context of GBV. Such ministries should be utilised as a mirror of what other churches could do to intervene in GBV situations in the church and communities.

9.3.4 How should the role of UBCZ in responding to GBV in the community be considered as public pastoral care to the communities where it is located?

Instead of remaining silent and in an ambivalent state, the church should intentionally seek to care for one another in the context of GBV. Such care must be holistic in its approach. Consequently, the church should extend its human web of pastoral care by creating partnerships with the existing community structures in its ministerial spaces. Together as a wider community, they should challenge from grassroots level the socio-cultural beliefs and other tendencies entrenched in society that fan GBV. The church should become the hub for GBV victims where they seek healing, counselling and assistance to navigate channels towards getting further help. The ability to understand the phenomenon and frame transformative interventions at local and community levels makes the ministry of the church public pastoral care in its ministerial places. In this way, the church restores its salt of the earth and light to the world (Mt. 5:13-14) nature.

9.3.5 How can such care be understood as church pastoral care ministry and theological GBV ministry to encourage a meaningful church intervention, theologically grounded and balanced GBV ministry?

The church's public pastoral care must originate from God through valid interpretation of biblical passages in relation to GBV. Scripture should challenge, influence and change oppressive structural attitudes that prevail so that men and women treat each as fully created in the image of God. A study of contextual accessories on GBV in ministerial context remains pertinent. This helps the interventions framed to remain theologically solid and contextually relevant regarding GBV.

Finally, in response to the key theoretical question raised in this research. The role of the UBCZ should move from a parochial ministerial approach regarding GBV and embrace a public pastoral care approach by identifying the oppressed and marginalised people within and outside the church. To better fulfil its public pastoral role, the church should systematically create synergies with the wider community structures in its ministerial contexts. A move from an individualist approach should be replaced by the will to widen the human web of pastoral care in real spaces of GBV. This allows the church to be what it means to be a church in society. The scourge of GBV does not only need a highly polished theology of the church, but a theology that can talk and walk (Anderson, 2001: 12) is pertinent in the context of GBV.

9.4. Recommendations

- Engagement with KIIs and FGDs revealed that widows and single parents in the church have become the highest population among the congregants. They have unique aspects and experiences of GBV, which are not fully known to the church. Future research should focus on investigating the GBV experiences of these women with the aim to design theological public pastoral care ministries that encounter the needs of these marginalised people in the church and society. These are women with so much commitment to the church but they live almost on the periphery of what it means to be part of the church when it comes to gender relations.
- The church relegates GBV to a social problem to be addressed by government, NGOs and CSOs. The church is caught in between what is secular and religious such that its efforts to respond to GBV just plummet. Future research should investigate how the church could

remain a church when its public pastoral care ministries encroach and integrate with the secular world in the context of GBV.

- The role of the clergy is pertinent in the fight against GBV as one of the top social ills of society. However, clergy training institutions do not fully prepare students to confront this social ill. Research should challenge clergy training institutions on how to produce a pastor that is competent to confront issues of society and frame ministerial interventions in situations of GBV.
- Research in future should investigate on how the church's ministry towards GBV should be strengthened by conceptualisation of the stubbornness of the phenomenon and strong systematic collaborative relationships with the state and communities towards a holistic practice of public pastoral care.

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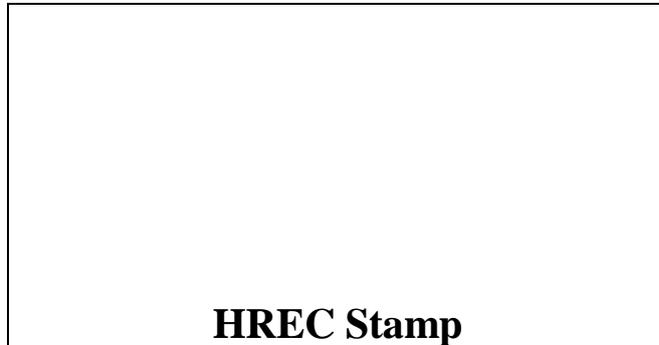
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11. Consent form for participants



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: A public pastoral assessment of Church response to Gender Based Violence (GBV) within United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe.

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00346-18-A6

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof Vhumani Magezi

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Peter Manzanga

ADDRESS: Mukhanyo Theological College, Plot 1 Solomon Mahlangu Drive, KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga.

CONTACT NUMBER: (+27) 063 552 7483

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my PhD research. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Faculty of Theology Ethics Committee of the North-West University** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Theology Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

The research aims to furnish how the UBCZ has been fanning and curbing gender based violence. The research is done with a view to provide a public pastoral care church ministry model that is theologically sound and yet relevant to communities of GBV victims and perpetrators.

Why have you been invited to participate?

The UBCZ Key Interview Informants (KIIs) have been selected to participate in the interviews based on their long experience and leadership roles they have played in the church. As such they are well placed to provide the required information during the interviews. Secondly, the Focus Groups Discussions (FDGs) have been selected based on their aged groups, experience in the church and being members of the denomination. Based on this they are able to provide information relevant for the research study.

What will be expected of you?

You are expected to share your experiences, comments thoughts about the church's response to gender based violence issues based on what you have observed or experienced.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

You will gain awareness on gender based violence issues that you probably treated as normal because you were not informed. There are no costs involved or any form of remuneration. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

The risks in this study are very minimal. Some (if any) of you might recall your gender based violence experiences and display visible emotional instability. In the event of emotional disturbance, a professional counselor in gender issues will be on standby to give help and guidance where it is needed. Even those who might need long term assistance, it will be given freely so that they get help on dealing with their gender based violence experiences. The interviews and discussions benefit the participants more than the risks.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

Anonymity of your findings will be protected by using pseudonyms for KIIs and group numbers for FDGs. Your privacy will be respected by not sharing what I discuss with you outside these contact sessions.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

They will be kept in a lockable cabinet and will be destroyed as soon as the research study is completed.

How will you know about the results of this research?

Only the general findings will be shared with you through the academic public domain and relevant channels.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

No you will not be paid to take part in the study because this is voluntary participation without any funding attached to it. There will thus be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

You can contact Peter Manzanga (Researcher) at +27 63 552 7483 (pamanzanga@gmail.com) or Prof Magezi (Research Promoter) at +27 82 921 0847 (veemags.Magezi@nwu.ac.za) if you have any further questions or have any problems.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I,
.....,
.....,
.....,
.....,
.....,

... agree to take part in the research study titled: A public pastoral assessment of Church response to Gender Based Violence (GBV) within United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe.

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Signature of participant (s)

Signature of witness (s)

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
- I did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of person obtaining consent

.....
Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of researcher

.....
Signature of witness