An African Women's Theological Analysis

of a development programme:

'Churches, Channels of Hope'.

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract / Summary

This thesis is offering an analysis of the Facilitator's Manual of the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA). The analysis is situated in the context of HIV and AIDS as the manual is used to train facilitators during a weeklong training to become 'Channels of Hope' in their communities which are affected by HIV and AIDS. The HIV and AIDS discourse therefore needs to be explored. However, the manual was developed during the end of the 1990's in South Africa and therefore the context of HIV and AIDS specifically in South Africa needs to be analysed. Furthermore, the 1990's was the end of *apartheid* and the start of a new democracy in South Africa and therefore the impact of the legacy of *apartheid* is part of the analysis of the context.

 In order to analyse the content of the manual and do a study of the language used, a theoretical framework was developed by using African women theologians. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (referred to as the Circle) was used as a resource to find African women theologians. As a woman born in South Africa and therefore Africa, this seemed as the most appropriate resource. The process of seeking for a method of doing discourse analysis, eventually lead to the feminist practical theologian, Denise Ackermann who is also a member of the Circle and a South African. Her Feminist Theology of Praxis was used as methodological point of departure.

The theoretical framework was then used to do a close reading of the manual and compare the themes of the framework with the content in the manual. The question was, whether these themes identified through the framework were present in the manual or not. Furthermore it was explored in which ways the themes were present once they were identified. The themes identified through the discourse analysis was used to suggest alternative methods used in the manual in order to enhance the manual. The goal of the "Churches, Channels of Hope" programme is to empower people and help communities to grow and flourish. The hope is therefore that the suggestions would be used to enhance this programme and to make that goal possible.

HIV and AIDS continue to be a challenge and CABSA and other Faith Based Organisations need all the support possible to address the challenges of this pandemic.

Uittreksel/Opsomming

Hierdie tesis bied 'n analise van die Fasiliteerders Handleiding van die Christen Vigsburo vir Suidelike Afrika (CABSA). Die analise val binne die konteks van MIV en VIGS aangesien die handleiding gebruik word om fasiliteerders op te lei tydens 'n weeklange opleiding om 'Kanale van Hoop' in hul gemeenskappe wat deur MIV beinvloed is, te word. Die MIV en VIGS diskoers moet dus ontgun word. Maar die handleiding was ontwikkel in Suid Afrika tydens die einde van die 1990's en daarom moet die spesifieke Suid Afrikaanse konteks en MIV en VIGS ontleed word. Verder was die 1990's die end van *apartheid* en die begin van 'n nuwe demokrasie in Suid Afrika. Dit is dus nodig om die impak van die nalatingskap van *apartheid* in te sluit by die analise van die konteks.

'n Teoretiese raamwerk wat deur vroue teoloeë uit Afrika ontwikkel was, is gebruik ten einde die inhoud van die handleiding te ontleed en die taal te bestudeer. 'Die Sirkel van Betrokke Afrika Vroue Teoloë' (hierna verwys as die Sirkel) was gebruik as 'n hulpbron om vroue teoloë uit Afrika te vind. As 'n vrou, gebore in Suid-Afrika en dus Afrika, het dit na die mees toepaslike bron gelyk, omdat die navorser 'n feministiese standpunt gekies het. Die proses van 'n soeke na 'n metode om diskoers analise te doen, het uiteindelik tot die praktiese teoloog, Denise Ackermann gelei wat ook 'n lid van die Sirkel en 'n Suid-Afrikaner is. Haar 'Feministiese Teologie van Praxis' is gebruik as metodologiese vertrekpunt.

Die teoretiese raamwerk is dan gebruik om 'n noukeurige lees van die handleiding te doen en die temas van die raamwerk met die inhoud in die handleiding te vergelyk. Die vraag was, "Is die temas wat deur die raamwerk geïdentifiseer was, teenwoordig in die handleiding? Indien teenwoordig, hoe was dit teenwoordig?" Die temas, geïdentifiseer deur die diskoers analise, is gebruik om alternatiewe metodes voor te stel om sodoende die handleiding te verbeter. Die doel van die "Kerke, Kanale van Hoop" program is om mense te bemagtig en gemeenskappe te help om te groei en te floreer. Die hoop is dus dat die voorstelle gebruik sal word om die program te verryk en sodoende hul doel moontlik te maak.

MIV en VIGS bly 'n uitdaging en CABSA en ander geloofs gebaseerde organisasies benodig alle moontlike ondersteuning om die uitdagings van dié pandemie aan te spreek.

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It has been a privilege to work with Dr Nadine Bowers du Toit as my supervisor. Our journey was challenging at the beginning as it took time to meet each other as companions, but once we found common ground it became a process of growth and development. Words fail me to convey my appreciation as I think of Dr Charlene van der Walt, who introduced the course to me and continued to be a silent companion and supporter. She eventually joined the journey as co-supervisor. I thank these two women as well as the rest of the family of the Theology Department of the US who in different ways encouraged me.

Through the University of Stellenbosch, I was introduced to CABSA (Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa) who's 'Church Channel of Hope' programme became the content of my thesis. I am therefore thankful for CABSA's support of my studies by allowing me to analyse their manual.

I have been surrounded by wonderful family members and friends who continued to encourage me throughout my studies. A special thanks to my mother, brothers and sisters for continued support and prayers. Without the love and support of Hilton, my husband and Joy and Stephano, our children I would not have made it thus far. I am blessed to have you in my life.

When I completed my last degree, you were so proud and I know that you are smiling at me this time around as well. Thanks for always being in my corner dad and for inspiring us to be the best we can be.

God has been my constant companion and blessed me through amazing people in my life. "Great is Thy faithfulness…" May I continue to "soar like an eagle" (Is 40:31).

Thanks be to God.

Preface

During my retreat in preparation for my ordination to become a deacon - my formal entrance into the Anglican Church of Southern Africa as clergy person, I heard the story of the eagle who thought it was a chicken for the first time. The story was told of an eagle chick which was found by a farmer and put into the chicken coop with his chickens. The eagle grew with the chickens and copied the chickens as it believed it was a chicken until a friend of the farmer visited one day and saw this eagle in the coop. He was surprised and challenged the farmer about this eagle, but the farmer explained that the eagle believed it was a chicken and would not even try to fly. The friend took on the challenge of reminding the eagle who it was and took it with him. He took the eagle to his farm and every day tried to get the eagle to fly. This continued for a few days until one day, he again threw the eagle into the sky and it flew. He took the eagle to a cliff and it spread its wings and flew. It realized that it was not supposed to be on the ground, but in the sky. It was not a chicken but an eagle.

This story became my companion as I journeyed into the Church. The story has over the years been a constant reminder of my identity. Repeatedly I have been reminded that I am not a chicken. I am an eagle. This meant embracing the fact that I was not a man but a woman – not just any woman but rather a daughter, a wife, a mother, an African. It is my identity as African woman which has challenged me to look at the role of the parish priest and identify the gap between the Church gathered and the Church scattered. I was challenged by the fact that people attend services on a Sunday and meet together in order to be spiritually uplifted and encouraged. However, they then leave the Church building and return to their homes and communities where they continue to face social challenges and struggles of unemployment, poverty, alcohol abuse and drug abuse, physical and mental abuse and feelings of powerlessness and despair. Through the studies I found the vocabulary to talk about my experiences in the Church. The Mth in Gender, Health and Theology reminded me again of who I was – it challenged the identity I developed in the Church and reintroduced the academic arena to me. It introduced the Faith Based Organisation sector, specifically CABSA (the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa) to me.

At CABSA I again was challenged and reminded that I was an eagle and not a chicken. When introduced to the Facilitator's Manual of the 'Churches Channels of Hope' Programme, I could look at the manual from my experience – from my identity as a woman from Africa.

This thesis is therefore part of my journey into being more me and finding my voice. The hope is that as I discover different parts of what it means to be a woman from Africa – a so-called coloured woman from South Africa and speak about my experiences, the journey would empower others and help more women to find their voices and flourish.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   Introduction

HIV and AIDS continues to be a challenge to sub-Saharan Africa and, therefore, to South Africa[1]. The church has and continues to attempt to address the challenges which the pandemic brings through a variety of programmes. Due to the fact that HIV and AIDS continues to be a challenge to our societies, Faith Based Organisations (FBO's) have developed to join the challenge of addressing the pandemic. The Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA) is one such FBO, which was developed during the 1990's. CABSA has developed a training programme called Churches Channels of Hope, through which training is offered to facilitators, in order to empower them to become 'channels of hope' to their communities. The programme, CCoH, is a training programme, focuses on training facilitators by empowering them through supplying knowledge on HIV and AIDS and knowledge on the use of the bible in addressing HIV and AIDS. The facilitators are also trained in basic skills of facilitation l and ultimately, the vision is that the facilitators would become a channel of hope and encourage social development – "a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development" (Green 2012:31). The process of change, however, is viewed as starting with the facilitators – with the people attending the training first. They need to be empowered and encouraged to become a channel of hope which would ultimately lead to social change and well-being of the community the facilitator comes from.

 This study attempts to do a close reading and analysis of CABSA's training manual, which is used to train facilitators. During the process of analysing the training manual, the study will explore the context within which the manual was developed, as well as the role of the church in the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

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[1] South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012 http://www.health-e.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/HRSC-2012.

1.2   Rationale

1.2.1 Personal

During my work as parish priest in the Anglican Church, I was challenged by the parishioners who came to services every Sunday, looking for hope while burdened by social problems – unemployment, poverty, the impact of alcohol and drug abuse, to name a few. I was, therefore, challenged to start thinking about what salvation meant for our parishioners. People who return to difficult realities after being preached to about salvation of their souls and life after death – what would this mean in their day to day lives? I started thinking about the role of the Church in our communities – about life before death. What would make the gospel a reality to people who suffer in these difficult circumstances? How can the Church bring hope when people's reality seems hopeless? How can the Church encourage people to flourish?

I then worked at CABSA [2] as coordinator of the programme, Churches, Channels of Hope (CCoH) for a few months. I discovered that the programme (CCoH) was offered to the Anglican Church during an agreement between the two entities[3]. The aim of this then was "to strengthen the Christian response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This service is also seen as a follow-up service linked to the "Churches, Channels of Hope" programme which strives to assist churches in their mobilization processes".
(Memorandum of Agreement: 2004/2005 no. 2).

The CCoH programme seems to attempt to address the dualism between religion and society, which had developed over time with religion on the one hand and society on the other – thus separating the spiritual and the material. The CCoH programme is then an attempt to develop "channels" between the two entities (religion and society) and bring it together.

1.2.2 Lingering challenges of HIV and AIDS

The CCoH programme is focused on HIV and AIDS. Haddad (2002:94) comments with regards to Sub-Saharan Africa that "[t]he rate at which HIV prevalence increases in South Africa is one of the highest in the world…" Recent surveys[4] released indicate that HIV and AIDS is still a widespread problem in South Africa. There is therefore still a need for programmes which educate people about HIV and AIDS. "In the context of HIV/AIDS, the

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[2] Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa
[3] As mentioned previously, I am an ordained priest in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA)
[4] South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012 http://www.health-e.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/HRSC-2012.

dominant discourses that are most commonly examined are those of medicine, development, gender, ethics or morality" (Olivier 2006:83).

However, HIV and AIDS is much more than only a disease, as it is closely linked to social issues such as poverty, gender and gender violence. Haddad (2009) argues, "understanding and responding to the epidemic is a complex and multi-layered task which requires a deeper and ongoing inquiry into the inter-relationship between practices of culture, gender, end religion (both missionary and indigenous) in Africa".

Cochrane (2006:60) agrees that HIV and AIDS is one of the "leading causes of death and among the principal barriers to human and economic development in the world's poorest countries, not least in Africa." Therefore, he argues "to address health as part of comprehensive well-being, as that which reflects life-energy and spirit, is thus to address the internal, external and social body that defines any person" (Cochrane 2006:126). Any effort to address the disease should therefore involve a comprehensive approach which addresses all the social issues linked to HIV and AIDS. It is therefore essential for the CCoH to address the interrelatedness of these factors (such as patriarchy, poverty, gender) with HIV and AIDS.

1.2.3 The intersection of Gender, HIV and AIDS and theology in context

CCoH is offered throughout Africa (and even wider than Africa) through agreements with international organisations. However, as a programme offered in Africa, it needs to take the context of HIV and AIDS in Africa into consideration. Africa - which has the highest number of infections[5] and has a very diverse collection of people living on the same continent. Where being in community is a natural way of life and also means a natural inclusion of all issues of community, e.g. culture, religion, conflict and poverty. Addressing HIV and AIDS, therefore, needs to take this communal understanding into consideration. It is also important to highlight the gendered nature of HIV and AIDS. Haddad (2002:95) reminds us of the biological facts around women – "[w]omen's genital tissues are easily damaged during sexual intercourse; this results in cuts and bruises that provide entry points for the virus." It is women on the African continent who are most physiologically vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. When further taking into account, poverty and the fact that mostly women stay in the rural areas to take care of families, "the odds are stacked against [the women], Haddad (2002:95) emphasises. Haddad (2009:6) argues that "the gendered nature of the epidemic is also

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[5] Country Comparison. http://www.indexmundi.com/ Accessed on 7 July 2014

intimately related to traditional African social and cultural practices. These practices reinforce women's subordination in all social spheres of life, including the sexual". Women have for centuries in the past and often today due to tradition, not been able to negotiate safe practices for sexual intercourse.

1.2.4 Scholary "gap"

There has been some research done on the CCoH. Rhodé Janssen, while working as an intern at CABSA did a Quantitative Analysis of 2012 Facilitator Reports and wrote a comprehensive report on her findings. Furthermore, Christina Landman published a paper in the *Verbum et Ecclesia* in August 2010: 'The church as a HIV-competent faith community: An assessment of Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa's *Churches*, *Channels of Hope* training'. Landman however uses Julian Müller's Praxis of Theology from a post-foundational point of view to assess whether the CCoH training embodies HIV competency in practices and whether the discourses can be called contextual as well as contra-cultural. The research of Landman was, furthermore, done based on the responses from facilitators who attended the training and were giving their yearly feedback on the training, the impact it had on their lives and the work they do in their communities. There has been no research done on the training manual, which is used by CABSA.

Furthermore, this analysis in this thesis would be done from a gendered perspective. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, especially Beverley Haddad has looked at HIV and AIDS from a gendered perspective. No analysis of a social development programme intended for churches has been done through a gendered lens.

Looking at the CCoH programme through an African Women's Theological lens could, therefore, be an enhancement to the programme as well as to scholarly discourses in development in its efforts to integrate gender into these discourses.

1.2.5 Literature Review

HIV and AIDS continues to challenge theologians and the Church as the parishioners in our congregations who are HIV positive continue to be a reality. Van Klinken (2011:107) in an article reviewing literature on HIV and AIDS comments, that:

the HIV epidemic continues to challenge African theology. As HIV is a dynamic epidemic, constantly new issues arise that pose new challenges to churches and theologies in the context of HIV and AIDS. The books discussed in this review demonstrate that in the last decade a theological framework to understand and respond to the epidemic has emerged, mainly based on the paradigm of Liberation Theology and with women theologians in the forefront. However, it is also clear that theologically and methodologically the analysis of and reflection on issues related to the epidemic need to be advanced.

There is, therefore, a need for continued reflection on HIV and AIDS – especially on methods to address the continued denial, apathy and indifference of people. The church has been identified as a vehicle, through which the pandemic could be addressed[6] - hence the development of the programme CCoH by CABSA. It was started in response to the need of churches to be relevant in their response to HIV. The training is focused on leaders in the church, with the intention that once they have been empowered through the training, they would become channels of hope which could help to lead their faith community to competence with HIV[7].

The CCoH programme is geared towards bringing about change – change within individuals but also possible social change towards people living with HIV and the stigma often attached to such people. Merino (1969:145) when speaking about liberation, reminds that God's "redemptive work embraces all the dimensions of human existence" and therefore also liberation from the HIV and AIDS pandemic. For those living with the virus, liberation refers to being liberated from being treated differently and stigmatised due to a virus which people carry in their bodies. In order to realise such a goal, a holistic approach is needed. CABSA's Churches Channels of Hope, is a training programme[8] focused at bringing about change within the participants of the training, who might in some way go and bring about change in the faith communities or organisations they belong to.

Church leaders agree that the faith community plays an essential role in educating congregations about HIV and AIDS and fighting the stigma that keeps those with the virus

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[6] See Beverley Haddad, " Reflections on the Church and HIV /AIDS South Africa," *Theology Today* 62, 2005. 29-37
[7] See http://www.cabsa.org.za/ for information on HIV Competence
[8] See http://www.cabsa.org.za/ for information on Churches Channels of Hope.

from seeking physical and spiritual healing. Haddad (1993:106) notes that "... the church has a moral obligation to become part of lobbying and advocacy work in communities...").

Although the church, through organisations such as the World Council of Churches,[9] has been challenged and understands the need to get involved in HIV and AIDS, getting involved at grassroots level is however still a process which requires reflection. Cochrane (2006:8) for example notes that the "pastors on the ground are often overwhelmed by the impact of the virus and its effects on the members of their congregations or communities". It is, therefore, often easier to preach about taking care, than to get down from the pulpit and go and take care by being there for people through physical support and care. He further notes that as result "there is need for more reflection on the role of the Church beyond the pulpit beyond a model of 'caring for the sick' or a theology built on the analogy of ministering to the leper in our midst. However, no clear trajectory is evident for an ecclesial practice adequate to the challenge" (Cochrane 2006:8). Several factors could be the cause - restrictive or inappropriate dogmas, inadequately trained leadership, poor infrastructural, foundations or management skills perceptions remain that are not helpful to the process of the church. Although the church is part of community, it is often seen as focusing on the spiritual only and not on the communities with its many social challenges. Bowers Du Toit (2010) addresses this dualism between prayer and social action. She notes that "evangelism alone is viewed as mission and social action is regarded as instrumentalist rather than as part of mission". Through training church leaders to become "channels of hope" it becomes possible to be able to start the process of bridging the gap between the pulpit and social development by implementing the reflections of theologians.

Van Klinken notes that, "the HIV epidemic continues to challenge African theology" (2011:107). Therefore, the programme CCoH is run all over Africa where the challenge of HIV and AIDS is the greatest. The fact that the programme was developed in South Africa situates the programme within the African context with its diversity and focus on community. HIV and AIDS highlights the social problems present in the communities and emphasise the necessity of focusing on community. Kanyoro (2001:169) also notes that "in Africa, commitment to do changing of oppressive systems has to be done within the community, otherwise its validity will be questioned ". Communities are faced with different challenges such as poverty, gender violence and gender issues. When analysing the programme

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[9] See http://www.oikoumene.org/ for information on the WCC.

Churches, Channels of Hope the lens used needs to take the complexity of HIV and AIDS into consideration. In the words of Cochrane (2006:7), "HIV and AIDS present not just a health challenge, but a socially comprehensive one". A socially comprehensive approach needs to include the fact that issues such as HIV and AIDS are gendered. Haddad (2005:35) remarks that, some African practices are oppressive towards women. For example, the practice of lobola (bride-price) can contribute to abuse as husbands often treat womenas possessions. Women then have no power to negotiate safe sex. Women also often choose unsafe practices in order to please husbands sexually, which put them at risk for HIV infection.

When addressing sexual behaviour, which is of course intrinsically related to the transmission of HIV, the issue of gender and patriarchy needs to join the conversation. Understanding HIV and AIDS as gendered, therefore, also implies the need for theologies that originate from our context and understand its complexity and patriarchal links. Ackermann (2007:14) notes that "all theology is ultimately 'contextual', that is, it arises from a specific historical context and it addresses that context". The questions which it asks, and the answers it seeks to give, are determined by its specific historical situation. This context impacts theological thought and complicates the landscape of HIV and AIDS further. Ackermann explains that women from Europe have experiences very different from women from Africa for example as their contexts are different. Although they therefore are feminist theologians, just as she is, their experiences of HIV and AIDS are very different (Klein 2004)

Ackermann (2007:14), therefore, notes that within this context "a feminist liberatory approach [which] seeks that which is freeing and whole-making for both women and men" is needed. "African Women's Theologies share with global feminist theology the highlighting of women's experience of self, God, community and nature as its starting point. It is this experience that African women bring to the sources of African Theology" (Phiri 2009:115). Phiri (2009:115) further explains that African women theologians use the global feminist theories that identify patriarchy as a cause of women's oppression and apply them to analyse all the sources of African Theology. By so-doing, it treats all the sources of African Theology with suspicion because of their potential to accommodate patriarchy. Patriarchy is defined by Manda (2009:24-25) as "a cultural practice that supports gender inequality between men and women whereby power and authority in both the private and public sphere is firmly vested in men".

1.3   Problem Question

In which ways could an African Woman's Theological reading of the text (the manual) enhance the programme Churches, Channels of Hope?

1.3.1 Objectives

- To explore the context and discourses within which HIV and AIDs is to be found within a South African context.
- To describe the context and content of the HIV and AIDS programme, Churches, Channels of Hope.
- To explore what is understood by African Woman's Theology.
- To use African Woman's Theology as lens to do a Critical Discourse Analysis of the HIV and AIDS programme Churches Channels of Hope.
- To make recommendations as to how the programme Churches Channels of Hope, could be enhanced by reading the manual through an African Women's Theology.

1.4   Research Methodology

HIV and AIDS highlight the interdisciplinary nature of social development. "People who live with HIV are precipitated into AIDS if faced with poor nutrition and stress, which shortens their life expectancy and diminishes their quality of life. Children and HIV+ breast-feeding mothers are sometimes given low priority in food distribution..." (Chirongoma 2006:180). The multi-faceted nature of HIV and AIDS therefore requires an approach which is interdisciplinary.

The programme CCoH - in striving to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of HIV and AIDS – structures the manual into three separate sections which are also closely linked and interrelated, namely (1) Knowledge of HIV and AIDS, (2) Facilitation Skills and (3) Christian Response. The sections, separate but also interrelated can be seen as an effort to practically address the complexity of the pandemic. Each of the discourses of these sections will have to be analysed critically, as these are offered with the goal in mind of training people towards competent faith communities in Africa.

The focus of the study will thus be the training manual of Churches Channels of Hope used during the training session of a week. A critical discourse analysis of the manual through an

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African women's theological lens will be used. What is meant by critical analysis needs to be unpacked and explained. The explanation of discourse analysis, in the next section, will include an explanation of the choice of Ackermann's feminist theology of praxis.

1.4.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is the study of language.[10] In doing discourse analysis a close reading of the text and a study of the language used will be done. Lazar (2005:1) describes critical discourse analysis as "a critical perspective on unequal social arrangements sustained through language use, with the goals of social transformation and emancipation, constitutes the cornerstone of critical discourse analysis". According to Lazar there is a complex hierarchy of power and ideology at work in discourse which helps to sustain a gendered social order. Therefore, the language used or not used with the power relations in mind will be one area which will be investigated "People talk and act not just as individuals, but as members of various sorts of social and cultural groups. We do not invent our language, we inherit it from others" (Gee 2011:182).

The manual is a product of a few individuals who come from a certain community. One needs to look at the community they come from and the language they inherited. The question is therefore: was there an awareness of the implication of this inheritance for the use of the manual and the training of others – especially if others are not necessary coming from the same community and therefore the same context? The manual is used to teach and influence others to bring about change – change, therefore, from what to what? These questions are asked to encourage discussion rather than to cause destruction and therefore the method of Oduyoye referred to by Phiri and Nadar (2006:2) is appropriate - the method of "Treading Softly but Firmly"[11].

This terminology of Mercy Oduyoye " treading softly but firmly" used by Phiri and Nadar (2006:2) "offers an alternative to head-on altercations only resulted in the equivalence of cabinet drawers being shattered. Sometimes a 'soft but firm' theology is more appropriate". In seeking an approach which would be "soft but firm" Denise Ackermann's feminist theology of praxis is explored as a possible methodological point of departure. In exploring a feminist theology of praxis, the work of Denise Ackermann as practical theologian needs to

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[10] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/discourse_analysis

[11] See Mercy Oduyoye in Phiri I and Nadar S. African Women, Religion, and Health. Essays in honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye. 2006:2.

be investigated. Ackermann (2007) suggests further that the underlying presupposition is that we know God only insofar as we know ourselves. The tyranny of male patriarchal anthropologies has to be broken and new holistic images found which affirm the full humanity of all. (Ackermann 2007:14). Therefore when analysing the manual, one would start with suspicion towards male patriarchal anthropologies. One would question the usage of images for God – are there female images included. One would interrogate the narratives included – are the stories about women and how are they told and by whom. When looking at the impact of African culture, one would be aware of the presence of patriarchy in African culture. When examining social issues, especially poverty need to include the fact that poverty is gendered.

Treading softly but firmly, therefore is African women's theological reading strategy – a close reading of the text (the manual) and seeing what is written, but also a reading "of seeking out the gaps and silences in the text and re-imagining the unspoken"(Imathiu 2001:39). Ackermann is also part of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and the Circle will be used as source for finding African women theologians in order to develop an African women's lens.

1.4.2 African Woman's Lens

In order to emphasise the difference in context of this reading, the label "African Feminist" was not chosen, but rather "African Woman". Phiri and Nadar (2006:5) highlight "we do not want to be called feminists[12], because of its seeming neglect of race and class; neither do we want to be called womanist because the experiences of African-American women are different from those of African women. Therefore the use of the label, "African Women's Theologies" is used by some African women Theologians. [13] "A second feature of African women's theologies is their commitment to 'grassroots' women living in faith communities – requires that African women become 'bilingual,' speaking the language of the academy and that of their communities, not just linguistically, but culturally and socially" (Phiri and Nadar 2006:6). Furthermore, when analysing the text, we need to ask, "Who compiled the text? Why was the text - the manual put together? What does the text suggest, was used as criteria when including information into the manual? As Elisabeth S Fiorenza (1992:xxiii) suggests, the text needs to be read with suspicion; with remembrance as one reconstruct women's

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[12] The label "African woman" is chosen, although Ackermann's feminist theology of praxis is also used.
[13] Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye called the theology done by the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians "African women's theologies".

history; one needs to look at the proclamation – is there a presence of oppression or liberation and one needs to seek signs of creative actualization for women.

1.4.3 Positionality and intersectionality

1.4.3.1   The Role of Experience

Not only does one need to tread softly but firmly past the reader, through the text, one also needs to then move to reading the context. "There are two contexts to be taken into account; the first is the context of the text itself; the other is the context of the reader and interpreting" (Watson 2003:14). The reader according to Watson (2003) will be encouraged to make connections between the text and her own perspective and she will be challenged by the text. Coming from a specific cultural group and growing up during the *apartheid* years in South Africa, have an impact on the reader and her interpretation. As a so-called "coloured" she has experience of segregation and racial oppression by law as well as the process of liberation and moving from being oppressed to living in a democratic society. "All that we know, perceive and believe is grounded in our experience as human beings and in our reflection on this experience. Thus anthropology becomes the starting point for theology concerned with liberation. We start with questioning in order to be affirmed" (Ackermann 2007:14). The researcher doing reading and analysis, would therefore be doing the analysis from her experience – from who she is.

1.4.3.2   Predisposed Position

The reader doing the analysis is a woman who lives in Africa- South Africa. She therefore chooses to read from a woman's perspective. Watson (2003) remarks, that the reader, for the feminist theologian, can no longer be gender-neutral.

Living in South Africa, I grew up in a segregated society where differentiation was made according to race. This segregation was called *apartheid*. I however was fortunate to experience the dawn of a democratic country and was able to vote together with my sixty something year old parents for the first time. As a twenty-eight year old mother, I stood in the queue with my husband and eighteen month old daughter waiting to vote. I was born under *apartheid*, grew up under *apartheid*, demonstrated and boycotted against *Apartheid* and celebrated the end of *apartheid*. I will therefore be reading from my African perspective – from the perspective of a so-called "Coloured" woman in South Africa.

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A "Coloured" person is a person of mixed race – specifically between people of African (Black) culture and people from or having ancestors from other parts of the world. The term "Coloured" is not accepted by all, however I find the term descriptive of the many people I carry within me. I have Griekwa, San, English and Malaysian blood in me (that is of what I am certain). All of these different people make me a very 'colourful' person. Being labelled as a "Coloured" is therefore not derogatory to me as some people experience the term. Rather it says something about the amazing people I am part of – a colourful people who are creative, friendly, musical, hospitable, innovative and passionate due to our diversity.

1.5   Ethics

When the process of looking for a topic was started, I was working at CABSA and received the consent of the management in choosing to analyse the CCoH programme. Although I no longer work at CABSA I am still committed to see whether the programme could be enhanced and will still offer the results of the analysis to the management of CABSA as agreed earlier.

The manual called the 'Facilitator's Manual' which will be analysed is given to each person who participate in the training. It is therefore a public document and permission is given to the facilitators to use the material, including the manual, when doing training in different faith communities or wider communities.

1.6   Limitations

Being able to position oneself from a particular context is able to give the research a specific focus. However, the study could have been enriched by a multi-dimensional interaction with the manual, being able to interact with the manual from different contexts. This could have been possible through additional empirical research.

The fact that there was not empirical research done, but only a theoretical interaction with the manual, could be a limitation. Empirical work verifying the interaction of facilitators with the manual could have strengthened the analysis of the manual. Empirical research using the observations and experience of facilitators while attending the training would have enriched the analysis of the manual. It would have offered different experiences and observations of a diverse group of facilitators - more than one analysis.

1.7   Chapter outline

Chapter 1: An outline of the study.

Chapter 2: The context and discourses within which HIV and AIDs and the manual itself is
to be found within a South African context.

Chapter 3: The development of an African woman's theological lens.

Chapter 4: The analysis of the CABSA manual in light of the developed African woman's
theological lens.

Chapter 5: Recommendations of how to enhance the CABSA manual and Conclusion.

1.8   Conclusion

This chapter is a general introduction to the study of analysing the training manual of
CABSA. It includes an outline of the different chapters and supplies an overall picture of
what the study entails. It introduces the different contexts and discourses of HIV and AIDS
and outlines the fundamentals which influenced the choice to develop an African woman's
theological lens. An overall picture of the process of analysis which will be embarked upon is
explained. The study attempts to offer ways to enhance the training manual of CABSA's
"Churches Channels of Hope" programme and support the flourishing of communities.

Chapter 2

Context of Manual

2.1   Introduction

The manual which will be analysed within the thesis is a Facilitator's manual which is used by the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA). It was developed by CABSA for the training of leaders in the Church, and other organisations who are involved in HIV and AIDS. The training offers knowledge, skills and resources in the process of trying to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic in South Africa, as well as the rest of Africa. The manual was developed during the 1990's. In this chapter the researcher will be setting the context of the manual.

As the manual focuses specifically on HIV and AIDS, it is important to look at the discourse with regards to HIV and AIDS in South Africa at the time of the development of the manual, as well as the current context of HIV and AIDS discourses. Special attention will be paid to the gendered nature of HIV and AIDS, which encourages a multifaceted response to the pandemic.

The training of CABSA is noted as being offered "to assist faith communities" (manual cover page) – faith communities would include the Church and therefore the situation in the Church then and at present around HIV and AIDS will be discussed. The training programme was developed during a time of the development of a curriculum on HIV and AIDS for seminaries who train clergy, in order to address the pandemic from within the Church. The curriculum will therefore also be explored as part of the broader Church in Africa context.

Finally, the development of CABSA will be discussed. CABSA is a Faith Based Organisation (FBO) and one needs to explore the issues raised around FBO's. Once FBO's are understood, the journey of CABSA to becoming a Faith Based Organisation (FBO) as well as the eventual development of the Churches, Channels of Hope (CCoH) Programme and its Facilitator's Manual, which is the subject of assessment in this thesis, will be analysed.

2.2   HIV and AIDS

HIV and AIDS is still a challenge world-wide and especially in South Africa. "Despite constituting just 0,7% of the world's population, South Africa accounted for 17% (about 5,5 million people) of the global burden of HIV infection in 2007" (Karim, Churchyard, Karim & Lawn 2009:921).

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is complex and there is a "constellation of factors"[14] which impact HIV and AIDS. As a health issue it is about infection and understanding the virus; however it is also impacted by social and cultural factors as well as religious factors. Dube (2003:13) emphasises the challenge of HIV and AIDS as both a health issue and an issue of justice, which needs to be approached by all disciplines. In seeking an understanding of the complexities of HIV and AIDS, Powers (2012:532) explains that: "One of the great challenges posed by the AIDS epidemic to those seeking to understand its social impact is the necessity of linking social, political, economic and biological processes operating on different socio-cultural scales". There are no easy answers, and in order to understand HIV and AIDS, one needs to attempt to investigate all of the different factors impacting the spread of HIV and AIDS. It is also key to note, that HIV and AIDS has been feminised. According to statistics is more than half of the people living with HIV globally are females[15].

2.2.1 HIV and AIDS in South Africa

2.2.1.1 HIV and AIDS discourses over time and current status

As the manual was developed in South Africa, it is important to look at the social factors at play in the South African society.

The 1990's was in general a period of empowerment for the South African people[16]. The empowerment process was especially good for women as the position of women was addressed through the South African constitution. Gender inequalities were, therefore, addressed through the new constitution; however, issues of health and more especially the HIV and AIDS pandemic, did not get the same focus and attention (Haddad 2008:48).

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[14] Constellation of factors is used by Rachel Jewkes in referring to the complexity of causes of intimate partner violence.
▪ [15] See www.unaids.org.
[16] The South African people experienced the first democratic election in 1994.

Mr Mandela stepped down as the first democratic President of South Africa and Mr Thabo Mbeki was elected as the second President of post-apartheid South Africa on 14 June 1999 with Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang being elected as Minister of Health to the Cabinet at that same time (McNeil 2012). This change signalled the beginning of a time of crisis around HIV and AIDS in South Africa. The new president, Mr Mbeki, questioned the link between HIV and AIDS and the fact that HIV caused AIDS, which set in motion a problematic discourse with regards to HIV and AIDS (Powers 2012:532). Mr Mbeki's views were rooted in his focus on the positive of being African and what he termed the need for an "African Renaissance". Karim, Churchyard, Karim & Lawn (2009:922) write about that period of the South African history in the following way:

> Unfortunately, South Africa's response to the epidemics during the past decade has
> been marked by denialism, ineptitude, obtuseness, and deliberate efforts to
> undermine scientific evidence as the basis for action.

McNeil (2012) notes that Mr Mbeki openly held the position that HIV did not cause AIDS, and faced minimal dissent in his Cabinet for his many public statements on the matter. Haddad (2009:5) further argues that it is the contradiction of him calling for an "African Renaissance" and the large number of people dying in South Africa which "led to (Mr Thabo Mbeki's) alignment with 'AIDS denialists' refuting that HIV infection leads to AIDS, and declaring the AIDS epidemic a disease of poverty".

In order to address the pandemic there was a huge civil society campaign to educate people about the virus. The focus was on sharing knowledge about the virus and hoping that this information would have an impact on the spread of the virus. However, "HIV and AIDS spread like wildfire during the 1990s", assisted by Mr Mbeki's continued denial with regards to the link between HIV and AIDS (Grundlingh 2009: 240). At the beginning of the year 2000, Mr Mbeki sent a letter to world leaders urging them to reconsider socio-economic factors as the true cause of AIDS. The Health Minister Tshabalala-Msimang refused to contradict the claims of the President at that time and his attitude of denial became the stance of the government on HIV and AIDS during the time of Mr Mbeki's term as President of South Africa. Change, nevertheless, started slowly but surely. "In 2002, the South Africa High Court ordered the government to make the antenatal drug Nepravine available to HIV-positive pregnant women. The South African Cabinet also then officially confirmed the policy that 'HIV causes AIDS' to cease any further speculation of this fact by government

officials" (McNeil 2012). Due to technology, the world is connected and people are informed and able to access information about HIV and AIDS in the rest of the world and as a result the South African public was aware of the discourse of HIV and AIDS, as the discourse was mainstreamed. However, "AIDS denialism± particularly under past president Thabo Mbeki has had devastating consequences for South Africans, including a `science war' (i.e. traditional medicine versus antiretroviral medications)" (Hogg R, Nkala B, Dietrich J, Collins A, Closson K, Cui Z, et al 2017:2).

It was the Health Minister's alternative treatment campaign used to address the challenges of ARV treatment which in itself created challenges. McNeil (2012) notes, that the Health Minister advocated the consumption of African foods such as garlic, lemon and beetroot by HIV-positive individuals as a viable alternative to ARV treatment in preventing the onset of AIDS. The reminder that there were African foods which could support people's health was not the challenge but rather the fact that these African foods were offered as alternative to ARV treatment. In addition, she continued to make public statements insinuating that ARVs were toxic, with little scientific evidence to back her claims. This proposed alternative treatment attracted a great deal of media attention and it generated controversy within the ranks of both South African and international AIDS activists.

The resignation of President Mbeki on 25 September 2008 and the election of Mr Jacob Zuma as President on 22 April 2009 introduced a different path with regards to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in South Africa. McNeil (2012) highlights that on 1 December 2011 a third National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV, STDs and TB was released for 2012-2016.

Although the crisis around HIV and AIDS experienced during the term of President Mbeki is something of the past, and the situation around HIV and AIDS has improved, there is still work to be done. It seems like the HIV and AIDS discourse has been put on the backburner, but the results of a survey conducted in 2012 show that HIV and AIDS is still a challenge. An HIV and AIDS Survey (2014)[17] was done on the prevalence of HIV in South Africa in 2012 and the results showed an increase in the prevalence of HIV. Although the increase shown is most probably due to the combined effects of new infections and a successfully

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[17] South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012, published in 2014 by Human Sciences Research Council

expanded ART programme, as explained in the survey, it is clear that HIV is still a challenge and continues to demand specific focus.

According to the HIV and AIDS Survey, published in 2014, "it is estimated that 12.2% of the population (6.4 million persons) were HIV positive in 2012". From the statistics, looking at the difference in infection between areas as well as the difference in infection in different age groups, it is clear that there must be other factors at play in the HIV and AIDS pandemic. It cannot be seen as only a medical problem, as highlighted earlier, nor can only one factor, like poverty for example, be treated as the cause for the spread of the virus. However, in South Africa, there are factors which are specific to this context only – the legacy of *apartheid* and the South Africa education will be explored.

2.2.1.2   The legacy of apartheid

South Africa has a *history of colonialism*[18] as well as a history of *apartheid* where the majority of the South African society was being oppressed by the minority of the society. South Africans lived under a*partheid* for almost fifty years[19]. Although the manual was developed *post-apartheid*[20], Dube (2002:101) nevertheless notes that, despite the legal ending of the system, many other scars remain: "Political independence of former colonies did not mark the end of colonialism. The post-independence native elites, revolutionaries, and leaders of the new nations emerged fully cloaked in the colonial garment and devoted to the structures and policies of their former colonizers". *Apartheid* was no longer part of the legislation of the country, however, people had lived under these laws for fifty years and would have internalised this way of life. Mbeki's call for an "African Renaissance" might, therefore, have been an attempt to address the legacy of apartheid, at a stage when there was a need to focus on the HIV and AIDS pandemic. It is clear that the government of the young South Africa democracy's key focus was to focus on the legacy of *apartheid* – trying to eradicate years of segregation and address the inequalities and colonial past. Ackermann (2008:107) describes that period as complex. "Gender inequality, attitudes toward human sexuality, the scarring and fragmentation of large sections of society, our history of migrant labour and uprooting of communities under apartheid exacerbated today by increased poverty and unemployment and denial of the cause of AIDS by leading politicians, are all part of the South African AIDS story".

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[18] South Africa was colonized by the Netherlands and Britain.
[19] During *apartheid*, people were segregated along racial lines.
[20] After 1994 when a democratically elected government took over in South Africa

However, Dreyer (2015:658) argues that *apartheid* is still with us. "Apartheid, legitimated by religious convictions, is the "life story" of South Africa, a country which has been transformed yet is still in need of resilience" (Dreyer 2015:658). Dreyer makes this statement as she reflects on the words of Tinyiko Maluleke, a Reformed exponent of Black theology. He invoked a Shangaan proverb about "dancing in another style". He asked whether there is indeed, "a new style of dancing in the country, or are we being cheated: the dancer says it is a new style but actually the content is the same" (Dreyer 2015:652). In using the Shangaan proverb as metaphor for the South Africa society, Dreyer is implying that *apartheid* continuous to be with us. She is agreeing with Maluleke who introduced the proverb − the basic dance is still the same. There might be changes in the style of dancing, but it is still dancing. It is difficult to let go of *apartheid* − its impact over years has created complicated internalised stigmatisation within parts of the South Africa community. Ackermann (2003:70) reminds us: "Memory is complex. It is much more than simple retention. Remembering something entails forgetting something else. We remember what matters to us". What Ackermann refers to as memory can also be interpreted as internalised stigma. Campbell & Deacon (2006:414) explain that stigma may be 'layered' − "stigma[21] may follow existing social fault lines, deepening existing divisions between, for example, men and women, rich and poor".

Although *apartheid* is something of the past, Dreyer highlights the challenges of freeing people who have lived under *apartheid* for fifty years. We had internalised the power abuse and we are struggling with many different issues which are preventing the people of South Africa to "respond with resilience" according to Dreyer (2015:652) - to flourish or prevent us from experiencing "shalom" as Ackermann envisions. *Apartheid* cannot be used as reason for all the challenges we experience today, however, the impact and aftermath of *apartheid*, needs to be looked at critically.

Phiri (2004:17) highlights the fact that women as "the majority of the oppressed people, experience colonialism, *apartheid* and the many atrocities unique to Southern Africa differently because their oppression is coupled with denial of justice on the basis of gender". The legacy of apartheid therefore problematises the discourse of HIV and AIDS even more.

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[21] Campbell & Deacon (2006:416) describe stigma as "a phenomenon rooted in the individual psyche, yet constantly mediated by the material, political, institutional and symbolic contexts".

Dube (2002:105) joins the conversation and also notes that, "it reminds feminists of former colonial centres that colonizing frameworks are still, by and large, in place and unless one deliberately chooses to be a decolonizing feminist, one is likely to operate within these oppressive paradigms, and consequently to reproduce them". An important warning is given to women - especially women in positions of authority. This way of thinking was strengthened through the education systems of South Africa during the *apartheid* years. The legacy of *apartheid* therefore adds another dimension to HIV and AIDS. Karim, Churchyard, Karim & Lawn (2009:921) note furthermore that the social, economic and environmental factors which were present during the apartheid years, continue to have an impact on the spread of HIV and AIDS. Even though these conditions might have changed for the better, communities continue to experience the results of *apartheid*. The legacy of *apartheid* continues for example through the kind of socio-economic conditions that continue to perpetuate epidemics such as HIV and tuberculosis in a *post-apartheid* era. (Karim, Churchyard, Karim & Lawn 2009:921).

2.2.1.3   South African Education

Although *apartheid* is no longer on the Law books of South Africa, the structures in place continue to keep people oppressed, and the education system is one such structure. It is highlighted that the majority of the youth of South Africa have continued to be educated in the same environments as before *apartheid*. There continues to be a difference between the circumstances at schools in townships and previously all-white schools, although all schools are open to all racial groups. (Heaton, Amoateng & Dufur 2014:107). Although the inequality in the society seems to be addressed, the presence of other challenges like poverty and unemployment prevent total elimination of inequality. (Heaton, Amoateng & Dufur 2014:115). One of the "social inequalities" which continues to create cycles which are difficult to challenge, is the fact that many young people grow up to be parents who did not get a good education. These parents fail to find employment which offers sustainable salaries for their families, which causes poverty and different social challenges. (Heaton, Amoateng & Dufur 2014:115). It is from these circumstances that people who work in organisations or attend churches where there is a focus on HIV and AIDS come. These adults are often the facilitators who attend workshops to empower themselves. The ability of people to be actively involved in traditional educational methods of reading and writing cannot be assumed as the structures of *apartheid* continue to oppress people. According to Heaton, Amoateng & Dufur (2014:115), "black Africans bear the brunt of the effects of the so-called

triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the new South Africa". Added to these continuing challenges of *apartheid*, are the challenges brought about by HIV and AIDS. "Effects on family structure on educational outcomes may be especially sensitive in South Africa because of the dramatic impact of HIV and AIDS. A substantial number of children have only one parent or are orphaned, with children lacking mothers at particularly high risk of school dropout" (Heaton, Amoateng & Dufur 2014:105).

The HIV and AIDS Survey shows that HIV and AIDS continue to be a challenge in South Africa and the legacy of *apartheid* and education increase the challenges. Even though the survey tends to generalise the epidemic in South Africa, it shows that there are specific groups that have HIV prevalence above the national average, which are classified as key populations with higher risk of HIV exposure. These groups require targeted interventions. This survey identified these groups as "black African females aged 20–34 years (HIV prevalence of 31.6%), people co-habiting (30.9%), black African males aged 25–49 years (25.7%), disabled persons 15 years and older (16.7%), high-risk alcohol drinkers 15 years and older (14.3%), and recreational drug users (12.7%)"[22].

From the survey it is clear that the challenges of HIV and AIDS are multi layered. African women theologians strive to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic as multi layered and therefore a method which is "interdisciplinary and multi-faith" needs to be used, as Phiri and Nadar (2011:86) argue. "By engaging themes of religion/theology and social justice, equity, inclusion, solidarity – across gender, race and ethnic group - African women theologies also aim to be prophetic in the theological sense or activist in the secular sense" (Phiri and Nadar 2011:87).

2.2.2 Factors influencing HIV and AIDS

As already alluded to there is a constellation of factors which influence the spread of the virus. This section discusses these factors, namely poverty, gender and culture and their intersections as they influence the prevalence and spread of HIV and AIDS.

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[22] See South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012
  See also www.AVERT.org

2.2.2.1 Poverty

When looking at the link between poverty and HIV and AIDS, Grundlingh (2009:241) highlights the link between poverty and so-called opportunistic infections, which "attack" the body when it is weak due to a compromised immune system. These are infections like a sore throat, tuberculosis, flu or bronchitis to name a few. If a person's immune system is strong and the person gets enough rest and has a nutritious diet, such a person would be able to easily withstand such an infection[23]. However, if the person's basic living conditions are poor and the person does not have a meal every day, that person's immune system will be compromised and opportunistic infections could lead to such a person's death.

Poverty has an impact on the spread of the HI virus in different ways and even impacts the power relations between men and women. This is what social scientists term "gendered power relations" (Haddad 2009:5-6). For example, women are often dependent on men financially and are therefore powerless in sexual relationships, oppressed due to cultural practices and more vulnerable to the HI virus because of biological factors:

> Traditional African culture regards women as inferior to men and relegates them to the private sphere of life. Both in private and in public life, the traditional decision-makers are men. Women experience great difficulty in negotiating sexual practices in their relationships. Because of their subordinate cultural status, it is accepted that women's role is to please men sexually, and they have little say over the kinds of sexual practices they engage in (Haddad 2005:35).

 Taking these named factors into account, it is important to emphasise that the role of poverty is more complicated – "it is not incidental that 67% of all persons infected with HIV live in poverty-ravaged Sub-Saharan Africa and that 72% of all AIDS-related deaths in 2007 were from this region with 60% of infected adults being female" (Haddad 2009:6). The statistics highlight the challenges around the complexity of poverty and its link with HIV and AIDS. Poor women are often most at risk of HIV infections. It is, therefore, interesting to note that it is poor women who according to Haddad "embrace a dignity, a quality of life, which is intricately intertwined with (their) understanding of God in their lives. Poor and marginalised women employ strategies that show agency and resistance to their material conditions of

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[23] See CABSA Manual 3/11 for information about opportunistic infection.

oppression" Haddad (2008:49). Manda (2009:25) highlights another important facet of poverty in Africa:

> In Africa, the dire poverty that exists in black African communities, is a direct result of the legacy of colonialism. Colonialism created an environment of political and economic discrimination and marginalization, which was not based only on race, but also on gender. With the introduction of capitalism, a dual economy was introduced into Africa which was comprised of a large-scale, capital-intensive sector aimed at producing commodities for national and international markets, and a small-scale labour-intensive sector producing mainly food crops for household consumption and local markets. It is with this introduction of a dual economy that colonialists began to create and enforce the division between the private and public spheres of the economy.

Manda's context is Malawi, but most of Africa, including South Africa, has a history of colonialism. The impact of colonialism and its link with poverty is therefore an important aspect to add to the poverty discourse and its link with HIV and AIDS. Therefore the reference to a "rural-urban dichotomy created" could be true of other parts of Africa and is definitely present in South Africa - the more rural areas of South Africa in relation to urban areas. In rural areas there is often a small-scale labour-intensive sector producing mostly fruit and vegetables, which is usually done by women. Men often move to urban areas in search of employment and leave the women behind. The challenge of rural and urban areas is found everywhere in Africa. CABSA works within the wider Africa as well as South Africa and, therefore, this issue would be relevant in any analysis of the manual. The poor women, involved in "small-scale labour-intensive sector producing mainly food crops" (Manda 2009:25), in order to feed their children, are furthermore facing cultural factors which add to them being more vulnerable. Haddad (2009:49) agrees that culture plays an important role and adds, "in the last five to ten years, continued cultural oppression amongst poor women in South Africa has led to the death of thousands of women through AIDS-related illnesses".

According to Haddad (2009:9-10) it is however important to emphasise the link between culture and poverty - contemporary practices in Kwazulu-Natal are shaped as much by culture as by socio-economic context of poverty. "Among the poor of KwaZulu-Natal,

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marriage has ceased to be an option" (Haddad 2009:9). This means that more and more households have become female-headed households and the children are then often left in the care of the grandmothers (Haddad 2009:9). The centrality of gender in the HIV and AIDS discourse is clearly highlighted through Haddad's comments on marriage and households.

2.2.2.2 Gender

The results of the Survey on HIV prevalence in South Africa also highlights the centrality of gender and indicates that, with respect to sex, age, race, and locality type, there were statistically significant differences found. Overall, females had a significantly higher HIV-prevalence than males. Kanyoro (2004: viii) notes for example that according to figures released by UNAIDS, 58% of all Africans living with HIV are women. It is important to highlight that it is particularly adolescent girls and young women who are at risk (Kanyoro 2004: ix). The Survey[24] still supports this reality as "results continue to show prevalence that the infections of HIV were highest among females aged 30–34 and among males aged 35–49. In the teenaged population, the estimated HIV-prevalence among females was 8 times that of their male counterparts, suggesting that female teenagers aged 15–19 years are more likely than their male counterparts to have sex, not with their peers, but with older sex partners". Kanyoro (2004:ix) furthermore reminds us that the statistics indicating higher HIV-prevalence with women is not always due to women practicing high-risk behaviours, but rather that women, "are vulnerable or (are) made vulnerable by external issues, laws and cultures, which regulate low status for women". At first glance of these statistics, one might therefore assume that the high incidences of infections of women can be interpreted as women practicing high-risk behaviour. However the reasons for the high infection rate with women is more complicated. It is important also to note that physiological difference, social and cultural norms and economic and power relations between women and men have a very big impact in the process of who gets infected and how one can prevent infection and who looks after the sick (Phiri 2003:8-9). Depending on the context, there are more issues which impact the statistics. It is important to look at the link with other social factors, which could impact statistics; for example culture is another important factor.

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[24] South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012. See also http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/south-africa for more recent statistics on HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

2.2.2.3. Culture

According to Denis and Haddad (in Phiri 2003:10) it is important to note that there are cultural practices that enhance African women's risk of HIV, as women are often powerless in sexual relationships, oppressed due to cultural practices and more vulnerable to the HI virus because of biological factors. As mentioned previously, women are regarded inferior due to cultural norms and therefore women mostly accept the role of pleasing men – also sexually. Women are therefore often powerless and unable to negotiate protection in sexual practices (Haddad 2005: 35).

Manda (2009:26) agrees and adds that, "the loss of power and status altered social relations between men and women, because the 'domestic and public spheres were reconstructed, with women now expected to be subservient and obedient to men"[25]. The relationships between men and women have changed. It is also further believed that men prefer to have 'dry sex' and therefore women find ways to cause their vagina to be dry. This practice of using herbs to dry out the vagina is however detrimental for women as it increases the possibility of having small tearing around the entrance of the vagina. Dry sex also removes the natural protection of the walls of the vagina and leaves the woman vulnerable for the virus to enter the woman's bloodstream. Added to the practice of dry sex are other culturally accepted practices. Masenya (2003: 117), furthermore, introduces 'power' and patriarchy to the conversation and how women, "in the traditional African culture becomes fully human only when she is married". A woman's identity is closely linked to her being married to a man. She has power and is valued as part of the community when she is married to a man, much more than when she is not. It is fully acceptable, however, for men to be engaged in extra-marital relationships with other women, as it is accepted that men find it difficult to stay with one woman (Masenya 2003:122). Manda (2009:24) also noted that: "Physiological vulnerability is compounded by another important social factor, namely patriarchy... that supports gender inequality between men and women whereby power and authority ... is firmly vested in men". Men decide what would be the 'rules of interaction' between men and women and this is accepted as the society is patriarchal. Women often accept these as way of life. Phiri and Nadar (2011:83) emphasise the importance of being critical about these practices and remind us that feminist cultural hermeneutics "affirms the life-giving nature of religion and culture and rejects those elements that are life threatening. Feminist cultural hermeneutics brings a critical lens to bear on the oft-used phrase "it is part of my culture" (Phiri and Nadar

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[25]See also Phiri (2003:8-9)

2011:83). Women are therefore encouraged to ask questions about their experience of these choices which is often done under the umbrella of culture.

Haddad (2009:15) reminds us that attempts have been made to prevent further infections and that the old practice of virginity testing was revived as a method of HIV prevention. Virginity testing as implemented by communities in Kwazulu Natal, show communities taking responsibility for finding ways to prevent new infections of the HI virus. There are, however, mixed reactions to this practice. Evidence has been collected to prove for example that virginity testing encourages young girls to practice anal sex and the young virgin girls, marked with a white cross, leaves the marked girls vulnerable to being raped (Haddad 2009:15). Pillay (2009:51) argues that not having unprotected sex is also not helpful to women who often come from a context or culture where a woman's worth is defined by her ability to bear children. Women often look to the church for support and guidance.

2.2.3 HIV and AIDS and the Church

Not only are women oppressed by culture, but as Christians they are also oppressed by the bible. Masenya (2003) reminds that both the Christian Bible and the African culture are experienced as authorities in the lives of African Christians. "In South Africa, Christian faith communities exert a powerful influence on attitudes and life style and have credibility in the society" (B. Haddad, E. Eriksson, G. Lindmark & P. Axemo 2013: 1662). Ackermann (2004:37 highlights that both the Church and its use of the Christian Bible as well as culture often emphasise male dominance which is problematic for women. Women often use the Church as a space of safety where they go to find support and care. It is therefore important according to Masenya (2003:125) to re-educate members of the Church in order to "undo the problematic education received from the traditional male leadership and its teachings". Added to this tradition is the fact that the Church in South Africa is also part of the legacy of *apartheid* – either through its silence around *apartheid* or by its support of *apartheid*. The division, created by *apartheid* in the Church in South Africa along racial lines, continue to be a challenge and has an impact on addressing the HIV and AIDS. We need to remember that the church played a huge role during *apartheid*. Masuku emphasises the role of the DRC, "Apartheid ignited various responses from churches and some of them adopted and supported it. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) stands prominent in this regard. Although other Afrikaans speaking churches did not adopt an official position in support of apartheid as did the DRC, individually, their members supported the system." (Masuku 2014: 152). It is

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wonderful that there has been change and movement towards inclusion, however, there is still no structural unity with its sister churches in the DRC family.

During the years of *apartheid,* the Church was vocal in finding ways to unite against *apartheid*. Masuku (2014:164) argues that the prophetic voice of the Church is silent due to the fact that there are close relationships between individual religious leaders and the new post-apartheid government of our democracy. (Masuku 2014:164). If religious leaders took up positions in government, it explains the silence from the Church, when Mbeki called for an African Renaissance rather than addressing the challenges of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Haddad agrees with the silence in the Church, especially around the issue of HIV and AIDS: "During the late 1990s, immense public silence surrounded HIV/AIDS" (Haddad 2005:40). Haddad (2005:32) argues that the silence was not only in the Church, but also in the society. Ordained male leadership of the Church were not quick to condemn people who were HIV positive, but were neither able to respond in helpful ways to address the challenges of HIV and AIDS (Haddad 2009:50).

 "The traditions of the Church notoriously have seen sexuality as "dangerous," thus rendering it a taboo subject confined to the dark, secret corners of our lives. This secrecy and silence have made it difficult to engage in sex-education and HIV-prevention honestly" (Haddad 2005:34). Therefore, although HIV and AIDS was a big challenge to *post-apartheid* South Africa, unfortunately the response of the Church has mostly been silence. Silence from the Church meant silence about human bodies, human sexuality and human bodies which are infected with HIV. Various voices have noted that the Church is a key stakeholder in the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Africa due to it being seen to have the moral authority to "speak and influence change in people's lives" (Haddad 2005:32). Scripture is often used to speak into the lives of people.

2.2.3.1 The use of Scripture

Although education and training are important ways in which the Church addresses HIV and AIDS, we are however challenged to be critical of the methods used to educate and train. When the Church educates and trains, scripture is used mostly in addressing any challenge. It is therefore important to explore the use of scripture. West (2001:159) notes for example that: "Sacred texts have the capacity to stigmatise, discriminate and bring death; and they have the capacity to embrace, affirm and bring life". One therefore needs to interact with scripture

carefully, while keeping in mind what scripture is capable of. There is an implied responsibility when it comes to the use of scripture from West. He further reminds us of the centrality of scripture in the lives of Christians and the different ways in which scripture can be interpreted. Scripture is used to encourage, to punish, to challenge and to show the love of God – depending on which text is used and who is interpreting the text. Kanyoro (2002:78) notes for example that we need to "find our own way of speaking about God" and that those who have been prevented from participating fully in this myth-and-symbol making process must claim back our right to do so. When we are able to achieve unity in diversity, then we claim to experience God's power and glory present in the community". Finding our "own way of speaking about God" - interpreting scripture - is a process of using different experiences to understand scripture. Our experiences of HIV and AIDS will therefore add more interpretations to the HIV and AIDS discourse, in turn adding more symbols, concepts and models to the interpretation of scripture. West (2001) emphasises that "there is clear evidence that HIV and AIDS, particularly in Africa but also elsewhere, is changing the theological landscape so significantly that sacred texts are being called to address this disease complex in ways that may alter how they are interpreted by religious communities" (West 2001:160). God and punishment needs to be visited in order to address the interpretation that HIV and AIDS is punishment from God for example, and the loving image of Jesus who chooses to touch the leper needs to be explored according to Phiri (2004:22). In order to find explanation for HIV and AIDS, people started to associate the disease with punishment for sin and the supposed immorality of those people who were infected and suffering. "This perspective contributed towards creating a second epidemic, namely stigma and discrimination" (Dube 2003:viii). As well as the fact that people stigmatised people living with the virus, the Church often added to the problem of discrimination and stigma by excluding people from the Church community. The choices the Church made in order to prevent infections often caused more problems. Abstinence was preached and in the process sexual impurity was associated with the spread of HIV which added to stigma. "In the process, the importance of preserving life was subjugated to the gospel of sexual purity" (Dube 2003:ix). There has been a focus on "sexual purity" while often ignoring "the importance of life". In order to address this one-sided attempt to address the challenges of HIV and AIDS, there have been conscious explorations of all things life-giving. Nadar and Phiri (2012) explored life-giving methods of interacting with the HIV and AIDS discourse and highlighted a shift to the following: (1) Focus on religion and culture in the discourse – Nadar & Phiri (2012: 124) explain that "religion is not practiced individually but in

community. Hence emphasis is placed on working in community to finding solutions to African problems". It is therefore important to highlight the importance of community especially when working in Africa. (2) The particularity of context - Nadar & Phiri (2012:126) explored HIV research produced by the Circle and highlighted the dangers of speaking about HIV and AIDS in general terms and emphasised the danger of generalizing. It is important to be aware that each context is unique and needs to be treated as such. (3) A focus on masculinities - "male theologians began to look at the ways in which the construction of male hegemonic masculinities contributed to the spread of HIV" (Nadar & Phiri 2012:127). The fact that there are different masculinities needs to be emphasized. (4) Action research for change –"the aim in doing research is not just to access knowledge but to impart knowledge as well" (Nadar & Phiri 2012:128). There is a responsibility to share with others and help build communities which are more whole and where people can flourish.

The Church needs to explore more methods which are life giving in the usage of scripture as we confront the challenges of HIV and AIDS. Akintunde (2003) for example uses the story of the woman who anointed Jesus, which appears in all four gospels (Mk 14:3-9; Mt 26:6-13; John 12:1-8; Lk 7:36-50) and reads the texts with women from a Nigerian Church to challenge their response to prostitutes and HIV and AIDS. The fact that the woman is called 'a sinner' is explored and the churchwomen agree that: "Jesus recognises all, no matter the colour, race and gender" (Akintunde 2003:102). A book, "Grant me Justice! HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible" was published by the Circle in 2004 which offers different interpretations around HIV and AIDS. The focus of the book is justice and the following are some of the "key concepts which are captured through the analysis of the text of the Bible" (Kanyoro 2004:viii). In the first chapter of the book, Musa Dube (2004:3) explores the gendered nature of HIV and AIDS and encourages "gender-sensitive multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS readings of the Bible and focuses specifically on Luke 18:1-8 – the parable about persistent prayer". Dube problematises the story by highlighting the judge as representative of the justice system while asking who the system is serving. The woman is highlighted as having no power in this justice system due to her being a widow. In an age of HIV and AIDS, Dube flags the plight of women, especially widows who are powerless and not allowed to make decisions about their own bodies, their properties or their lives. Denise Ackermann (2004:31) explores in her chapter the story of Tamar in 2 Samuel 13:1-22. Ackermann uses the "social location" of Teresa Okure, referring to a method of reading the Bible – to "read from this place". Ackermann (2004:32) describes her place as "a place in which the 'bleak

immensity' of violence against bodies of women and children, now haunted by …HIV and AIDS, rages on". She continues that her place is also a place where the Bible is known as the "book of the Church" and this book is used, although it carries cultural, social and gendered baggage - it is used to "discern interpretations that affirm God's intention that we may have life and have it abundantly" (Ackermann 2004:32). Ackermann uses Tamar to "say it as it is" and not be silent – she challenges the Church to "accept responsibility publicly for our role in the promotion of maintenance of gender inequality" and as the Church confesses its faith in the creeds as 'one holy catholic and apostolic' to therefore also admit that the Church is HIV positive. Ackermann further highlights the importance of the narrative and emphasises the necessity to be able to tell your story: "Telling stories is intrinsic to claiming one's identity and in this process finding hope" and furthermore it can help to make sense "of an often incomprehensible situation" (Ackermann 2004:41). Ackermann (2004:51) not only encourages awareness and use of the narrative, but also embodiment, moral community and issues of life and death; she also offers the Eucharist as hope in a context of HIV and AIDS in South Africa. Sarojini Nadar explores the problem of suffering by looking at the book of Job and God and punishment. Nadar (2004:76) concludes by not offering a holistic answer to the problem of suffering but rather arguing that the book of Job " tells us how not to talk about God in times of suffering" and offers this as "a new starting point from which those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS can begin to talk of God in the midst of suffering". These are only three of the nine gender readings of the Bible found in the book "Grant me Justice".

The gendered readings mentioned above were done by theologians. Haddad (2008:51) listened to ordinary women in Natal telling their stories and sharing about the difficulty of speaking of God who brings life, when daily facing death in their communities. In dealing with the challenges of HIV and AIDS, people's individual as well as communal needs need to be taken into consideration. Phiri (2004:23) emphasises that HIV and AIDS can be prevented, managed and controlled "if there is solidarity at individual, family, community, national and international levels". In order to develop different theologies which can be used in addressing HIV and AIDS, people need to be critical of scripture. Phiri (2004:16) reminds of the importance of scripture in the lives of Christians. There are Christians who follow scripture literally and therefore people need to be encouraged to be critical when reading it. She continues that it is a challenge to get Christians to engage critically with scripture and read it with a hermeneutic of suspicion even though scripture has been used as a tool of "colonialism, racism, sexism, classism and exclusivism".

For women it is worse, and so the church should be encouraged to "critically revisit" the manner in which "women unfriendly biblical interpretations" have "been applied indiscriminately to powerless girl children and women." (Masenya 2003:125). The aforementioned theological stance came from a history of patriarchy and interpretation of scripture[26].Nadar (2006:78) notes that the voices of women are often silenced in the Bible and we, therefore, often fail to hear the voices of the women who are sometimes "victims of rape or agents in their own right. Everything about women is filtered through the voice of the narrator, who is male" (Nadar 2006:78). Much of this alienation has to do with the interpretation of scripture, which, through the Bible, is embraced by Christians as the norm for their lives (particularly in Pentecostal church settings) – this despite the fact that South Africa is a secular society. (Masenya 2003:115). Furthermore, in many churches the Bible is often used for patriarchal control (Masenya 2003:118).

Texts such as Ephesians 5:22-24[27] for example are often used to control women and to teach women that they should listen to and do everything the husband says and wants as they need to "be subject to their husbands as the church is subject to Christ". The verses are not read in the context of the whole chapter, where there is reference to "being imitators of God" (verse 1) as well as to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ". There is reference to both parties being subject to each other in relation with Christ. Furthermore the husbands are encouraged in verse 25 to "love (their) wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her…" When the verses are read in the context of the whole chapter, there is no power play of one being a subject and another authority.

The authority of the Bible and its patriarchal control through interpretation, as well as the fact that the HIV and AIDS discourse includes sexuality, might be some of the reasons the Church's reaction to the pandemic was slow. Patriarchal attitudes embedded over centuries through almost solely male leadership, has further resulted in the silencing of women's

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[26] "Interpretations of the Biblical text reinforce the notion of women's subordination that enables even Christian men to view their wives as property "(Haddad 2009:14)

[27] "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23.For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body, of which he is the Saviour. 24. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands" (NRSV).

voices and theological justifications often being used to encourage women to "be faithful" to their marriage vows Haddad (2013:155)[28]

Within the Church, it has become difficult for people, especially women, to talk about their experiences as they are different from what the Bible teaches. Haddad (2008) argues that for many who are HIV positive, particularly women, the Church has become a place of alienation. [29]

The Bible has many examples of Jesus touching the sick and healing them, or Jesus teaching about reaching out to the marginalised, the poor and the sick. The Church however continues to encourage the role of caregiver mostly for women. "Religious ideologies tend to mask their fluidity by posing as permanent so that they are handed down from one generation to another" (Chitando 2001:249). However, Haddad (2002:98) highlights the fact that women did not remain silent – women theologians met in December 1994 and these 45 women from 14 countries "declared that out of death, there is life" and this conversation has continued over the years. In safe spaces women in the Church were furthermore encouraged to share their stories. In such a group, Haddad (2002:100) discovered that these safe spaces could "become sites of potential transformative power". Becoming a space where transformation can happen is however not an easy process due to the fear of stigma and layers of oppression and abuse through patriarchal leadership in the Church, the misuse of scripture and silence around issues of power. The process needs to be one of making women aware, then deconstructing in order to re-construct – to transform. This Haddad (2002:101) has experienced to be "a long process" – a long process but not an impossible process.

From this discussion, it is clear that the Church took time before becoming involved. Haddad (2005:30) notes that the Church "refused to face reality until the deaths of young people became so numerous that it was impossible to deny that a disease of epidemic proportions was at work".

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[28] Within the marriage vows of the Anglican Church for example there is a sentence, which may be omitted – "and in all things lawful to obey" (Anglican Prayer Book 1989:464). The option of this sentence to be added is only with the bride. The sentence has a strong link with the Ephesian chapter 5 discussed above.

[29] See also Haddad 2005:33

2.2.3.3 A Theological Curriculum Response

It is important to note that the Church has, however, through the World Council of Churches, joined the discourse of HIV and AIDS. Dube[30] developed a curriculum for theological institutions in Africa. Dube (2003: 152-153) explains the process which led to the development of a curriculum:

> The process of drawing up the curriculum started in June 2000, when MAP International, with the support of the WCC and UNAIDS, hosted a forum of academic deans, principals, theologians and representatives from twenty theological institutions of all denominations from fourteen countries in east and southern Africa. A year later, in July 2001, the first draft of the curriculum was used to train 24 trainers from the same regions. Following this, southern African trained trainers, with the support and encouragement of the WCC, ran two training-of-trainers workshops for theological institutions in their region.

In developing the curriculum, Dube (2003) has looked at the Church and what the Church is called to be, and used these principles as the foundation of the curriculum. The Church, as the Body of Christ, is a community of healing and compassion where all people are seen as being created in the image of God and life is seen as God's will for humankind and creation as a whole according to Genesis 1 and 2.

The curriculum was therefore not only a list of books for reading or an outline of what knowledge about HIV and AIDS needed to be included, but Dube also included reasons for the Church to get involved. "The complexity of HIV/AIDS, as one epidemic among many others, demands a curriculum approach that does not simply deal with symptoms. Rather it must fully explore the complex factors behind the spread of HIV/AIDS" (Dube 2003: 157). Churches can be found in every community and therefore the Church had a close connection with individuals, families and different communities and is thus at the centre of HIV and AIDS. Dube (2003:214) highlights some perspectives which indicated that the Church needs to repent and re-dedicate itself to the gospel of Christ.

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[30] See Dube 2003. Towards Multi-sectoral Teaching in a Time of HIV/AIDS In Dube M (Ed) *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Progrsammes.* WCC Publications:Geneva

The shortcomings, identified by Dube (2003), highlight the need for educational programmes for the Church and its leadership, just as the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA) highlight in their manual. It is interesting to note that there seems to be some co-influencing present between the curriculums for Theological Institutions in Africa and that of CABSA's Churches, Channels of Hope.

The Curriculum for Theological Institutions in Africa, developed by Dube, was designed to assist instructors, teachers, lecturers and professors in institutions which prepare clergy for ministry. During the process of circulating this curriculum, the full curriculum as well as texts to read as a requirement of the curriculum, methodologies for teaching, as well as instructional material and different ways of student assessment was offered. It was an ecumenical instrument. The curriculum is divided into five units:

- Human Sexuality and (HIV and AIDS)
- Biblical Studies and (HIV and AIDS)
- Theology in (HIV and AIDS) Context
- Counselling and (HIV and AIDS)
- Programme Development and (HIV and AIDS) (Dube 2003:218-239)

Training to develop a curriculum as well as this curriculum as example was offered to all people and institutions involved in HIV and AIDS. "The instructor and the institution concerned may use any part of the curriculum units in whole or in part" (Dube 2003:159). Seeing that this curriculum was only offered at residential theological seminaries, many people were excluded from the training. Kithome offers distance-learning as an alternative to residential theological education, as she argues that there is a need for dissemination of knowledge to rural women in Africa as well. She argues that the HIV and AIDS Curriculum for Theological Institutions in Africa offered by Dube (2001) is meant for the 'elite' who are able to attend residential theological colleges and seminaries. This practice of offering theological education at seminaries only excludes people who are not interested in becoming ordained (Kithome 2003:241).

Theological education therefore needs to be explored in Africa, as all education and training needs to encourage change and growth for communities and not only result in a few people being ordained (Kanyoro (2001:160). In line with this argument, lecturers at the School of Religion and Theology developed a course for their students. "The course was aimed at introducing students to the (theories and methods) employed by the various disciplines within

the field of theological analysis" (Nadar 2009:11). In looking at feminist pedagogy, Nadar (2009:20) explains that "feminist pedagogy theory is different to traditional teaching in at least three ways: its form, its content and its goals". Nadar (2009:21) quotes Freire in explaining the form of feminist pedagogy:

> Teachers who use feminist pedagogy utilise mutual and shared learning as the basis of knowledge creation rather than the traditional 'top-down' approach or what Freire characteristically calls the "banking" method of education, where knowledge is considered "a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing (1972:46).

Feminist pedagogy wishes to involve the learners in the process of learning by starting with their experiences. Nadar (2009:21) explains: "In the traditional classroom, teaching begins with theory and proceeds to practice, in a feminist classroom; teaching begins with actual experience with the ultimate aim being to unravel the theory out of this". Feminist pedagogy can be used to enhance programmes and curriculums.

2.3 CABSA as Faith Based Organisation (FBO)

As the Church was developing a theological curriculum response but continued to often be silent while struggling to stand with communities, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) developed. Although South Africa managed a non-violent transition to a democratic country, the government is still struggling to provide for its poor and vulnerable and the division between poor and rich continues to exist.[31] A few years ago Patel highlighted: "Seventeen years after the establishment of a democratic society, pockets of excellence in the provision of expansive non-contributory cash transfers (social assistance) exist alongside a neglected, underfunded and smaller system of social and care services that rely mainly on families and under-paid welfare staff, the unpaid care work of women and over-stretched voluntary welfare sector" (Patel 2012:604). It is within this "neglected, underfunded smaller system of social care services" where FBOs work – where people's faith encourages them to volunteer[32] and make a difference in the lives of the poor and vulnerable. CABSA is one such

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[31] The number of people living below the food line increased to 15,8 million in 2009 from 12,6 million in 2006, before dropping to 10,2 million people in 2011.The share of national consumption between the richest and poorest remains stubbornly stagnant.

[32] Clarke and Ware (2015:39) highlight: "Religious belief is relevant to both social and private realms because in addition to the worship of a deity, it also involves belief in 'a revealed scripture, a divinely ordained code of laws and an assortment of institutions and communal structures in which the religion is observed' (Segal, 2009:

FBO and it should be noted that while the Church[33] took time before becoming involved, Faith Based Organisations (FBO's) such as CABSA who are working in communities, got involved earlier. This section begins by discussing the broader context within which FBO's are placed.

2.3.1 Towards the positioning of the FBO

Clarke and Ware (2015:37) explain that "while religious groups are generally primarily concerned with the spiritual well-being of their members, many have also long been interested in addressing the physical well-being of their communities as well. Indeed, for many this has often been a core aspect of their existence". This concern with physical well-being is often experienced and delivered through faith-based organizations (FBOs) affiliated with religious communities. Swart (2005:324) notes, in his investigation of FBO's that the government seem to be aware of its need to use FBO's as partners. There is an awareness of the important role FBO's play in social development.

The important role which FBO's play as a stakeholder in the response to HIV can no longer be ignored (Parry (2008:16). CABSA as FBO, although it is registered as NGO, therefore has an important role to play through its programme, Churches, Channels of Hope Programme, based on Christian principles. The goal of the manual is geared towards Christians: "To empower Christians with the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills to assist faith communities in their journey towards HIV competence" (Manual 2014: Cover page). Clarke and Ware (2015:41) highlight the fact that "FBOs have two identities. The first is as a development agency seeking to improve the material well-being of the poor, while the second is that of a religious organization whose existence is forged from a faith basis and its understanding of religious tenets".

It is important to note that NGOs and FBO's are not the same. There are similarities, but also differences. FBOs and NGOs seem to have the same intrinsic characteristics of independence, not profit and use of volunteers. However they differ through FBOs link with a religious structure in some way and NGOs having a more 'secular' characteristic

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4). Religion, therefore, provides a meaning for existence through which adherents interpret their own circumstances and make decisions on how to act and interact within wider society based on religious teachings".

[33] The term Church is used in contemporary theological discourse to describe various social and theological entities. These include denomination, congregation, local ecumenical bodies and faith based organisations. For more on this please see: Foster D, 2010, Christian and Positive. Reflections on Christianity in an HIV+ world (p30-31); August T.A, 2005, The Quest for Being Public Church. The South African challenge to the Moravian Church in context

Clarke and Ware (2015:40).

James agrees that a definition for an FBO is a challenge as there is "clear differences between people of different faiths", but also" major theological and cultural differences between FBOs of the same faith. These can lead to profoundly different views of what development means" (James 2009: 6). The relationship between FBOs and development has not been an easy one.

> Faith has always had an intense, but uneasy relationship with development. For decades religion has been subject to 'long-term and systematic neglect' by donors, despite the fact that faith-based organisations (FBOs) historically were at the forefront of service delivery and social movements. Many saw faith as something divisive and regressive – a development 'taboo'. As awareness of the distinctive contribution that FBOs make increases, however, so aid donors are now seeking to move from 'estrangement to engagement. (James 2005:1)

The relation faith has with development is therefore fragile. (James (2005: 2). FBOs are critiqued due to the relation of the secular and religious and the challenges of the tension between the secular and the religious. "FBOs can be read as co-producing neoliberal forms" but this is critiqued by Williams, Cloke and Thomas who "consider how FBOs could be read as offering paths of resistance against neoliberalism[34], deliberately resisting government partnership in order to pursue alternative philosophies of care and meet the needs of those ineligible for state support and/ or to engage in political activism" (Williams, Cloke, Thomas 2012:1481). James (2005:7) reminds us that: "Faith is a vital fuel for development. But like all fuels, it needs to be handled with understanding and care". Keeping the fragility of the relation with FBOs in mind, Patel's reminder[35] that "South Africa's development social welfare policy relies largely on non-profit organizations (NPOs) to deliver social welfare services to poor and vulnerable persons and populations at risk"(Patel 2012:603) is therefore significant.

2.3.2 Historical Background of CABSA

The need for a Christian HIV and AIDS service was identified towards the end of the 1990's as many people were looking for help in different avenues – help to understand the virus, but

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[34]Political theory of the late 1900s holding that personal liberty is maximized by limiting government interference in the operation of free markets. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/neoliberalism.

[35] The *Report on Poverty Trends in South Africa between 2006 and 2011[35]* notes that: inequality in our society remains a serious problem.

also help to deal with the fear and anxiety of people living with HIV. People also needed support and guidance from the Church in understanding where God was in the whole discourse. During this period Revd Christo Greyling, an HIV-positive ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, made his status public and was overwhelmed with requests from people to get involved and offer assistance (Facilitator's Manual 2014: Introduction page). Revd Greyling was invited to churches to share his story and inform people. He used this process to develop methods of sharing the information and to collect information.

The CABSA developed and individuals and various church groups identified the need for a centralised information and resource service, where they would also have access to training and support. At the same time, the Huguenot College[36] of the Dutch Reformed Church expressed the desire to be involved in the HIV and AIDS field and provided office space and infrastructure for the Christian AIDS Bureau. A service plan was developed and, with financial support from the General Youth Commission of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Christian AIDS Bureau was launched in 2001[37].

Mrs Logy Murray was appointed as Manager and started working for CABSA in July 2001. For the first two years Mrs Murray was the only employee of CABSA. She helped to shape the administration of CABSA and was also instrumental in developing the Churches, Channels of Hope mobilisation model as the flagship of CABSA's training (Facilitator's Manual 2014).

According to the Facilitator's Manual (2014) Mrs Murray left CABSA at the end of January 2005 to become the Africa Advisor HIV/AIDS & Church Partnerships for World Vision Africa Region. During three and a half years she developed CABSA into an organisation that plays a significant role in HIV and AIDS. Mrs Murray and Revd Greyling now both work for World Vision, where they are actively involved with the Churches, Channels of Hope (CCoH) Programme.

Revd Nelis du Toit joined CABSA in 2003, when Revd Greyling left CABSA and he contributed to the development of the theological basis of the material used in the Training Manual. At the time he was a full-time minister of the Uniting Reformed Churches of South

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[36] The Huguenot College as a private training institution aims to train learners to deliver social and church service based on the Christian faith and value system. See http://hugenote.com/about/. Since its inception the Huguenot College was closely connected with the Dutch Reformed Church.

[37] See http://www.cabsa.org.za/content/beginning-organisation

Africa[38]. He led the organisation as manager from 2005 and later as director until the end of June 2011[39] .

2.3.3 CABSA as organisation

Today CABSA is a "registered NGO responsible for its own funding. Sources of funding include: donations from individuals; financial support from faith-based organisations and congregations; funding through trusts; project funding from local and international donors and provision of services on contract"[40].

Although CABSA is an FBO, it is registered as an NGO as mentioned above. As explained earlier, according to Clarke and Ware (2015:40) NGO's and FBO's share the same basic characteristics but are not the same. Clark and Ware describe NGO's as "secular". CABSA started off as an FBO it seems, but registered as an NGO and might have the same challenges as identified by Van der Merwe & Swart (2010:75) – "The expectations that the state has of the religious sector can easily lead to a situation where FBOs are drawn into forming part of the agenda of the state, with the possible result that this could minimise the peculiar character, identity and social contribution of FBOs". It is therefore not easy to identify whether an organisation is an FBO. Sider and Unruh have developed a Typology of Religious Characteristics Model with five categories FBO's can be divided into. There are also eight organisational characteristics and four typical characteristics of the different programmes. These three aspects are used to typify FBOs as explained by Van der Merwe & Swart (2010:78-82). According to this model CABSA might be described as a Faith-centred organisation. Such an organisation is described as being originally founded for a religious purpose and remaining strongly connected to the faith community from which they originated. This organisation has religious elements, but it is organised in such a way that there is room for other purposes. CABSA uses religious language in its vision and has a founding history with the Dutch Reformed Church; however it has licencing agreements with international organisations and is dependent on donors[41] which are a combination of churches and faith

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[38] The Dutch Reformed Church was divided along racial lines during the *apartheid* years. The Uniting Reformed Churches of South Africa developed during *post- apartheid*. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church (the so-called coloured church) and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (the black church) united to form the Uniting Reformed Churches of Southern Africa. It is not "united" as the DRC (the white church) is not part of the unity yet.

[39] See http://www.cabsa.org.za/content/beginning-organisation.

[40] http://www.cabsa.org.za/content/about-us

[41] See http://www.cabsa.org.za/content/donors-and-funders

communities, as well as the South African government through the state lottery. CABSA is able to continue its work through this funding as HIV and AIDS is still a challenge.

The office of CABSA is in Wellington in the Western Cape and the information service - Christian AIDS Resource and Information Service (CARIS) - is based in Johannesburg. CABSA works mainly in Southern Africa[42], while CARIS services are accessible internationally. CABSA operates with a small core staff and various co-workers, including part time CABSA representatives all over Africa. (CABSA: 2011). Through the many trainings of the Churches, Channels of Hope (CCoH) programme hundreds of people were trained as facilitators and educators and are encouraged to use the skills received to train others in their different communities. During the training participants are assessed and will be either a facilitator or educator depending on the results of the assessment.

Through its webpage, pamphlets, workshops and networking CABSA makes information available and continues to be involved in HIV and AIDS in different ways. (CABSA: 2011). CABSA offers a variety of services e.g. a "Message of the Week" and a monthly newsletter sent electronically to subscribers; enquiries are responded to during office hours; information is sent out for special occasions such as World AIDS Day and AIDS Candlelight Memorial Sunday (CABSA: 2009).

According to CABSA (2009) it believes in the potential of faith communities to address the serious challenges still posed by the HIV epidemic.

2.3.4 The Churches, Channels of Hope Programme

The Churches, Channels of Hope (CCoH) Programme is a training programme of CABSA, which they refer to as their "flagship training programme" as it is a key element of their work. It is described as: "targeted training and information sessions suited to specific environments. This approach has been adopted in response to feedback from the field, where individuals and communities called for different levels and types of support" (CABSA 2013).

The programme was developed "to empower Christians with the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills to assist faith communities in their journeys towards HIV-competence"

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[42] See www.places.co.za/html/southern_africa_countries.html; www.sadc.int/member-states/ www.southafrica.info/africa/sadc.htm.

(Facilitator's Manual 2014). The CCoH Programme has endorsements from World Vision International[43], AIDSLink International[44], Tearfund[45], INERELA[46]+, Christian Aid[47] and EHAIA[48]. Furthermore, CABSA has licensing agreements with World Vision International and with AIDSLink International. They are licensed to present the CCoH training independently and do so under the name 'Channels of Hope'.

The initial authors of the training manual were Revd Christo Greyling and Mrs Logy Murray as indicated earlier in the *Historical Background*. Greyling (2002) explains that the manual was the result of 9 years of trial and error in presenting HIV and AIDS workshops. Murray (2002) added that some of the information in the manual she developed herself and others come from several sources - unfortunately there is no bibliography attached to the manual. The manual was developed over a period of three years, while Murray was Director and Trainer at CABSA. Other people were invited to help in the process of developing the manual. For example the factual information contained in the manual has been checked by Dr Francois Cilliers from the Division for University Education at the Medical School, University of Stellenbosch, while Revd Nelis du Toit contributed to the development of the theological basis of the material, as mentioned earlier[49].

The CCoH Manual (2014) is described as not just a curriculum or a collection of scientific facts and information, but rather as a journey guided by *Biblical Guiding Principles:*

- Compelled by the love of Christ
- We are the body of Christ
- To honour, uphold and restore the dignity and value of every human being
- We are a living hope
- To demonstrate God's love through practical acts of compassion
- To be Christ's ambassadors
- To accept with Christ's amazing grace
- With wisdom from the Holy Spirit
- To break the silence by speaking the truth in love

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[43] See http://www.wvi.org/vision-and-values-0
[44] See http://www.aidslinkinternational.org/about-us/vision-mission-values
[45] See http://www.tearfund.org/
[46] See http://inerela.org/ INERELA+
[47] See http://www.christianaid.org.uk/aboutus/who/aims/our_aims.aspx
[48] See https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/ehaia
[49] Facilitator's Manual - Introduction

- To stand up for justice as prophets and priests

There are also specific aims identified. The CCoH Programme aims to contribute to and create HIV-competent faith communities (Facilitator's Manual 2014: guide/1) In order to be classified as a competent faith community, *seven areas of competence* have been identified:

- Relevant and responsible use of scripture

- Understanding and acknowledging vulnerabilities

- Accountable Leadership

- Comprehensive Prevention

- Compassionate Care and Support

- Transformative Justice

- Meaningful Community Interaction

There are *five themes* which are covered in the manual:
- HIV and AIDS and Me

- HIV and AIDS – More than the basics

- Living with HIV and AIDS

- HIV and AIDS – A Christian response

- HIV and AIDS – HIV-Competent Faith Communities

2.3.5 Research on CABSA

An assessment of the Churches, Channels of Hope (CCOH) Programme was done by Prof Christina Landman[50] by using the praxis of theology of Julian Müller from a post-foundational point of view. Landman argues that the programme CCoH offers an opportunity for intra-disciplinary and /or interdisciplinary discourses on HIV. Through post foundationalism, Landman (2014:1) assesses the CCoH programme and investigates whether there is shifting of contextual discourses to contra-cultural discourses; she also assesses what the impact on the faith communities involved is and how competency regarding HIV is embodied in the alternative discourses presented by the CCoH training. She then uses the seven areas of competency offered by the CCoH Programme as seven contra-cultural discourses and practices and assesses each of them individually:

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[50] See Verbum et Ecclesia, v35 n2 (2014): 1-6.
The church as a HIV-competent faith community : an assessment of Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa's Churches, Channels of Hope training : original research

- A relevant and responsible use of the Bible

- An understanding of vulnerabilities

- Leadership

- Responsible community interaction

- Compassionate justice

- Compassionate care and support

- Compassionate prevention

Landman[51] however does not look specifically at the Training Manual. She uses the findings of Rhode Janssen, who published "the results of 72 impact reports that represent 10% of the facilitators trained in CCoH over the last decade" (Landman 2014:7). The assessment of Landman is on the training, based on the subjective feedback given by the facilitators, who through the process become 'co-researchers'. Although the impact report is used as representative of the last decade, the 10% of reports used were all taken from 2012 and 2013. These reports collected from 2012 and 2013 could mostly be from people who were trained during those two years, as there is no indication whether the reports which were used were from facilitators trained over the period of ten years.

Landman (2014:6) concludes that the CCoH training "provides a healthy toolkit towards making faith communities competent in dealing with HIV and AIDS". She however challenges the training to include more theological input, to guard against fundamentalism and to be aware of "voices against the discourses on sexuality, gender and intimate relationships". The fact that these voices against the discourse on sexuality, gender and intimate relationships are present after facilitators have been trained encourages a critical reading of the training manual. The question arises, "what is included on the sexuality and gender discourse which could lead to voices against these discourses being found after the training?"

2.4   Conclusion

In this chapter the context of the facilitator's manual of CABSA was explored. The context of the manual is the HIV and AIDS discourse, with a specific focus on South Africa and the discourse of South Africa, as the manual was developed in South Africa. Through the

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[51] See Verbum et Ecclesia, v35 n2 (2014): 1-6.

explorations of this chapter, it is clear that HIV and AIDS is still relevant and a challenge to all communities. Dube (2003:13) emphasises that the challenge of HIV and AIDS is a health issue, an issue of justice and needs to be approached by all disciplines and studied and analysed in an intersectional manner.

CABSA is an FBO and therefore FBO's were analysed as a stakeholder in the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The challenges around identifying and defining clearly what an FBO is were explored. FBO's work as a stakeholder with churches in addressing HIV and the Church was thus also examined. However the Church is still struggling with patriarchy and its inability to look beyond its hierarchical structures and binary understanding of humanity.

It is also important to highlight the fact that South Africa has a legacy of *apartheid* and therefore the discourse of the legacy of *apartheid* continue at a subconscious level. The legacy of *apartheid* was especially explored in the Church and education as CABSA is an FBO and close links with religion and scripture is evident. The manual is used to educate and train people and therefore education was explored. It seems that alternative methods offered by feminist pedagogy might be helpful. According to Nadar (2009:21) it seems to help to create a space for learners to share their experiences while using the experiences as point of departure to address theory and knowledge. Feminist pedagogy might be a way of enhancing the manual.

In the midst of this subverted discourse of the legacy of *apartheid*, is the discourse of HIV and AIDS which is multi-faceted. This multi-faceted challenge of HIV and AIDS does indeed need an intersectional method of analysis.

Could a manual be developed free from these influences – could it be developed in one context and be used in different contexts? These are the key questions which will be addressed in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 3

An African Woman's Lens

3.1   Introduction

The analysis of the training manual of the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA) – as noted in the previous chapter - will be done by using an African[52]woman[53]'s theological lens as tool. This tool was chosen as the training manual as it is used mostly in South Africa and in Africa in general in addressing the HIV and AIDS pandemic. "The crisis continues to be of magnitude proportions with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for 70% of all new infections in 2010 and South Africa having an estimated 5.6 million people with HIV, more than any other country in the world". (Haddad 2013:2). HIV and AIDS continue to be one of the challenges in South Africa. Phiri (2003:4) highlights that "African women theologians are concerned about 'Sex, stigma and HIV/AIDS' in the context of African religions and societies". It has previously been highlighted that HIV and AIDS is, indeed, gendered and therefore the training material offered needs to be able to challenge the participants to think about gender and the implications it has for the spread of HIV and AIDS.

In exploring what an African woman's theology is, I look towards the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Women theologians from Africa have organised themselves into the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (from here referred to as the Circle) and developed renowned theological voices world-wide. However, before exploring

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[52]As a woman from South Africa, I choose to use African, as a way to emphasise that South Africa is part of Africa. The label "African" has been identified with some negative assumptions. Dube (2001:10) explains, "...it suggests uniformity where there is enormous diversity. It is also a colonial and colonizing category and one that is more often than not racist... because it does not give proper regard for the great differences in and among African people". I do understand the argument against using the term and do not ignore the diversity of African people. However, there is often an attempt made from some South Africans not to acknowledge our connection with Africa. Also, in choosing the use the term African, I want to acknowledge my African ancestors. I grew up as being classified as a "Coloured" and a large part of this "Coloured" cultural group want to emphasise our European, Asian or other ancestors – not African, at the expense of our African heritage.

[53]I choose to use the term "woman" and not 'feminist'. Within the body of African women, there are different understandings around the use of "woman" rather than 'feminist or womanist.' Dube (2001:10) explains, "The phrase 'women's theology' is mostly used by the Two-Thirds World women to distinguish their work from that of 'First-World' or 'Western' women' who use the term "feminist".

the Circle and African women's theologies, I need to first situate the Circle within the larger landscape of feminist theologies, which started with feminist theories.

In order to understand the issues and major themes of the Circle and African women's theology, an explanation of the development of feminist theology and its relationship with feminist theory needs to be explored. Some key concepts in relation to feminist theology need to be explained and the relation between gender, power and religion need to be understood in order to be able to identify these in the manual. The presence and influence of 'patriarchy' for example can be very subtle and needs to be understood in order to identify it in the writings of the manual. According to Ackermann, patriarchy is one of the biggest reasons for division and discrimination. Ackermann (2007:16) explains:

> This division of humanity is deepened by the usage of sexist images for God. The act of naming, one of the most powerful human activities, has been, in patriarchal theology, a male prerogative from the beginning (Gen 2:19-20). Man has named creation: man has also named God, in his own image. It is not surprising, therefore, that the male features overwhelmingly as the prototype of humanity in Christian anthropology... When the image of God mirrors the patriarchal concept of the *pater familias,* it becomes an exercise of power by ruling-class males over all others. Such images can be the cause of ethical problems in the construction of relationships not only between men and women but also between people as they are divided by class and race into the dominating and the subservient.

Once feminist theology and the development of the movement have been explored, the development of African women's theology can be unpacked in detail. The manual was developed in South Africa - part of the continent of Africa - and therefore the specificity of context is important. African women's theology adds another dimension to feminist theology - the importance of culture. For women in Africa, it is not only gender, race and class which play a role in the way we as human beings are treated, but also the impact of cultural beliefs. Phiri and Nadar (2011:83) explain "for African women, issues of women's oppression go together with racism, economic injustice and the practice of religious and cultural practices that can be injurious to African women". Nadar and Maluleke describe the relationship between religion, culture and gender socialization as "...the 'unholy trinity' of religion,

culture and the subsequent power of gender socialization in underwriting a culture of violence against women" (Maluleke and Nadar 2002:14). Once a clear understanding of African women's theology is developed, the focus needs to move to South Africa –the originator of the manual. South Africa has a legacy of apartheid - of oppression. Therefore the 'Five Faces of Oppression' of Iris Young will also be explored. In finding a feminist methodology, the Circle is once more used as resource.

Denise Ackermann, a South African feminist theologian and also a member of the Circle, is where the focus moves to. She has been the co-ordinator of the Circle's Chapter in Cape Town for more than ten years. Ackermann is a practical theologian[54] who has developed a "feminist theology of praxis". The feminist theology of praxis is the methodology which will be used to analyse the training manual while using the African women voices from the Circle as well as other feminist voices as conversation partners.

3.2   An African Woman's Lens

In order to create a framework to use for an African women's lens, a process of discovery will be embarked on while exploring the terms "African" as well as "woman". Writing from a woman's perspective situates the research within feminism and, therefore, feminist theory and feminist theology in general will be explored first, before exploring the notion of an African woman's lens specifically. As mentioned earlier, the Circle will be used as a resource for African women's theological reflection.

3.2.1 Feminist Theory and Feminist Theology

3.2.1.1 What is Feminism?

hooks (2000:18) highlights the fact that it is a challenge to define what feminism is: "A central problem within feminist discourse has been our inability to either arrive at a consensus of opinion about what feminism is or accept definition(s) that could serve as points of unification". There are, therefore, different understandings of feminism depending on the point of departure. Feminism as a movement has been described as having a "class nature". Definitions can be described as liberal, focussing on the right to freedom and self-determination of individual women (hooks 2000:25). Furthermore for hooks (2000:26):

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[54] See "After the locusts" p 28

> Feminism is a struggle to end sexist oppression. Therefore, it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels, as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion and material desires.

Ackermann (2003: 30) agrees, stating feminism is understood "as a movement to end sexist oppression..." A definition offered by Ruether (2002:3) highlights the patriarchal gender paradigm and explains feminism as "a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant and females with those defined as inferior and auxiliary". It is important to challenge this way of thinking, where males are always seen as being dominant and superior. Ackermann quotes Ruether, "she speaks of 'universal human experience' and is not interested in a system of thought that inverts discrimination" (Ackermann 2008:40). This would refer to the human experience of both men and women – a system of thought where there would be no discrimination towards either women or men. For feminist theory, the starting point would be the experience of women. However, hooks warns that feminism needs to "(call) attention to the diversity of women's social and political reality, especially the women whose social conditions have been least written about, studied or changed by political movements" (hooks 2000:27). Women's experiences are as diverse as they are situated and therefore unique. One therefore needs to listen to a diversity of women's voices from different contexts.

Rakoczy (2004:11) on the other hand focuses on the critical dimension and writes "feminism is critical and constructive" and continues that feminism "is based on the conviction of the full humanity of women". Here is a clear emphasis on the fact that women are first human beings before they are women or females as Ruether also challenges. A different definition for feminism is offered by Ackermann (1993:24) who aregues that feminism is about "a different consciousness".

This definition challenges the narrow understanding of feminism, as being about equality between women and men, which hooks (2000:27) also highlights. Feminism is not only about the liberation of women but also about the wellbeing of women and the whole of society – creating a world where everybody can flourish. Robson quotes Oduyoye and explains that, "...happiness and human flourishing pertains integrally to the humanisation of women and the

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fullness of life" (Robson 2014:1). Feminism introduces a different way of thinking – "a different consciousness", which is critical and questions traditions and structures in society. The critical element agrees with both Rakoczy and Ruether's explanations that feminism is "critical". Ackermann (2003:65) further reminds us that women - all human beings - are our bodies, "feminists say 'our bodies, ourselves'. Body Theology reminds us of the importance of our bodies. Our bodies are sites of revelation: "...the most important article of Christian faith is that God became [human]. It is therefore hard to believe that the body has been so despised," (Isherwood & Stuart 1998:15). "What we mean is plain. Human beings do not live disembodied lives". This reminder of Ackermann is important in the discourse on HIV and AIDS as it is in the bodies of people, especially women, that the virus is carried. These same infected bodies attend church services and support groups and often experience stigma and alienation from people, including members of the church. Ackermann quotes McFague, who "points out that we do not have bodies, we are our bodies, 'body and soul" (Ackermann 2003:66). Oduyoye (1986:121) adds the importance of women's experiences as well as the importance of community – women and men together as a whole.

The different definitions of feminism given above offer a framework for an understanding of feminism. Feminism is therefore a "different consciousness" which challenges all oppressive structures while striving for the wellbeing of flourishing communities, while:

- Valuing women's full humanity.
- Emphasising the equality of all human beings and wholeness of the community.
- Being critical and suspicious of patriarchy.
- Valuing the experience of women in our bodies

Having a framework for understanding feminism in general, leads one to the different trends of thought in feminist thinking.

3.2.1.2 Examples of emerging trends in feminist thought

 According to Rakoczy (2004:12), feminism has gone through stages of development. The first wave of feminism focused on women's suffrage – women realised how different their lives were in relation to men. Women were treated differently and women started to ask to be viewed and treated the same as men. There were many public displays of women's anger at the discrimination of women. Women fasted and chained themselves to fences in public for

example. The second wave of feminism broadened the debate and this wave was started by the civil rights movement for political and social equality of African-Americans. It was during the second wave of feminism where women started to call for the ordination of women. During the third wave of feminism, there was the exploring of the micro-politics of gender equality. This developed around the end of the 1970s and this wave includes voices from Africa, Latin America and Asia. It is, therefore, clear that the voices of feminists are diverse, coming from different parts of the world with different contexts of departure.

The diverse nature of feminist voices is not only influenced by different contexts, but also by different issues, which stem from the lives of women. There have been attempts made to link certain feminists according to the issues addressed. Maynard (2001:293) categorises the development of feminist theory as:

> Three classic feminist positions; characterised as Liberal feminism, focusing on individual rights; Marxist feminism is seen as being concerned with women's oppression as it is tied to forms of capitalist exploitation of labour and Radical feminism is attempting to formulate new ways of theorising women's relationship to men.

Ackermann also emphasises the diversity of contexts and issues, "feminism is a socio-political movement with different political orientations" (Ackermann 1993:23). Although experiences of women are diverse, there seem to be similar challenges experienced by women from different contexts.

 The challenge of **oppression** is a recurring theme which is addressed in different contexts as women continue to experience oppression. Two examples of women addressing oppression are Iris Marion Young and Martha C Nussbaum. Both women write from a feminist political philosophical point of view. However Young focuses on a developed country and Nussbaum focuses on developing countries.

Iris Marion Young

One important phenomenon which is experienced in different cultures is **oppression.** Young (2009:3) identifies oppression as "a central category of political discourse". When looking at the political discourse, it is clear according to Young that, "in the most general sense, all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings" (Young 2009:4). Although

oppression is central in the political discourse, Young (2009:5) realises the challenge in addressing it, as there are different understandings of oppression.

When thinking about oppression, Young chooses to focus on the day to day interactions of people and the oppression people experience through daily practices – usually "practices of a well-intentioned liberal society" (Young 2009:5). This type of oppression is not one group having power over another and coercing the other into subservience. The oppression Young chooses to focus on is what she calls "structural oppression":

> Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies. Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules. In this extended structural sense oppression refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes, and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms— in short the normal processes of everyday life. The conscious actions of many individuals daily contribute to maintaining and reproducing oppression, but those people are usually simply doing their jobs or living their lives, and do not understand themselves as agents of oppression. (Young 2009: 5-6).

Young uses different categories in addressing the challenge of one definition, and rather identifies five categories of oppression:

(1) exploitation, (2) marginalization, (3) powerlessness, (4) cultural imperialism, and (5) violence.

Exploitation

Oppression through exploitation is based on the Marxist theory of exploitation. Young (2009:14) reminds us that, in the capitalist society, goods in the market do not exchange hands at their value, due to the labour theory of value. "Every commodity's value is a function of the [labour] time necessary for its production. [Labour] power is the one commodity that in the process of being consumed produces new value" (Young 2009:14). People receive less payment for the product produced than what it cost them in labour to

produce the product. Or people add value to the labour used while producing the product and the producer receives more payment. Young (2009:14) explains:

> Through private ownership of the means of production, and through markets that allocate [labour] and the ability to buy goods, capitalism systematically transfers the powers of some persons to others, thereby augmenting the power of the latter. Not only are powers transferred from workers to capitalists, but also the powers of workers diminish by more than the amount of the transfer, because workers suffer material deprivation and a loss of control, and hence are deprived of important elements of self-respect.

The result of the labour is transferred from one group to benefit another group. Young uses this Marxist theory of exploitation and looks at exploitation of women and gender. "Gender exploitation has two aspects, transfer of the fruits of
material [labour] to men and transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to men" (Young 2009:14). Exploitation is used to include material support as well as emotional support. The work which women do is often valued as less important and therefore women receive less for their labour. However, the emotional support and care which women supply in order for men to work outside of the home, is often valued as having no numeral value and women do not get paid for this labour. Young quotes Christine Delphy (1984), who uses marriage to explain the difference in payment for women and men for the different tasks performed in the marriage. Women do not get paid for the domestic chores they perform at home, neither do they get acknowledged for the emotional support given to the spouse and the nurturing of the children. Young further explains "the exploitation consists not in the sort of work that women do in the home, for this might include various kinds of tasks, but in the fact that they perform tasks for someone on whom they are dependent" (Young 2009:15). In order to understand what powerlessness does to a person, Young (2009:22) describes a powerless person:

> The powerless have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgment in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect.

Marginalization

Young explains that marginalization causes oppression not only through people's lack of material things or old age or mental challenges for example but also due to the deprivation of independence:

> Two categories of injustice beyond distribution are associated with marginality in advanced capitalist societies. First, the provision of welfare itself produces new injustice by depriving those dependent on it of rights and freedoms that others have. Second, even when material deprivation is somewhat mitigated by the welfare state, marginalization is unjust because it blocks the opportunity to exercise capacities in socially defined and recognized ways (Young 2009: 19).

Young adds a different understanding of what the impact of marginalization is on people. "Even if marginals were provided a comfortable material life within institutions that respected their freedom and dignity, injustices of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect" (Young 2009: 20). Young explains that people continue to be marginalized due to people's continued feelings of uselessness and boredom which can lead to a lack of self-respect. This could cause feelings of powerlessness and allow oppression.

Powerlessness

"Non-professionals suffer a form of oppression in addition to exploitation, which I call powerlessness. Domination in modern society is enacted through the widely dispersed powers of many agents mediating the decisions of others" (Young 2009:21). Education is the factor which enables a person to become a professional. However, Young argues that the opportunity to be a professional offers power to that person, "...The powerless lack the authority, status, and sense of self that professionals tend to have"(Young 2009:22). Young explains the theory by describing what professionals gain, apart from financial privileges:

> First, acquiring and practicing a profession has an expansive, progressive character. Second, while many professionals have supervisors and cannot directly influence many decisions or the action of many people, most nevertheless have considerable day-to-day work autonomy. ..[T]hird, the privileges of the professional extend beyond the workplace to a whole way of life. I call this way of life "respectability (Young 2009: 22).

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Non-professionals would therefore not be accustomed to or exposed to the above named privileges and this could cause them to feel powerless when interacting with those who have been exposed to such privileges as those mentioned above. Young (2009:21) explains further "The powerless are those who lack authority or power, …those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them". The powerless might thus continue to feel powerless even if their situation changes.

Cultural Imperialism

Marginalization and powerlessness as forms of oppression refer to "structural and institutional relations that limit people's material lives" (Young 1990:58). Cultural imperialism however refers to the dominant meanings of a society being the perspective of a particular group, while another group is being stereotyped and labelled as 'other'. In other words, it "involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm" (Young 1990:59). When the dominant group comes into contact with other groups, the dominant group's claim of universal dominance could be challenged. According to Young, this position would encourage the dominant group to reinforce its position by "bringing the other groups under the measure of its dominant norms" and the difference of the other groups then "becomes reconstructed largely as deviance and inferiority". The differences which are exhibited and emphasised are then constructed by the dominant group as "lack and negation" (Young 1990:59). Furthermore Young (1990:59) explains that these "stereotyped and inferiorized images" are internalised. Therefore, according to Young (1990:60), cultural imperialism:

> Involves the paradox of experiencing oneself as invisible at the same time that one is marked out as different – the oppressed group's own experience and interpretation of social life finds little expression that touches the dominant culture, while that same (dominant) culture imposes on the oppressed group its experience and interpretation of social life.

Violence

Violence as oppression includes physical and sexual violence against women, but it also includes more subtle ways of being violent – degrading people through the way we refer to them or by telling jokes or by making certain gestures.

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Feminist theologians have used the work of Young – one such is Serena Jones. In her discussion of feminist theology, Jones identifies three themes – women's nature, oppression and community (Jones 2000:9). When looking at oppression, Jones (2000:79) highlights the fact that there is not one theory of oppression but rather theories of oppression. Jones uses the feminist theory of Iris Young (Five Faces of Oppression) as a lens when looking at oppression. "Broadly defined, 'women's oppression' refers to dynamic forces, both personal and social, that diminish or deny the flourishing of women" (Jones 2000:71). This definition of Jones' highlights the diversity and complexity of women's experiences and what causes them to flourish. In South Africa, the impact of "dynamic forces" referred to by Jones is a complex reality. South Africa has its history of Apartheid added to the "dynamic forces" referred to by Jones. In South Africa, where women have different experiences depending on race, social and economic situations, it is possible for two women to go through the same situation with one flourishing whilst the other experiences oppression. The same interaction could cause one woman to grow and to flourish, while another woman could feel powerless and oppressed due to growing up with little education and being poor. "Women's oppression requires theories (plural) as diverse as women's identities" (Jones 2000:71). When listening to the stories of women being oppressed, similarities can be identified. Jones (2000: 72-76) has identified these as six dimensions in feminists' accounts of oppression. They are:

- *A distinction between material oppression and cultural oppression*
  Jones (2000:72) emphasises that oppression can be both material and cultural but "if one focuses only on the cultural, one misses the concrete, institutional ways that relations of power shape our corporate life". It is however also important to be aware of the "complex dynamics of their interactions" (Jones 2000:72).

- *A trace of the relations between power and domination*
  Jones (2000:72) reminds us that "one must attend to the power dynamics that shape social worlds (as it) permeates all aspects of our interactions with other persons and with institutions and ideas". Relations of domination can be men having control over women, also domination in relations between women and between women and social institutions and cultural forces (Jones 2000:73).

- ***An appreciative holding together of the collective/institutional and the individual/personal character of oppression***

  Jones (2000:73) highlights that oppression could be either collective or personal, but the challenge for feminist theory is to hold the collective and personal together. However Jones reminds us that 'personal is political' and the personal cannot be or should not be depersonalised as "individuals' intentions and actions do work to oppress women and thus the individual must be held responsible" (2000:74). Jones also introduces the responsibilities of victims and perpetrators – "it is important to affirm the agency and personal responsibility of the victims of oppression as well as the perpetrators" (Jones 2000:74).

- ***An engaged character of oppression – being inside experts***

  Jones (2000:74) reminds us that "feminists who theorize women's oppression do so from the inside. They theorize it at the same time they stand in it – as inside experts". It is important to remember that women's oppression is harmful and it can damage women both emotionally and physically. "Feminist theorists thus hold in tension their desire to listen to oppression from the inside with an acknowledgment that harm can diminish one's capacity to carry out such analysis" (Jones 2000:75).

- ***Having a vision of women's wholeness***

  Jones (2000:75) emphasises that it is important to have a vision of 'women's wholeness' – this vision refers to the flourishing of women. Jones reminds us that women's flourishing has different meanings for different women. "Just as there is no single model of true womanhood or true oppression, so too there is no one image of full flourishing in feminist theory" (Jones 2000:76).

- ***Having a practical character – need to work towards the good of women's lives.***

  Jones (2000:76) explains that "by 'practical' I mean that feminists want their theories of oppression to work for the good of women's lives". The theories are described as practical, "when they illuminate what women already know quite intimately but have not yet theorized".

Both Young and Jones emphasise the complexities of oppression and the fact that there are "faces of oppression". For Young and Jones, oppression is more than one

group or individual being oppressed by another – for them oppression is structural as well. Oppression "is embedded in norms, habits and symbols" according to Young and therefore it becomes part of our everyday interactions – it becomes internalised and part of our daily interactions. The "faces of oppression" are therefore: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence, according to Young.

As mentioned earlier, another person who writes on oppression is Martha Nussbaum who writes from a feminist political philosophical point of view as well, but focuses on developing countries:

Martha Nussbaum

> Women in much of the world lack support for fundamental functions of a human life. They are less nourished than men, less healthy, more vulnerable to physical violence and sexual abuse. They are much less likely than men to be literate .... Should they attempt to enter the workplace, they face greater obstacles,... Similar obstacles often impede their effective participation in political life. In many nations women are not full equals under the law... In all these ways, unequal social and political circumstances give women unequal human capabilities (Nussbaum 2000:1).

Nussbaum (2000:4) argues that women are oppressed and in need of support in order to lead lives showing their full humanity. In order to address this need Nussbaum suggests a universal approach which offers basic constitutional principles through philosophical thought. She suggests that these "should be respected and implemented by governments of all nations, as a bare minimum of that respect for human dignity" (Nussbaum 2000:5). Nussbaum's approach focuses on human capabilities – "what people are actually able to do and to be" (Nussbaum 2000:5). Amartya Sen[55] was the pioneer of the capabilities approach in development economics but Nussbaum has a different version of the same approach. Nussbaum (2000:70-71) offers capabilities as "a foundation for basic political principles that should underwrite constitutional guarantees" and argues that the capabilities approach offers the opportunity for people's lives to be examined in their own contexts and environments. Nussbaum argues that women have for too long "been treated as the supporters of the ends of

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[55] See Capabilities Approach in Economics in Feminist Economics 10(3), November 2004, 77 – 8

others, rather than as ends in their own right" (Nussbaum 2000:5-6). The capabilities approach is therefore challenging this point of view. It has two important foundational ideas according to Nussbaum (2000:71-73): (1) there are functions in human life which indicate humanity – without these functions human life is not possible, (2) there is a level of interaction and capability of human beings which indicates that all people have value and human dignity:

> "What this approach is after is a society in which persons are treated as each worthy of regard, and in which each has been put in a position to live really humanly. A principle of each person's capability: the capabilities sought are sought for each and every person..." (Nussbaum 2000:74).

Nussbaum (2000:78-80) offers a list of capabilities or opportunities for functioning:

1. **Life**. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.

2. **Bodily Health**. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

3. **Bodily Integrity**. Being able to move freely from place to place; having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e. being able to secure against assault, including sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

4. **Senses, Imagination, and Thought.** Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by adequate education, including, but by no means limited to literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training.

5. **Emotions.** Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety, or traumatic events of abuse or neglect.

6. **Practical Reason.** Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

7. **Affiliation.** A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction. B. Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others.

8. **Other Species**. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. **Play**. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. **Control over One's Environment. A. Political**. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life. B. **Material**. Being able to hold property, not just formally but in terms of real opportunity.

Nussbaum (2000:81) reminds us that the different items on the list are connected and one has an effect on the other and therefore one needs to be aware not to promote one item on the list at the expense of another. These items on the list are offered in order to support the government in delivering "the social basis of these capabilities" (Nussbaum 2000:81).

Nussbaum (2000:6) offers the capabilities approach as universal as she argues "the capabilities in question are important for each and every citizen, in each and every nation and each is to be treated as an end". According to her, this general universal framework offers us in fact the best framework within which to locate our thoughts about difference "as this approach is sensitive to pluralism and cultural difference" (Nussbaum 2000:7-8). Using the arguments of Young and Nussbaum, when referring to oppression, the understanding is that oppression is also structural and part of our daily interactions, rituals and norms. Oppression is internalised to the extent that we are often unaware of oppressing others. One therefore needs a lens to help identify oppression which is present in most human interactions.

Looking at oppression, as one of the issues women struggle with daily from a feminist perspective, highlights the important contribution feminism adds to the liberation discourse. Oppression is an important issue in South Africa where Apartheid is no longer law, but oppression is still part of the day-to-day interactions of South Africans. The contribution of feminist theory on oppression is therefore important for the liberation of the people of South Africa.

3.2.1.3 Feminist Theology[56]

Feminist theology has its **roots in liberation theology -**it is **"**one of the family members of liberation theology which began in Latin America in the 1960s" (Rakoczy 2004:5). Liberation theologies surfaced during the seventies and "challenged the understanding of 'the poor'"(Soskice 2003:5). Liberation theology was a different way of doing theology, "it sets out a new and radical interpretation of the method and content of theology from the side of

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[56]"African women's theologies belong to a wider family of feminist theology, which is further categorised as liberation theology. Both theologies are different varieties of Christian theology, which acquired their names on the basis of context and approach" (Phiri 2004:16)

the poor" (Rakoczy 2004:5). As liberation theology focuses on the experience of the poor, feminist theology focuses on the experience of women – "the critical principle of feminist theology [is] the promotion of the full humanity of women" (Ackermann 2008:40). It is important to remember that "we know God only insofar as we know ourselves. All that we know, perceive and believe is grounded in our experience as human beings and in our reflection on this experience" (Ackermann 2007:13). Ruether (1987:147) explains "Women must be able to speak out of their own experience of agony and victimization, survival, empowerment and new life as places of Divine presence and out of these revelatory experiences, write new stories that can tell of God's presence in experience...". The challenge to include a women's perspective gave rise to a theology eventually labelled 'feminist theology'. Elizabeth Johnson in Soskice (2003:6) explains feminist theology as:

> By Christian feminist theology I mean a reflection of God and all things in the light of God that stands consciously in the company of all the world's women, explicitly prizing their genuine humanity while uncovering and criticizing its persistent violation in sexism, itself an omnipresent paradigm of unjust relationships. In terms of Christian doctrine, this perspective claims the fullness of the religious heritage for women precisely as human, in their own right and independent from personal identification with men.

Ackermann (2008:38) remembers the first women who wrote as feminist theologians:

> Ruether, together with Letty Russell, Beverly Harrison and later Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, laid the basis for what was to become a challenging and life-changing discipline for countless women across the world. I do not want to discount the initial work of Mary Daly whose 'The Church and the Second Sex' and 'Beyond God the Father' predated the work of these women. Daly undoubtedly asked the first important question for feminist theologians: "Why do Christian traditions and practices conspire together to oppress women and to accord them second class status in the church?

Rakoczy (2004:16-17) explains that, as feminist theory has developed into different categories, feminist theology also identifies three types of feminist theology. There are Christian feminist theologians which seek 'a liberating theological core for women in the Christian tradition'. They seek to deconstruct and then reconstruct theology and they are referred to as Reconstructionist Christian feminist theologians. Reformist Christian feminist

theologians seek change and more inclusion of women but "they are basically content with their theological traditions". Then there is Revolutionary feminist theology which is a "post-Christian response to the patriarchy in the Christian tradition". Women who follow this way of doing theology often choose to leave the Church. Although it is challenging to be in the Church, leaving it is not an option for me, as I believe that we need to work towards change and creating a church where everybody – women and men - are accepted and part of its structures. We need to deconstruct oppressive structures and challenge people to reconstruct structures which embrace all people.

As women developed feminist theology, Soskice highlights the fact that there has been development and change in "who did theology" and the way men and women are treated in the church. "Theology became formalised as a discipline, (however) women were barred from universities and theological colleges and rabbinical seminaries were slow to open their doors to women. Most Christian and Jewish denominations found women to be professionally unsuitable until well into the twentieth century" (Soskice 2003:5). Today women have started to take up leadership positions in churches and often congregations are filled with more women than men. Women have started to be actively engaged with theology and theology is no longer the domain of men only. The work of Valerie Saiving Goldstein in the 1960's especially challenged thought about sin and the fact that "the analysis of 'the human condition'' was given from a man's perspective.

As noted by hooks (2000: 26) in an earlier section, feminist theory focuses on ending sexist oppression. While challenging sexist oppression, feminism has challenged women to think about our *experience* of faith and God. These experiences of women have often been ones of exclusion and oppression and have been used as the foundation for the development of theory. Feminist theologians, therefore, start from women and women's experiences. "The uniqueness of feminist theology lies not in its use of the criterion of experience but rather in its use of women's experience, which has been almost entirely shut out of theological reflection in the past" (Ruether 1983:13). The experience of women is used as a point of departure. "Present experience, in our case women's experience, can be said to act foundationally when it is the ultimate norm against which everything else is judged" (Martin 1994:174). Women's experience of the church has been one of being treated differently from men for centuries. This treatment of women was due to the perspective of male leaders in the

church which eventually developed into the doctrine and tradition[57] of the church. The church has taught women that they are "second class citizens" and some churches have even taught that women are unclean and, therefore, not worthy. It is therefore important to re-look at the teachings and rituals of the church in order to find different interpretations which affirm women as creatures of God. The face of the church has changed significantly since the time of John Knox. In the past the men were the leaders in the church – the priests and the theologians - and the women were the caregivers and the support. Women did, in the past and continue in the present, to help the poor and destitute. Kanyoro (2002:80) explains, "Eager to live in obedience to Christ and his life, women in the churches have continually thrown themselves into volunteer-run activities of loving service". Ackermann agrees that "...the Mányanos in the Methodist Church (have) harnessed African women's zeal for evangelisation, prayer and fundraising, but they did so around an ideological understanding of women primarily as mothers" (Ackermann in Klein 2007: 46). Ackermann in Klein (2004:46-47) explains that the groups were helpful, as they offered safe spaces for women to tell their stories and express themselves, but the spaces did not challenge the status quo – the division of power and the way women were portrayed. Women seem to show different foci than men in the church. "Men were the priests and the theologians and women were the cleaners of the buildings, they made the tea at the church meetings and formed their own women's groups where they would support each other" (Ackermann in Klein 2007:47). Njoroge (2007:429) however encourages us to stay faithful to what is good about the tradition where women share the good news and in the past did not allow institutions, structures or patriarchal authority to silence them or marginalise them. With the encouragement of Njoroge to "be faithful to the tradition of women" one is reminded that, through history, women have continued to "be faithful" and bring 'the good news'" although they were not always allowed to be part of the structures of the church and institutions. The stories of women have continued to be stories of faith amongst suffering and challenges.

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[57]See Soskice (2003:2) for the example of Scottish theologian John Knox:
"To promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion or empire above any realm, nation or city is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, a thing most contrary to His revealed will and approved ordinance, and finally it is the subversion of good order, of all equity and justice... Nature, I say, doth paint them forth to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish; and experience hath declared them to be inconstant, variable, cruel and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment...As St Paul doth reason in these words; 'man is not of the woman but the woman of the man. And man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the use of man...'(1 Cor. 11:8) ... and therefore that she should never have pretended any kind of superiority above him, no more than do the angels above God the creator or above Christ Jesus their head. So I say that in her greatest perfection woman was created to be subject to man."

The experience of women is not only in their day to day interaction with others in the church or their understanding of their faith, but also *women's experiences of scripture.* For Christians, the church and especially scripture – the Bible - have in many societies become the guidelines for people's way of life and the choices people make. West (2001:159) highlights the power of scripture and encourages therefore responsible use of scripture as it can cause death through stigma and discrimination or it can bring life by affirming people. Kanyoro (2002:78) agrees and adds, "Every people must find its own way of speaking about God and of generating new symbols, concepts and models that are congenial to express their religious vision. Those who have been prevented from participating fully in this myth-and-symbol making process must claim back our right to do so. When we are able to achieve unity in diversity, then we claim to experience God's power and glory present in the community". Finding our "own way of speaking about God" - interpreting scripture - is a process of using different experiences to understand scripture. It is important to be critical of the use of sacred text – scripture or the Bible. The Bible has been used to silence women and oppress them. That is why Kanyoro (2002:85) encourages applying the hermeneutics of suspicion to the biblical text, as theologian Schussler Fiorenza has suggested in her framework of feminist hermeneutical theory[58]. Masenya agrees and warns:

> The church should also critically revisit the androcentric[59] interpretations of the Bible since these interpretations have contributed to the perpetuation of the view that the female is inferior, and that the latter is God-ordained. Such a view has enabled dangerous cultural sayings, reinforced by apparently similar sayings from the Bible, to be applied indiscriminately to powerless girl children and women. These women-unfriendly Bible interpretations should be substituted with empowering life-giving ones. (Masenya (2003:125)

For women it is worse, as indicated by Masenya above. The aforementioned theological stance came from a history of patriarchy and interpretation of scripture. "Interpretations of the Biblical text reinforce the notion of women's subordination that enables even Christian men to view their wives as property" (Haddad 2009:14). Nadar (2006:78) notes that the voices of women are often silenced in the Bible and that we fail to hear the voices of the

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[58] See Schussler Fiorenza 1992 *The Power of Naming* 339-354
[59] is the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing male human beings or a masculine point of view at the centre of one's world view and its culture and history.

women who are sometimes "victims of rape or agents in their own right. Everything about women is filtered through the voice of the narrator, who is male". Much of this alienation has to do with the interpretation of scripture. Scripture – the Bible is embraced by Christians as the norm for their lives. "Despite the secular nature of South Africa, the Bible still enjoys authoritative status in especially Pentecostal Ecclesiastical settings" (Masenya 2003:115). In many churches the Bible is often used for patriarchal control as Masenya (2003:118) highlights.

The relationship between husband and wife is used as a metaphor for the relationship of the church and Christ. The church, as the body of Christ is reminded of its connection to Christ as the leader of the church. Christ is described as the head of the church and just as the head and the body cannot function without the other, the church cannot function without Christ. This relationship of the Church being under the authority of Christ is however used for patriarchal control to oppress women. Men are put in the same position as Christ and women as the church. Women as human beings just as men can however, function without men. The relationship between Christ and the church is not the same as men and women in this regard, but it has been taught as being the same by the church leaders. Women were instructed that they need to be subservient to their husbands "in everything" as this was what the Bible taught. Women have been oppressed and even abused by men for many years by using this text as authority on married life. The text was used to keep men in a position of authority. It was interpreted from the male position, thus keeping patriarchal[60] control. This patriarchal control is one of the issues feminist theology is addressing.

Rakoczy (1993:17-18), explains *the task of feminist theology* as to "deconstruct and critique the male cultural paradigms in theological thought and to construct and formulate new perspectives". It is during the deconstruction process that a critical stance of suspicion is needed and the context is analysed. After the process of deconstruction and critique is complete, the second step of searching for "an alternative history and tradition to support the inclusion of women as full human beings" is started. The final step of the methodology of feminist theology, as explained by Rakoczy, is to "reconstruct and formulate the teaching of Christianity – bringing new and original insights into the Christian tradition as women speak their truth". Feminist theology has been influenced by feminist theory. Jones**,** a feminist theologian, refers to feminist theory when she describes how feminists "do theory". She

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[60]Rakoczy (2004:10) explains that patriarchy "literally means the rule by a father or fathers – it is a way of thinking, feeling and organising human life which legally, politically, socially and religiously enforces male dominance and power.

explains that the feminists need to analyse individual as well as collective thought processes and therefore the analysis is done "at many levels – language, emotions, physical expressions, institutional forms, economic systems,... and in many different places... churches and university lecture halls, to name just a few" (Jones 2000:4). Jones (2000:8) therefore emphasises that all of a person's life needs to be investigated and therefore the gendered methods of looking at life and which are usually oppressive need to be analysed and unpacked. Jones encourages us to look at the old landscapes known to us, with its oppressive structures, and find new imaginative ways of moving through the old landscape. In order to analyse, Jones (2000:9) highlights the fact that "normative criteria" which can be used during assessment need to be developed. Jones uses the metaphor, "cartographies of grace" to explain this process of developing normative criteria. As the cartographer, Jones will "lay feminist theory over the terrain or landscape of Christian doctrine to see how the lines of theory might map the contours of theology" (Jones 2000:19). As Jones is "mapping" and looking at these two – feminist theory and the landscape of Christian doctrine, she is looking for new ways of looking at doctrine and feminist theory "provides markers for travelling" through the old terrain in new ways" (Jones 2000:19). During the development process of these criteria Jones brings her "feminist, constructive, systematic theology in the Reformation tradition (in) conversation with feminist theory" (2000:11). As a feminist theologian interested in doctrine or systematic theology Jones (2000:18), with "feminist systematic theology asks whether the church practices what it confesses". Jones strives to bring doctrine in conversation with practices and this theory is closely linked to what Ackermann focuses on in her feminist theology of praxis – looking at church practices through a feminist lens. Ackermann (2003:33) also refers to "doing theology" when she explains feminist theology: "I learned that 'to do' feminist theology means to be critical, constructive and collaborative". In being critical Ackermann (2003:34) refers to being critical of especially the domination by men through the history of the Christian church and its traditions, while recovering the history of women which had been hidden, and the value of women ignored. After critically investigating the traditions and history of the church, there follows the task of reconstruction, where "new insights and material are used to construct contemporary theology" (Ackermann 2003:34).

In Africa, when Kanyoro speaks about theology, she also identifies a method of 'doing theology'. This is "the method of action-reflection out of which theological reflections arise..." The method consists of critically reflecting on traditions and culture, then taking

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action by deconstructing and then reconstructing and finding new ways of 'doing theology'. This method is different from using "existing theological insights to present situations. This method invites communal theology" (Kanyoro2002:1).

"Feminist writings present a challenge to traditional theology, transgressing its disciplinary boundaries, questioning its neutrality and deliberately combining advocacy with scholarship" (Soskice 2003:7). The traditional way of doing theology was by creating a dichotomy between the private and the public. Women were seen as being in the private – the home. Women were responsible for looking after the children and the home – for taking care of and nurturing at home away from the public. The public sphere was seen as the space of men – the space where men would go to study, to work, to debate and interact with others on an intellectual level. Feminist theology has therefore captured the slogan, "the personal is political". According to Ackermann (1993:24 - 25) this slogan was decided on as it challenges the belief that the private and public arenas are separate universes. It is therefore important to challenge the separate "worlds" women and men live in, but also important to learn from history and challenge the past. "...The wider enterprise must look back as well as forwards, precisely because it concerns traditions we love as well as criticise. As with the writings of the prophets, criticising the ills of the present is a sign of hope for the future" (Soskice 2003:9). Women are, therefore, challenged to continue to question the status quo and "refuse to be satisfied with anything less than what is totally satisfying – not what should satisfy, but what in fact *do*es" (Harry Williams in Walter 2003:13).

According to Ackermann (1993:31) the development of theology is a process and therefore "feminist theology is not a closed endeavour". Different themes have been developed as women identified different issues in their experience of faith, God and the church. Njoroge (1997:78) reminds us that "our differences have been used to divide, silence, oppress, marginalise, and even to kill. Worse still, this has sometimes been done in the name of our faith and scriptures. Failure to take our differences seriously and constructively can lead us to assume that we are simply a mass of people with everything in common". Ackermann (1993:19) agrees that women are not one group, but are separated by our race, our class and our economic status. One therefore needs to be careful not to simply focus on the universality of feminism, as women have different experiences as they have different contexts. Women in

the church and in our experiences of faith and God come from different contexts and there needs to be sensitivity about this fact. As highlighted, feminist theology can offer new insights for the church. However, women are diverse and come from different contexts and therefore feminist theology is also diverse. Women from Africa would find different insights to add to the discourse, as their context is different from American women for example.

African women's theology is one of the contemporary theologies which are constructed. Oduyoye (2001:16) explains that "African women's theological reflections intertwine theology, ethics and spirituality. It therefore does not stop at theory but moves to commitment, advocacy and transforming praxis." Women in Africa's theologies therefore include more dimensions of life than other contexts and parts of the world. "It is imperative that we affirm the plurality in the cultural and theological interpretations of our experiences as people living in the borderlines of religious, cultural, racial and social plurality" Kanyoro (2002:75), emphasises when thinking about women in Africa. "From the periphery, the women's social standing informs (their) interpretation of the world and the words" (Kanyoro 2002:75). African women's theology had been developed mostly through the Circle of Concerned African Theologians.

3.2.2 African Women's Theologies

3.2.2.1 The Circle for Concerned African Theologians

> African women theologians have been mobilising to make known to their Southern African black and African theologians that the issues of women have been marginalised. Women have spoken out that they form the majority of the oppressed people. They experience colonialism, apartheid and the many atrocities unique to Southern Africa differently because their oppression is coupled with denial of justice on the basis of gender (Phiri 2004:17).

Phiri refers here to women from Southern Africa. However, African women theologians come from all over Africa and include many different cultures. Oduyoye (2001:16) explains that the women from Africa have been able to organise themselves and form the Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians. Specific themes and foci have been developed by the Circle. One such theme is that of HIV and AIDS as highlighted by Chitando (2009:89), "The creativity, commitment and competence that the Circle has shown in its engagement

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with the HIV epidemic must be applauded. This has catapulted African women's theologies from the margins to the centre of the field".

The Development of the Circle

The Circle was initiated by Professor Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye. Amoah (2006: xvii) describes Oduyoye as "a wise African woman theologian [who has] a deep commitment to the wholeness of life for all African women". Today Oduyoye is respected as the wise woman who called African women together for the first time and who continued to nurture the gathering of women theologians in order to reflect and write their stories and their understanding of God involved in their lives. Fiedler and Hofmeyr (2011:52) indeed note that Oduyoye was the first woman theologian from Africa who created a feminist theology from Africa. Oduyoye is the first-born of her parents in Ghana. Her father was a teacher who in his later life became a minister in the Methodist Church. Both her parents therefore played important roles in the Church as well as in the society, as that was expected of a clergyperson and family. Oduyoye eventually married a man from Nigeria, Modupe Oduyoye. "Thus, her life has unfolded within the context of a bicultural orientation", and her personal story would eventually be the source for theological reflection - "reflections on the limitations of culture in respect of the liberation of African women" (Fiedler and Hofmeyr 2011:41).

Fiedler and Hofmeyr (2011:40) describe the start of the Circle as a group of African women meeting at the offices of the World Council of Churches in August 1988. In Geneva, Mercy Amba Oduyoye met with these women to:

> Strategize the formation of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Most of these women were academics in the field of religion and culture. All of them also belonged to the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). The primary objective of the Circle was to investigate African women's theologies and to record and publish research in this regard
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> (Fiedler and Hofmeyr 2011: 40).

In 1989 the Circle of Concerned African Theologians was officially launched and Amoah (2006:xvii) describes the launch as Oduyoye creating a space for women theologians from Africa to reflect theologically. Different women from Africa give their own understanding of

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the Circle. Njoroge (2004:32) explains the thinking behind the launching of the Circle as follows:

> Despite being multi-faith, the Circle has a strong and sound biblical and theological basis that is embodied in the choice of the gospel story of Jairus's girl-child presumed dead who was called to get up or arise? *Talitha cum Yi* by Jesus. It is also important for women in the Circle that this story is intertwined with the story of the bleeding woman who touched Jesus for healing (Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:40-56). This pioneering small group of women who planned the launching of the Circle felt called to arise and to seek for healing from deep wounds of being submerged, silenced, overlooked, and devalued. The titles of the published proceedings of the launching of the Circle *Talitha Qumi, Talitha Cum! Theologies of African Women* and the first publication, *The Will to Arise* attest to the Circle's biblical commitment and ensure that posterity will not miss its *raison d'être.* For the launching of the Circle, Teresa Okure, Nigerian religious sister and New Testament theological educator and scholar, wrote the bible study on these two women and connected them to the African women theologians.[7]

Kanyoro (2002:89) remembers how sixty-nine women got together and started telling stories of women and writing the stories. She remembers that they decided to have an open circle – open to "any woman in Africa concerned about the well-being of and fullness of life for women in Africa" (Kanyoro 2002:89). The Circle became a space where women were nurtured and supported to develop as theologians of Africa. From this Circle many papers developed and African Women Theologians joined the discourse of theology and religious studies.

The Work of the Circle

When thinking about the work of the Circle, Monohan (2004:2) explains that listening to the Circle is not an action of doing nothing, of being passive, but rather the members of the Circle write to encourage and empower others to become active and to also participate. "Theology for them is meaningless unless it is lived" (Monohan 2004:2). The Circle can be used as a source for stories of women which can be discussed from different points of departure. Monohan (2004:2) highlights the fact that African women have stories about exploitation and colonialism, they have stories telling about poverty and illness and through all of these issues women are living lives of faith. The women of the Circle therefore work

towards helping women to have their voices heard and discerning God's involvement in their lives. Chitando (2009:70) agrees that the Circle can be used as a source and explains that "Circle activists come from diverse disciplines in theology and religious studies (being) united by the need for the transformation of society to enable (everybody) to enjoy abundant life. This multidisciplinary approach has enabled the Circle to have a broad perspective".

Although Oduyoye was formally the founder member of the Circle, groundwork was done by the World Council of Churches (WCC). Njoroge (2004) highlights that one of the ground-breaking moments had in fact been "the Consultation of Women Theological Students, July 24-30 1988, hosted by the women's department in the WCC as one occasion that laid the ground work for the creation of the Circle".

After Oduyoye retired from the WCC, the coordination of the Circle was taken over by Musimbi Kanyoro at the Circle's second Pan-African Conference in 1996.[61] The theme of the second Circle Conference was "Transforming power: Women in the household of God". Phiri (2003:6) notes that there was also a committee elected which represented different regions of Africa, and that the members of the committee would help to run the Circle in these different regions. Although there was development in the different regions, the Circle identified specific foci from the needs of the continent. With the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the Circle therefore also organised itself around the issues of HIV and AIDS.

The Circle's contribution to HIV and AIDS discourse

It is important to note that one of the turning points in the movement of women theologians in Africa was around the issue of HIV and Aids. The next Circle Conference, which was held in Addis Ababa in 2002, "was an emergency call for Circle members to respond to HIV [and] AIDS more systematically as the Circle – and together with the church of Africa" (Phiri 2003:6). The systematic way meant bringing the different effort of individuals together. The Circle agreed that it was "important to highlight the centrality of gender and HIV [and] AIDS" (Phiri 2003:8). Chitando (2009: 85) celebrates the contribution of the Circle "The Circle has prioritised research and publication on HIV and AIDS, as well as transforming the

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[61]After her retirement, Oduyoye was then instrumental in building the *Talitha Cumi* Centre, which became the home for the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture at Trinity Theological Seminary, Accra, Ghana. "The Centre hosts seminars on gender and theology on a variety of issues for people in Ghana and, once every two years, it hosts an international seminar for Circle members and their partners" (Njoroge 2004:32).

curricula of theology and religious studies to reflect the reality of the epidemic. Between 2003 and 2006, the Circle had published five edited books on theology and HIV and AIDS". Chitando (2009:86) comments that "These books reaffirm the Circle's commitment to research, publication and curriculum transformation in the era of HIV and AIDS".

The Development of the Cape Town Chapter

Although I was only introduced to the Circle in 2014, the Cape Town Chapter of the Circle has been meeting for many years. Phiri (2004:19) reminds, "Despite the failure to establish a South African National Circle, the Cape Town Chapter of the Circle was born in 1991 at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, coordinated by Sr Arine Matsotso and Isabel Phiri. Denise Ackermann was also a founding member. "I have been involved since 1991 in the Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians. The Circle has one abiding principle: It is constituted in order to help women in Africa write theology and get it published" (Klein 2004:50). From the outset, it was felt that the Circle should be involved in the community by having meetings in members' homes. As the Circle becomes an authority of theology in Africa, students studying theology in Africa need to be introduced to this rich resource. The researcher was fortunate to have such an opportunity.

A Personal Experience of the Circle

More recently, the Cape Town Chapter organised a gathering at the University of Stellenbosch in May 2014 in order to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Circle. It was an experience of meeting women theologians from Africa, sitting in the Circle' and listening to stories with familiar themes. The experience was one of being part of community, "a community of African women theologians who come together to theologise from the experiences of African women in religion and culture" (Phiri 2003:5). It was a space where different women gathered – some have been theologians for many years and are well-known writers and teachers; others were PhD students who presented papers, while others were only starting the journey with the Circle. Somehow the Circle was able to hold all these different women together. This safe space is what Ackermann refers to when she describes the Circle as a space of support and care: "Only God's grace, the support of sympathetic male colleagues and my membership of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have kept me going" (Ackermann quoted in Klein 2004:49). "The Cape Town Circle is unique in that it has a mixed membership of white and black South Africans, Malawians, Swazis, and Sothos; African Traditionalist Christians, Jews and Muslims. It has existed for more than 12 years and is the longest surviving Circle in South Africa" (Phiri 2004:19). The Circle has

thus developed into one of the main resources of the diverse disciplines of theology in Africa which challenge theological reflection.

In summary

Monohan (2004:8) explains that it is the inclusiveness of the Circle which makes the Circle's practice of theology particularly holistic. The work done through the Circle has challenged theological reflection on the role of women in the church and in society.

Dube (2001:11) summarises the Circle's Transformative Acts as follows:

- For the empowerment of women and the recognition of human dignity. It "confronts all the factors that deny African women and others on the continent their human rights and dignity"
- It seeks to keep the interconnectedness of life. "Life as a continuous flowing force must continuously be nurtured by all and at all times"
- It emphasises the African context as a specific context. "African women are also part of the life force of creation"
- Power is shared by all in the Circle. "It seeks to ensure that power flows from all and to all"
- It is about liberation and therefore stands within liberation theology. "It seeks to clear a space for transformation"

Through the work of the Circle, women in Africa have been able to organise themselves and develop African women's theology.

3.2.2.2 The Theology of African Women

Oduyoye (2001:16) explains that the Circle has been used to formalise a description of African women's theology. The different features of the theology of African women were put together by Phiri and Nadar (2006). Haddad (2013:13) refers to what Phiri and Nadar identify as African Women's Theology:

- There is a focus on cultural hermeneutics
- There is a focus on narrative theology - story telling
- The Bible is a central source of theologising
- There is a focus on social advocacy
- It is communal theology - it involves *doing* theology in community
- There is an intersection of race and class
- It has a multi-disciplinary and multi-faith nature

Nadar adds two more features of Circle Theology to the above namely:

- That it stands within the liberation theology trajectory and is suspicious

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of the patriarchal and imperial nature of the Christian tradition

- That there is a focus on the specificity of experience - localities and subjectivities

This formalised description is therefore used as starting point in exploring what is meant by African women's theology. In order to get a clear understanding of African women's theology, each of the above-mentioned features need to be unpacked and explained. As a women's theology, the point of departure of African women's theology is women's experiences. The description of African women's theology starts with the narrating of women's stories in order to analyse it. Thereafter there is reflection on the experiences identified in the stories. The reflection is from the perspective of the Christian faith. "From this perspective they identify what enhances, transforms or promotes in such a way as to build community and make for life-giving and life-enhancing relationships. Women do theology to undergird and nourish spirituality for life" (Oduyoye 2001:16). However, before each of the features is unpacked, the relationship of African women's theology with other theologies, especially feminist theology, liberation theology and African theology needs to be explained. Njoroge (1997:77) reminds us that women from Africa had, through their reflections on their lives in Africa, started to make their voices heard and through their reflections showed that the experiences of women from Africa[62] were different from other women – the feminist theology coming from women from Africa was not the same as other parts of the world.

African women's theology and Feminist theology

If feminist theologians from Africa were different, the issue of using a label to describe women theologians from Africa needed to be discussed. However, Phiri (2004:16) adds that it is important to remember that the women theologians from Africa come from different contexts: "there is diversity of women's experiences due to differences in race, culture, politics, economy and religion". Therefore, not all women will have the same understanding. Phiri and Nadar (2006:4) highlight the fact that it is important to "critically think through the issues surrounding the way in which (women from Africa) name (themselves)". They challenge women to think about the label we use to describe ourselves: "Although many of us were trained in the tools of Western theologies, we have yet to systematically and

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[62] It is important to highlight however, that women from Africa may be recognised as women all from the same continent, but from different countries and different contexts (even differing cultural contexts) and that therefore the theologies of women from Africa should be recognised as diverse. The diverse contexts of women from Africa has an influence on the various African women theologies.

theoretically interrogate their meaningfulness within our context as African women" (Phiri and Nadar 2006:4).

As a member of the Circle, Ackermann prefers to call herself a feminist. "Despite these varied reactions and reservations, I persist in calling myself a feminist. I know of no other term that describes so well the total and active commitment to the infinite value of women's lives in every sphere of life" (Ackermann 2003: 32). Kanyoro (2001:29) refrains from using the term. "Although not named feminist theology, African women's theology foremost values the humanity of women as those also created in the image of God...It requires taking the African worldview into account in the analysis" (Kanyoro 2001:29). Although the women from Africa realise that there is a need to be in conversation with other feminist theologians, "some are still weary of the cultural imperialism that might be present in some of these discourses" (Phiri and Nadar 2006:5). Phiri and Nadar (2006:5) clearly verbalise the difference between feminist theologians and African women theologians by explaining that according to them, those using the label 'feminist' seem to neglect looking at race and class; they also do not want to use the label 'womanist' as they argue that the experiences of African-American women are not the same as African women. Kanyoro (2002:92) highlights the important network which feminist theologians offer: "to choose feminist theology as our method of study is to join a journey where we have solidarity with other women rather than keeping ourselves in a desert of risks and loneliness". It seems that the women theologians from Africa are aware of the positive connections being part of feminism and linking up with liberation theologies brings. They also acknowledge the fact that women theology from Africa springs from feminist theology, however they are critical of what feminist theology focuses on and the fact that the African context is different from where feminist theology originated. However, both feminist theology and African theology have developed from liberation theology.

African women's theology and Liberation theology

African women's theology, as a feminist theology, has liberation theology as its root. "African women's theologies belong to a wider family of feminist theology, which is further categorised as liberation theology. Both theologies are different varieties of Christian theology, which acquired their names on the basis of context and approach" (Phiri2004:16). "Liberation theology has its roots in Latin America" (Ackermann 2003:32). Ackermann explains that liberation theology has developed from different contexts and in different countries – in South Africa black theology is another liberation theology which developed

during the apartheid years. Liberation theology is therefore plural. "Liberation theologies are done from the standpoint of those who are victims: the poor, the oppressed, and the needy" (Ackermann 2003:33). Ackermann explains further that liberation theology has "become rooted in different places, is more communal, more prophetic and more interested in social action" (Ackermann 2003:33).

Through liberation theology, African women's theology also has a close link with African theology – also a liberation theology. Both African women's theology and African theology start from the experience of the people – African theology from the experience of being African and African women's theology from the experience of being women in Africa.

African women's theology and African theology

Chitando (2009:71) argues that women had at first been on the periphery but there has been movement of women away from the periphery towards inclusion, enriching the understanding of contemporary development in African theology. "If one wants to be aware of the contemporary developments in African theology, one has to be familiar with the writings of African women theologians … they now *define* African theology" (Chitando 2009:71). Kanyoro (2001:167) explains:

> African theologians of the last three decades, in reaction to the colonial mentality of the Church in its interpretation of Christianity to Africans, posted a theology of inculturation, various aspects of which are presented by Maimela (1994), Mugambi (1990), Parratt (1995) and Pobee (1979). Inculturation theology attempts to 'Africanize' in the sense of affirming African culture and positioning it as the basis for developing African liberation theology. The dominant participants in the theory of inculturation – whether they are novelists, politicians or theologians - were men, and were indeed perceived to be speaking for all African people.

Not only were men leading discussion in African theology, but they were also the only leaders at churches. Chitando explains further that earlier "male theologians have enjoyed the privilege of leading churches, theological institutions and other church-related institutions, African women theologians have operated 'from the margins'; one could maintain that in many countries there was a transfer of power from European males to African males in departments of religious studies" (Chitando 2009:69). African theology has also developed as a liberation theology.

"To a large extent, Africans experienced the Gospel as a tool of colonialism, racism, sexism, classism and exclusivism. This forms the background of the emergence of African liberation theologies as protest theologies" (Phiri 2004:16). African theologies focus on liberation from colonialism, racism, sexism, classism and exclusivism, and African women's theology includes culture in its discourse.

Culture

Kanyoro (2001:36) reminds us that "in the African indigenous thought system, culture and religion are not distinct from each other". In Africa, Kanyoro (2001:36) teaches that all areas of life are part of culture and religion. There is therefore no part of a person's life in Africa where culture and religion do not play a role. "It is therefore a great threat to community security to be critical of culture, for there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of these communities are nurtured" (Kanyoro 2001:37). In addressing the issue of community and being critical of culture Kanyoro raises the dilemma of women, who have been the custodians of cultural practices as they work at keeping communities together. "Harmful traditional practices are passed on as 'cultural values' and therefore are not discussed, challenged or changed" – these practices include the stigmatization of single women, of barren women, of widows and female mutilation for example (Kanyoro 2001:159). She highlights the fact that being critical of culture is indeed complex, but also encourages women in Africa to continue conversations. Women do not agree on cultural practices. Some of the women understand the cultural practices like paying *lobola* (giving a bride price) or polygamy as being at the core of African culture and therefore part of our identity as being African. There are however also other women who find these practices oppressive. "These dilemmas continue to divide us but the diversity of opinion will never again silence the women of Africa" (Kanyoro 2001:39). The trained women theologians, once they become aware of the challenges of culture and religion and make connections between what happens at their homes and in churches, and start suggesting change to bring about justice, they have conversations with other women. These conversations are very important, as "...in Africa it does not matter how much we write about our theology in books, the big test before us is whether we can bring change into our societies" (Kanyoro 2001:160). It is therefore important for women theologians in Africa to create safe spaces for women to speak about their challenges within culture. Kanyoro (2001:163) emphasises that the task for women theologians from Africa is to find ways to "incorporate discussions on culture in our African communities so that women find it safe to

speak about issues that harm their well-being" – issues which prevent women from flourishing. However Kanyoro (2002:78) encourages that it is important for each person to find their own way to speak about God, find their own way of creating symbols, concepts and models which are relevant to their context in order to give expression to their understanding of their religion. It is within this search of "generating new symbols, concepts and models" that feminist cultural hermeneutics has developed. Kanyoro (2001:164) has "...been working from the framework of reading the Bible with African women's cultural eyes". Her theory is "that the culture of the reader in Africa has more influence on the way the Biblical text is understood and used in communities than the historical culture of the text" (Kanyoro 2001:165). She further states that "not knowing the nuances of the culture within which the Bible is read or preached has much wider-reaching repercussions to the exegesis of the text than is often acknowledged" (Kanyoro 2001:165).

Oduyoye (2001:18) highlights how culture, with its rituals, folktales, proverbs, maxims and myths, is important. "African culture is perceived to be the thread which strings the community beliefs and social set-up together". Culture plays an important role of unity - it connects people and links them into community. It is important to understand that there are different roles culture can play. "Culture is a double-edged sword. In some instances, culture is like the creed of the community identity. In other instances, culture is the main justification for difference, oppression and injustice – especially to those whom culture defines as 'the other'- the 'outsides'" (Kanyoro 2002:1). This is why Kanyoro (2002:19) introduces cultural hermeneutics[63] as "a prerequisite to African women's liberation theology". When women reflect on women of Africa as the custodians of culture, Kanyoro encourages empathy and understanding. Kanyoro (2001:40) reminds us that "even women's actions are deeply rooted in patriarchal socialization...". Therefore, "we African women theologians make the claim that inculturation is not sufficient unless the cultures we reclaim are analysed and are deemed worthy in terms of promoting justice and support for life and the dignity of women" (Kanyoro 2001:167). Story-telling is used to create the opportunity for women to tell their stories. Through the method of story-telling, culture is discussed and analysed and women get the opportunity to critically engage with culture.

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[63]The hermeneutics of culture is a methodology which has been developed to enable interaction with theology, Africa and culture. "The hermeneutics of culture takes into account the culture as it has been touched by colonialism. Women, therefore, undertake a critique of the colonial culture's effect on women's lives and an appreciation and evaluation of the resilient elements of those of indigenous African origin" (Kanyoro 2002:19).

Story-telling

Kanyoro (2001:168) encourages the use of story-telling, in order to examine the cultural conditioning of African women's thinking in order to discover the roots of their belief system. Story-telling is used in a theology of inculturation from a women's perspective, while drawing on the wisdom used by African and feminist theologies of liberation. The feminist methodology "challenges cultural socialization by rejecting the assumption that the roles of men and women have been fixed either by the Creator or culture" (Kanyoro 2001:45). "Both feminist and inculturation theologies are contextual. They are involved in the present state of the world and thus adapt a hermeneutic approach to the text. They base their power analysis on the people's own named experiences" (Kanyoro 2001:45).

Kanyoro (2002:23) reminds us, "...our stories are a basis for theology. Indeed, women globally are saying that theology should begin with our stories – what we feel in our society, how we feel about our children, our families, what enrages us, what makes us laugh, what our lives mean to the next neighbour and how we experience God in all of these". Kanyoro highlights the importance of story-telling as a way of sharing people's different experiences and thus doing liberation theology. "Stories help to make connections between faith and action because they make use of experience and reflection as the intervals of connection" (Kanyoro 2002:23). Through liberation theology, "theology is no longer only an intellectual exercise, but also the expression of the religious experience of God's people" (Kanyoro 2002:23). It is also important to be reminded that the stories "must be told collectively as corporate stories of a community of God's people moving forward in faith and hope" (Kanyoro 2002:24). Phiri, Govinden & Nadar (2002) explain the importance of story-telling and highlight five reasons why we need to tell stories: "(1) To complement African church history (2) To revise and retell our stories from women's perspectives (3) Telling our stories shifts women from being observers and victims into participants and actors in history (4) Telling the stories will be therapeutic and be a process of 'narrative therapy' so that healing and wholeness can come to African women (5) The importance of telling the stories is so that we can find ways forward – transforming our society to one that values the humanity of all people". Telling stories collectively includes stories of men as well. Phiri (2004: 21) reminds us that "African women's theologies include men in the vision and struggle for African liberation from all forms of oppression. A partnership and mutuality with men for the exclusion of all forms of violence against women is sought". The need for safe spaces for

women and men where it is safe to be vulnerable in order to interact with each other on issues of culture and community is thus understandable. These spaces need to be safe so both the personal as well as the communal experiences of people can be listened to and analysed. Africa is diverse and therefore the experiences of people – women and men - are also diverse.

Particularity and Universality

Africa is made up of many different countries and it is important to remember that the voices from African women are diverse– not all countries have the same cultures and the same expectations when it comes to culture. Oduyoye (2001:18) emphasises that "issues of particularity and universality are as critical to the understanding of Africa as they are to the understanding of all African sources. It is necessary to know what can be generalised for all Africa and what pertains to a single language or ethnic group". For example, when it comes to patriarchy and patriarchal ideologies Oduyoye warns "not all of Africa is patriarchal, but the hegemony of the patriarchal mindset strives to make it so, and women have to resist this, as monolithic structures tend to be oppressive..." (Oduyoye 2001:18).

One needs to be sensitive to the diversities – to the similarities and differences as Oduyoye highlights above. African women's theology is therefore 'society sensitive' as described by Oduyoye (2001:17) - it does not use hierarchies but rather focuses on relations. "There is a marked emphasis on relations because African culture is very community-oriented and therefore requires all to be sensitive not only to the needs of others, but also to the well-being of the community as a whole" (Oduyoye 2001:17). Although African culture is community orientated, the majority of families and households are hierarchically organised and follow the "rule of the fathers" which is mostly patriarchal. Therefore when looking at communities and culture, it is mostly through the glasses of patriarchy – from men's view, men as the norm. The use and abuse of power runs through all of the features of African women's theology explored above. Through the discussion, the features and themes of African women were re-shuffled and African women's theology is summarised as:

- Valuing women's full humanity – women's experience
- Culture – Hermeneutics of Culture
- Story-telling[64]
- Context - Particularity and Universality

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[64] In identifying the themes and issues, the different women theologians discussed earlier will be employed, e.g. Young when looking at oppression, Oduyoye when looking at story-telling and Kanyoro when looking at culture.

- Patriarchy, Power and Oppression

3.3 Summary

The process of creating an African Woman's Theological Lens is therefore a conglomerate of all the different features and themes identified by the Circle and individual women. Firstly the Circle's Transformative Acts identified by Dube, secondly the features of African women's theologies as formalised by Phiri and Nadar, and thirdly the re-shuffled themes of the researcher will be used.

As mentioned earlier the Circle's Transformative Acts are:

- The empowerment of women and the recognition of human dignity
- It seeks to keep the interconnectedness of life
- It emphasises the African context as a specific context
- Power is shared by all in the Circle
- It is about liberation and seeks to clear a space for transformation

Furthermore features of African women's theology put together by Phiri and Nadar (2006) and referred to by Haddad (2013:13):

- There is a focus on cultural hermeneutics
- There is a focus on narrative theology - story telling
- The Bible is a central source of theologising
- There is a focus on social advocacy
- It is communal theology - it involves *doing* theology in community
- There is an intersection of race and class
- It has a multi-disciplinary and multi-faith nature

Nadar adds two more features of Circle Theology to the above namely:

- That it stands within the liberation theology trajectory and is suspicious of the patriarchal and imperial nature of the Christian tradition
- That there is a focus on the specificity of experience - localities and subjectivities

An African woman's theological lens is therefore a combination of the abovementioned three groups of themes and takes the following into consideration:

- Cultural hermeneutics

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- Valuing women's experiences through story-telling.

- The African context - Particularity and Universality

- Communal sharing of power

- Liberation with suspicion of patriarchy

However, the researcher comes from South Africa and is specifically from the cultural group called Coloureds. This situatedness causes the researcher to also include oppression as part of the lens due to the history of South Africa. South Africa has a legacy of apartheid – a history of oppression. Serena Jones uses the 'Five Faces of Oppression' of Iris Young when addressing oppression. Oppression, with specific reference to the 'Five Faces of Oppression' therefore needs to be added to the theological lens. Young uses 'the five faces of oppression' when looking at oppression, to emphasise the complexity of oppression. It is not only one group openly oppressing another by overtly exercising power over the other. Oppression is also subtle and is part of our structures and our everyday life as Young (2009:5) explains:

> In dominant political discourse it is not legitimate to use the term *oppression* to describe our society, because oppression is the evil perpetrated by the Others. In its new usage oppression designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society.

The Five Faces of Oppression can be summarised as:

- Exploitation

  Once the value attributed to labour is lessened by other than the people offering the labour, people are oppressed through exploitation. This change in value happens at different levels of the society – the private versus the public sphere, educated versus uneducated, professional versus unprofessional, material versus emotional. The list continues.

- Marginalisation

  People are oppressed through marginalisation when they are side-lined and ignored by another group because they are different. Examples are, the elderly because they are slower and not as agile as before, or women with children because they have the responsibility of taking care of their children, or the cleaner of the church because she cannot speak English fluently.

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- Powerlessness

The powerless experience oppression due to the fact that they no longer experience the inner authority to be confident and speak and do for themselves. Even though there are opportunities to access their authority, they are not capable, due to earlier oppression. So, when decisions are made for them, they silently agree. For example, an educated well-versed woman is unable to communicate her different point of view in a meeting due to her experience of patriarchy in the company.

- Cultural Imperialism

When the norms, values and way of life of one group is used as a lens through which all other groups are looked at. The dominant group's way of life is used as the standard against which all other things are measured, such as when a professional assumes that the woman who makes tea and cleans in their building had not received an education and cannot think critically.

- Violence

Violence as oppression is of course when physical or sexual violence is used to manipulate and use people as commodities. However, it is also much more and includes the language we use to refer to people different from us. Each of the four faces of oppression discussed above could be violent – any action will be experienced as violent when aggression is added.

In adding the 'Five Faces of Oppression' to the African woman's theological lens, one is able to emphasise the presence of oppression within an African woman's theology:

- Cultural hermeneutics

Kanyoro (2001:164) has "...been working from the framework of reading the Bible with African women's cultural eyes. Her theory is "that the culture of the reader in Africa has more influence on the way the Biblical text is understood and used in communities than the historical culture of the text" (Kanyoro 2001:165). It is therefore important that we who live in Africa be reminded of the importance of culture. When looking at cultural practices, through the lens of oppression, it is evident that oppression through exploitation is present as women are treated as the nurturers and caregivers, even working in the gardens in order to provide food for the family. However this labour is unpaid and has no monetary value. Although women might be aware of these discrepancies, the African understanding of

living in community and the fact that women have been the custodians of culture, makes it difficult to for women to address these challenges culture has. "It is therefore a great threat to community security to be critical of culture, for there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of these communities are nurtured" (Kanyoro 2001:37). "Harmful traditional practices are passed on as 'cultural values' and therefore are not discussed, challenged or changed" – these practices include the stigmatization of single women, of barren women, of widows, and female mutilation for example (Kanyoro 2001:159). These harmful practices, highlighted by Kanyoro, can be interpreted as oppression through marginalisation.

- Valuing women's experiences through story-telling.

The telling of stories, dating back to the oral tradition, is the way instruction in African communities continues to happen today. Kanyoro (2001:168) encourages the use of story-telling, in order to examine the cultural conditioning of African women's thinking in order to discover the roots of their belief system. Women are encouraged to tell their stories and discover for themselves the impact culture has on their lives. Kanyoro (2002:23) reminds us that "...our stories are a basis for theology. However, if women feel powerless due to years of oppression through cultural practices, they will find it difficult to have a voice and tell their stories".

- The African context - Particularity and Universality

Oduyoye (2001:18) emphasises that "issues of particularity and universality are as critical to the understanding of Africa as they are to the understanding of all African sources. It is necessary to know what can be generalised for all Africa and what pertains to a single language or ethnic group". However, even when we are aware of the danger of universality, oppression happens unconsciously as we decide who the main voices are speaking for Africa as universal. Those voices which are marginal, face the possibility of experiencing oppression.

- Communal sharing of power

Oduyoye (2001:17) reminds us, "There is a marked emphasis on relations because African culture is very community-oriented and therefore requires all to be sensitive not only to the needs of others, but also to the well-being of the community as a whole". This emphasis on community is one of the features of African women's theology which is at the core, therefore the name "Circle of Concerned African

Women Theologians". However, culture seems to be higher on the list of priorities than a sense of the well-being of the community, because single women are oppressed for example and cultural norms are observed for widows. These cultural norms cause oppression through marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence, which is not working towards "the well-being of the community as a whole".

- Liberation with suspicion of patriarchy

Oduyoye (2001:16) emphasise the flourishing element of African women's theology. "From this perspective they identify what enhances, transforms or promotes in such a way as to build community and make for life-giving and life-enhancing relationships. Women do theology to undergird and nourish spirituality for life". African women's theology is about liberation from oppression, from patriarchy which has entered all facets of life – it is about creating communities which are life-giving and where people can flourish.

3.4   Methodological point of departure

In order to situate this thesis within feminist theology, an extensive engagement in theory was embarked on starting with a general introduction into feminist theory. This was developed into reading of the work of feminist theologians in order to develop an understanding of feminist theology, which eventually led to reading and understanding African women's theology. A theoretical background was necessary in order to condense a lens with which the CABSA manual can be explored. Within African women's theology, the work of Denise Ackermann – a South African - is found. A feminist theology of praxis was developed by Denise Ackermann[65] and will be used as a methodological point of departure. Before explaining what is understood by a feminist theology of praxis, the life and contributions of Ackermann will first be explored.

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[65] Ackermann was decided on because of her feminist methodology. She is also a member of the Anglican Church, as the researcher herself. Ackermann is also South African and was an activist against *apartheid*.

3.4.1. Denise Ackermann

Phiri (2003:5) quotes Oduyoye: "African women were defined as women who belong to diverse classes, races, cultures, nationalities and religions found on the African continent". Although Africa is one continent, it has many differences not only between countries, but also within countries, as one can find a diversity of cultures, nationalities, religions and class. As mentioned earlier, Njoroge (1997:77) emphasised that the Circle embraced the diversity of Africa. "By taking seriously the religious and cultural plurality in Africa, it was decided that the Circle will embrace African women from all religions resident in Africa —provided their concern and commitment was to participate in 'doing' theology" (Njoroger 1997:77). As a Concerned African Theologian, Denise Ackermann therefore embraces the description of African women's theology and is embraced as a loyal member of the Circle.

Denise Ackermann shares her personal story through letter writing[66]. Marais (2014: 713) explains that theological letter writing is a "theological mode which exemplifies poesis in Ackermann's work." Letter writing," Marais (2014:713) explains in Ackermann's words, is "a vehicle to keep me from academic excesses," from the theological jargon of academic theology (2003: xii)". This choice of mode highlights one aspect of Ackermann's continuous struggle to keep theory and praxis linked. Through her theological letters, Ackermann shares information about her ancestors (as mentioned above) and explains her dual medium upbringing – talking English to her mother and Afrikaans to her father. The fact that she lived on three continents of the world, she explains, was due to her father becoming a diplomat. She lived in South Africa for the first eleven years of her life, then they moved to Sweden for two years and later moved to Argentina for three years. She spent her university years at the University of Stellenbosch. She writes about her life growing up in a patriarchal family, about her experiences of interaction with the marginalised in different contexts. She explains her internal struggles during the years of *Apartheid* and her search for her identity. Klein (2004:43) explains in the words of Ackermann:

> "1 am half Afrikaner. Members of my family supported apartheid policies. I
> know something of the cost of standing up against one's own people while
> also being accountable to those people in the white community who felt like I

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[66] See her book "After the Locusts" published in 2003

did. As a member of the perpetrating group, I also had to be accountable to those communities who suffered. It was both simple and fraught. I have always felt that I have to write from out of my own context".

Ackermann has strong links with Europe through her ancestors, some of whom were French Huguenots and some Dutch settlers (Ackermann 2003:3). However, she would accept the term 'African' rather than European. "We whites, we cannot allow ourselves to be excluded by a radically determined view of what it means to be African. I also reject the description 'European'. When I am in Europe, I feel a foreigner. I am not European. When I come home, I know that this is where I belong" (Ackermann 2003:16). Ackermann (2005:386) describes her writing:

> I write as a Christian feminist practical theologian. This basically means two things: First, I understand feminist practical theology, or what I prefer to call feminist theology of praxis as critical Christian theology that is alert to the challenges faced by women and all marginalized people in their traditions and religious institutions. Second, such theology is concerned with the tension between theory and praxis, between what we believe and what we do about what we believe.

The theological letters contain both Ackermann's theological insights and thoughts and personal information in a style of writing which is accessible to all educated people − theologians as well as lay people. Marais (2014: 714) explains, "The art of letter writing follows a certain theological method, which 'draws from experience that is submitted to critical scrutiny and tested within the social and political milieu in which it is shaped' (2003:xv)". Ackermann indicates through the narrative on her life, that she had lived and worked in South Africa during *apartheid* and experienced the dawn of the democratic South Africa. Ackermann explains her choice to become a theologian and not an ordained person in the church and writes about her struggles with her faith and the church. She also ventures into a discussion on her choice of being a feminist and her understanding of God. By using the label "feminist", Ackermann identifies with a specific group of theologians. Ackermann acknowledges earlier feminist theologians through Rosemary Radford Ruether:

> I am indebted to Ruether for her relentless pushing of boundaries. Perhaps more than any other feminist theologian… (she) has enabled those who have

come after her to rechart the journey towards a feminist religious revolution that will heal the split between mind and body, society and nature, and between males and females Ackermann (2008:45).

Ackermann is not only a feminist theologian, but she is also a practical theologian. "Practical theology is viewed as a theological operational communicative science in which reflection on the theory/praxis dialectic is central". (Ackermann 1996:35) Reflection challenges the practical theologian to look at the relation between theory and praxis. As a feminist Ackermann challenges the traditional method of doing practical theology and describes the task of the feminist practical theologian:

> The task for feminist practical theologians appears formidable: first, to analyse, critique and reconstruct practical theological discourse; second, to contribute to the search for new approaches to theological scholarship and third, to focus on feminist reconstructions of the different operational fields of practical theology. The goal is to make the tools of this field of theological study accessible to the needs of our context (Ackermann 1996:39-40).

As a South African, Ackermann, the feminist practical theologian, understands the South Africa context and writes from a South African perspective - thus my choice to use her feminist theology of praxis as methodology. Ackermann (1996:37) explains:

> Generally (feminist theologians) prefer to orient their theologies towards particular issues which are rooted in experience and illuminated by systemic analysis. This approach does not run the risk of reproducing traditional frameworks which essentially ask the same old questions.

3.4.2 A Feminist Theology of Praxis

The focus on action and the practices of people makes Ackermann a theologian of praxis. Ackermann describes herself as a "bottom-up thinker" (Ackermann 2003:28). "...My concern about what we do in life of faith makes me what is called a practical theologian" (Ackermann 2003:27). "I cannot separate theory from praxis. For me, what I believe and what I do about what I believe, are inseparable. In my theology, what I believe and what I theorise about has to find feet in praxis" (Klein 2004:51).

"A feminist theology of praxis is interested in women's diverse circumstances, in what we do for the liberating and healing of ourselves and our communities and what we think about our circumstances and our actions in terms of our faith" (Ackermann 2003:36). Ackermann explains the feminist theology of praxis as seeking to reflect on praxis as well as seeking to be a praxis which could be used to be a "form of praxis" which would shape Christian activity. The praxis of Ackermann emphasises that "individuals live in particular social and historical settings with many layers" (Ackermann 2003:34), and therefore there is a need for **reflection.** "It is always alert to the experience and place of women in its reflection" (Ackermann 2006:226). Experience is emphasised. "Our thinking and acting are born of experience. Experiences of pain and of joy shape our views and our values, past and present. Experience is never 'pure' or unmediated; it is always impinged on by the communities and the circumstances in which we live. This I learnt growing up white in South Africa" (Ackermann 2003:40).

Ackermann (2006:226) reminds further that "Praxis as a starting point emphasises the importance of everyday life and human bodiliness, as well as holistic anthropology, in order to overcome the dualisms of private-public (individual-community), and body-soul (matter-spirit)".

"A feminist theology of praxis is interested in the praxis of **listening**". Ackermann (2006:232) explains listening:

> Such listening is deliberately empathetic...It is participative, since the listener may enter the conversation, allowing both the story being told and her (or his) own story to interact and in this process to change. The praxis of listening is linked to an ethic of listening that respects confidentiality, respect anonymity, respects cultural differences, and, when given permission, uses narratives in the interest of resistance to stigma and discrimination. Lastly, listening requires discernment that is in essence sensitive to the context, to the place and plight of the narrator, and that is aware of other narratives, some of which may paint very different pictures.

"A feminist theology of praxis **embraces relationship** as a central concept. It begins with a critique of the historical forms in which relationship has been realized. Such critique focuses

on the inequality of power and the unfair patterns of economic sharing that have dogged sexual relations, parental responsibilities and political systems" (Ackermann 2006:234). In writing about relationships Ackermann comments, "personhood comes out of loving relationships with others and that it grows and is nurtured because it is summoned into such loving relationships. We are being always in the process of becoming more ourselves through our relationships with others" (Ackermann 2006:234).

Furthermore "feminist theology of praxis analyses and reflects critically on the practices of people in relation to the values of God's reign on earth. It asks: "How do questions of truth relate to actions?". Or put differently: "How compassionate, caring and just are our actions?" (Ackermann 2005:387). The context in which Ackermann lived as a young person in South Africa had a huge impact on her development of a feminist theology of praxis which questions people's actions. Klein (2004:42-43) quotes Ackermann during an interview, "just as some whites joined the struggle for liberation from racist oppression, men must join women in the struggle against discrimination, abuse and violation. It is about their humanity as much as it is about ours". Ackermann joined the Black Sash and "the Black Sash had a clear goal: to do justice, to affirm human rights" (Klein 2004:43). Her experience has challenged Ackermann to reflect and then to act. Ackermann explains to Klein, "the Black Sash's theories on human rights, that is their theological anthropology, informed their acts. Their actions were shaped by the needs they saw and their resolve to deal with them...It was theory to praxis and praxis to theory, all the time" (Klein 2004:52).

"Not all theologians may agree with me that theology speaks about our beliefs and our actions" (Ackermann 2003:27). For Ackermann theology is about action as well. "Our actions are concrete manifestations of who we are and what we believe" (Ackermann 2005:386).

"We live in a very patriarchal society in South Africa, despite our very enlightened constitution… The demands for liberation in its broadest and its deepest sense are so pertinent, in such crunching ways, everyday" (Klein 2004:51). Patriarchy is one of the biggest reasons for discrimination. "The history and prevalence of patriarchal attitudes embedded in Christianity has been exhaustively documented by feminist theologians" (Ackermann 2007:16). Furthermore, "it is clear that the Christian tradition has not interpreted the image of God in a way which has accorded woman her full humanity...We can either

discard its authority altogether... or we can apply a feminist hermeneutic in such a way that justice is done to oppressed women" (Ackermann 2007:19). Njoroge (1997:82) emphasises that "the greatest challenge African women face is that of unlearning internalised sexist practices, attitudes, beliefs and patterns. We must set out to create new models of how women and men relate in a non-sexist society".

It is therefore important to critically look at language used. Ackermann (2013:9) repeats, "In my kind of language, theological theory and theological praxis come together". "The role of language, symbol and metaphor are of prime importance in the doing of feminist theology" (Ackermann 1993:19). In a letter to Dirkie Smit, Ackermann (2013:6) describes herself as always being "interested in communicative praxis with emancipatory intent". The 'communicative praxis' refers to "communicative praxis in the sense of Jürgen Habermas, the German Philosopher" (Ackermann 2013:6).

The 'communicative praxis' "draw readers into a conversation. They work because they are contextually relevant while being critical, and above all they engage readers on ethical grounds where faith encounters morality and where hope and freedom are ever before us" (Ackermann 2013:9). Ackermann (2013: 8) explains, "I share Habermas' concern that language contributes towards the formation of consciousness. Every worship service I attend is still peppered with sexist language and my God is only and always a male figure! Language is, after all, foundational for our communicative practices". Ackermann (2013:8) quotes Harrison:

> Language expresses intent and the means of communication we choose is done with a certain interest in mind. Language encodes our sense of how we are positioned in our basic relations to and with others who make up our social world. This means that language teaches us, below the level of consciousness and intentionality, our sense of power-in-relation… The potential of language, then, is either to expand human possibility or to function as a transmitter of subtle, and not so subtle, patterns of human oppression and domination (Harrison 1985:24).

"Feminist theologians will approach the text with a hermeneutic of suspicion which acknowledges the patriarchal content of scripture" (Ackermann 2007:16). Through the critical

reading of the text, the process "constitutes a reclaiming of our humanity and in this process we critique patriarchal, androcentric and sexist images and reconstruct a new vision of what it means to be a redeemed human being" (Ackermann 2007:13). This is important because: "Women experience patriarchy both consciously as an affront and unconsciously as a conditioning exercise in the religious exercise of Christian beliefs" (Ackermann 2007:16).

Faith is however not only a personal experience, but is also relational, which is an important theme in feminist liberation theology according to Ackermann (2007:20). "Active loving of self and neighbour is understood as the praxis of right relationship. Communal right relationship is the essence of justice-centred praxis. Such praxis is liberating and reflects the values of the reign of God" (Ackermann 2007:20). "Being-in-relation begins with the praxis of relationality with ourselves...Self-love expresses the acceptance of God's love" (Ackermann 2007:22). "If I cannot love myself, I cannot love God". Ackermann (2007:22) explains that "ultimately, relationality finds its source in our understanding of the God as *God in relation.* Scripture tells of the God who is in relation with creation and who has a specific relationship with humanity in history in the covenant with Israel. Embodied in this relationship is the idea of justice and righteousness, expressed as right-relation. My key for understanding *God-in-relation* is the person of Jesus Christ". In order to understand who Jesus was, we need to understand the ministry of Jesus. "Christ's ministry was not just sermons and teachings; it was a praxis of healing, a praxis of caring, a praxis of being with those who were marginalised, and ultimately a praxis of dying, because that was what was demanded of him" (Klein 2004:51).

The ministry of Jesus included 'doing'. Njoroge (1997:77) explains "the 'doing' of theology implies participation and exploration, emphasising the activity that produces theology. We 'do' theology by seeking to live out our faith in the contemporary world, applying our skills and God-given gifts and addressing the problems confronting individuals and communities". The reason for 'doing theology' Ackermann (2005:387) explores is "that all theology should be done in service of the fulfilment of God's reign on earth. The reign of God brings good news to people in terms of their life situations. It speaks of justice, love, peace and wholeness, of the flourishing of righteousness and *shalom"*.

A feminist theology of praxis "seeks to engage contextual situations with liberating and transformative praxis in order to encourage human flourishing, undergirded by the belief that

such theology is done in service of furthering God's reign on earth" (Ackermann 2006:227). Richard Osmer is also a practical theologian who starts by looking at the praxis.

Richard Osmer

A feminist theology of praxis of Ackermann has some similarities with the "four core tasks of practical theology" of Richard Osmer. Osmer argues that actions can be interpreted and therefore the congregational leader (the priest, minister or pastor) needs to be an interpretive guide who can analyse situations and actions. He offers the "four core tasks of practical theology" as an interpretive tool. The four core tasks[67] are:

- The descriptive-empirical task: What is going on?
- The interpretive task: Why is this going on?
- The normative task: What ought to be going on?
- The pragmatic task: How might we respond?

Although different descriptions are used for the tasks of the four core tasks of practical theology and the feminist theology of praxis, both theories focus on praxis and start there – what is going on? (Osmer) or what is the experience, the context or the situatedness of the people (Ackermann). Ackermann then moves to reflection on the experience, while Osmer asks, why is this going on? Ackermann then deconstructs the experience using scripture and feminist theory as a lens, while Osmer looks at what ought to be going on by using "theological concepts to interpret" (Osmer 2008:4). Then Osmer offers how we might respond to the task, context or situation while Ackermann would act and reconstruct the experience, text or situation by using the different insights gained. Both the theories' goal is flourishing of the congregation, women or the people. There is thus a connection between the theory of Osmer and Ackermann which could be explored further.

3.5   Conclusion

By using a feminist theology of praxis as methodology, the manual of CABSA will be analysed through a critical and self-reflective reading. A "different consciousness", in the words of Ackermann, will be used - critically analysing certain features of the manual with a hermeneutic of suspicion by using the African women's theological lens developed throughout this chapter.

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[67] See Osmer p4 for a summary of the core tasks of practical theology.

Using the Circle's transformative acts highlighted by Dube, the features of women theologians from Africa formulated by Phiri and Nadar and the Five Faces of Oppression of Young as resource, the main themes of an African women's theological lens are:

- Cultural hermeneutics
- Valuing women's experience through story-telling[68]
- The African Context - Particularity and Universality
- Communal sharing of power
- Liberation with suspicion of patriarchy

As these themes are identified and discussed the aim is to highlight gender. It is specifically to focus on the liberation and wellbeing – the flourishing - of women. Robson (2014:1) refers to Oduyoye, "...happiness and human flourishing pertains integrally to the humanisation of women and the fullness life". The African woman's theological lens will be used to analyse the CABSA manual and see whether it helps to bring "happiness and human flourishing" to women who attend the training and use the manual.

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[68] In identifying the themes, the different women theologians discussed earlier will be employed, e.g. Young when looking at oppression, Oduyoye when looking at story-telling and Kanyoro when looking at culture.

Chapter 4

Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the Facilitator's Manual (manual) of the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA) will be analysed by using an African woman's theological lens as tool. This tool was developed in the previous chapter by using the Circle's Transformative Acts identified by Dube, the features of African women's theologies as formalised by Phiri and Nadar, and the re-shuffled themes of the researcher. As the researcher is South African, oppression was also included as part of the lens due to the history of South Africa with its legacy of *Apartheid.* The 'Five Faces of Oppression' of Young and Jones was, therefore, added to the theological lens. As mentioned in chapter 3, an African woman's theological lens therefore includes the following:

- **Cultural hermeneutics**

  Kanyoro (2001:164) has "...been working from the framework of reading the Bible with African women's cultural eyes. Her theory is "that the culture of the reader in Africa has more influence on the way the Biblical text is understood and used in communities than the historical culture of the text" (Kanyoro 2001:165). It is, therefore, important that we who live in Africa be reminded of the importance of culture. When looking at cultural practices through the lens of oppression, it is evident that oppression through exploitation is present as women are treated as the nurturers and caregivers, even working in the gardens in order to provide food for the family. However this labour is unpaid and has no monetary value.

  Although women might be aware of these discrepancies, the African understanding of living in community and the fact that women have always been the custodians of culture, makes it difficult for women to address these cultural challenges. "It is therefore a great threat to community security to be critical of culture, for there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of these communities are nurtured" (Kanyoro 2001:37). "Harmful traditional practices are passed on as 'cultural values' and therefore are not discussed, challenged or changed" – these practices include the stigmatization of single women, of barren

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women of widows and female mutilation for example (Kanyoro 2001:159). These harmful practices highlighted by Kanyoro can be interpreted as oppression through marginalisation, oppression through powerlessness and oppression through violence.

- **Valuing women's experiences through story-telling.**

The telling of stories, dating back to the oral tradition, is the way instruction in many African communities continues to happen today. Kanyoro (2001:168) encourages the use of story-telling, in order to examine the cultural conditional of African women's thinking in order to discover the rooting of their belief system. Women are encouraged to tell their stories and discover for themselves the impact culture has on their lives. Kanyoro (2002:23) reminds us, "...our stories are a basis for theology. However, if women feel powerless due to years of oppression through cultural practices, they will find it difficult to have a voice and tell their stories.

- **The Particularity and Universality of the African context**

Oduyoye (2001:18) emphasises that "issues of particularity and universality are as critical to the understanding of Africa as they are to the understanding of all African sources. It is necessary to know what can be generalised for all Africa and what pertains to a single language or ethnic group". However, even when we are aware of the danger of universality, oppression happens unconsciously as we decide who the main voices are speaking for Africa as universal. Those voices which are marginal, face the possibility of experiencing oppression.

- **Communal sharing of power**

Oduyoye (2001:17) reminds us that: "There is a marked emphasis on relations because African culture is very community-oriented and therefore requires all to be sensitive not only to the needs of others, but also to the well-being of the community as a whole". This emphasis on community is one of the core features of African women's theology, therefore the name "Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians". However, culture seems to be higher on the list of priorities than a sense of the well-being of the community, because single women are oppressed for example and cultural norms are observed for widows. These cultural norms cause oppression through marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism

and violence which is not working towards "the well-being of the community as a whole".

- **Liberation with suspicion of patriarchy**

Oduyoye (2001:16) emphasises the flourishing element of African women's theology. "From this perspective they identify what enhances, transforms or promotes in such a way as to build community and make for life-giving and life-enhancing relationships. Women do theology to undergird and nourish spirituality for life". African women's theology is about liberation from oppression, from patriarchy which has entered all facets of life – it is about creating communities which are life-giving and where people can flourish.

These five features of an African woman's theology, identified above, will each be used when reading and analysing the manual. The analysis of the manual will not be done page by page as it is a bulky document consisting of 345 A4 pages. The process of analysis would rather be done by reading through the manual and highlighting themes in the manual by mostly focusing on one section of the manual at a time, while using Ackermann's the feminist theology of praxis as a methodological point of departure[69].

Ackermann, as a practical theologian, identifies a link between HIV and the feminist theology of praxis. "A feminist theology of praxis can tackle the question of stigma by embodying the ethical demand for theology that is praxis-oriented" (Ackermann 2006:239). Therefore the Facilitator's manual will be read critically with a hermeneutic of suspicion, identifying issues, reflecting and deconstructing, re-constructing and then offering suggestions to enhance the manual. Ackermann notes the emphasis of a feminist theology of praxis is "on action/ reflection" (Ackermann 1996:37-38). The process of reflection will be done by highlighting practices from the manual and bringing it into conversation with the features of an African woman's theology. Through this process, we will be 'doing' theology. Njoroge (1997:77) explains "the 'doing' of theology implies participation and exploration, emphasising the activity that produces theology". When Kanyoro (2002:1) speaks about theology, she also identifies a method of 'doing theology'. This is "the method of action-reflection out of which theological reflections arise..." This method is different from using "existing theological insights to present situations. This method invites communal theology."

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[69] See Chapter 1 for an explanation of the methodological point of departure.

Oduyoye (2001:16) adds that "African women's theological reflections intertwine theology, ethics and spirituality. It, therefore, does not stop at theory but moves to commitment, advocacy and transforming praxis." This praxis of action-reflection is what Ackermann also uses. Ackermann (1996:35) reminds us, therefore that: "Practical theology is viewed as a theological operational communicative science in which reflection on the theory/praxis dialectic is central". Reflection challenges the practical theologian to look at the relation between theory and praxis.[70]

4.2   Analysis of the Manual

The manual is a ring binder with 345 A4 pages. All the pages are neatly divided into different sections.[71] Each of the sections is divided by a different colour paper, which makes finding the different sections easy. The coloured paper (yellow paper) has a summary of the section, which gives the person using it, a synopsis of what can be found in the section. At the beginning of the manual, there is a cover page, a welcome letter, an agreement, content pages and then the rest of the manual. At first glance the manual looks like a document which was carefully and professionally created. It is through looking at the content, that the following was discovered.

Cultural hermeneutics

For women in Africa, it is not only gender, race and class which play a role in the way we as human beings are treated, but also the impact of cultural beliefs. Phiri and Nadar (2011:83) explain that "for African women, issues of women's oppression go together with racism, economic injustice and the practice of religious and cultural practices that can be injurious to African women". The influence of culture is what women in Africa add to the feminist discourse. Culture is the main justification for difference, oppression and injustice – especially to those whom culture defines as 'the other'- the 'outsiders'" (Kanyoro 2002:1). In reading the manual, sensitivity to the importance of culture, is what the researcher was first of all looking for.

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[70] In Chapter 5, the final chapter, there will be movement towards advocating for a transforming praxis with regards to the manual

[71] As explained in Chapter 2, the manual was developed over years since the 1990's when Revd Greyling developed ways of sharing the information and collected in information and methods of sharing the knowledge.

Within the 46 pages **culture** is mentioned as a factor in only one line. Mention is made between the difference of men and women, as the percentage of women living with HIV is referred to, however only half a page - page 2.1/6, is offered. Reference is made to women and girls being more vulnerable to HIV infection, but biological factors and gender inequality are the only reasons offered. Culture is mentioned in a sentence, but not expanded on. "The risk posed by this biological difference is compounded in cultures that limit women's knowledge about HIV, constrain their rights to decide when and with whom to have sexual relations, and their ability to negotiate safer sex" (Manual 2.1/6). Seeing that it is only a sentence, in a small section on women, it is easy to miss this important information. In the discussion on information on HIV and AIDS in section 2, the global face of HIV and AIDS is compared with that of Africa – "The HIV situation – **Global versus Africa**" (Manual 2.1/4). It is therefore important that factors which play a role in the differences should be highlighted like culture for example. The omission of an explanation of the impact of the factors identified and listed on page 2.1/5 is an important omission. Factors like poverty and culture have life changing implications for the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, when looking at the link between poverty and HIV and AIDS, Grundlingh (2009:241) comments:

> "… the close connection between the resultant poverty and disease gave rise to a whole range of diseases, known as "diseases of poverty." HIV and AIDS specifically was called the "poor man's plague". Consequently, people whose immune systems were already compromised, were more likely to become infected. Clearly this led to a vicious circle of spiraling infection exacerbating the spread of HIV and AIDS".

The silence on the impact of the factors (Manual 2.1/5) implies that the playing fields in these different contexts (Africa and the rest of the world) are level. "In the rest of the world, except South and South-East Asia, HIV does not pose the same crisis we currently experience in sub-Saharan and especially in Southern Africa" (Manual 2.1/4). The Sub-Saharan region is flagged as an area in the world where HIV is experienced as a crisis. The first reason identified is the fact that "the virus originated in Africa" and therefore has been present in Africa longer than anywhere else (Manual 2.1/5).

The impact of culture needs to be unpacked. As Kanyoro (2001:36) reminds us, in Africa, all areas of life are part of culture and religion. There is therefore no part of a person's life in Africa where culture and religion do not play a role. Reference is made to the fact that more women than men are infected and "in Sub-Sahara Africa women account for more than 60% of infections" (Manual 2.1/6) Furthermore reference is made to the fact that "women and girls continue to be most vulnerable to HIV infection due to social inequity, gender-based violence and harmful traditions" (Manual 2.1/6) It is however important to interrogate these differences in statistics between men and women and girls by investigating the role culture plays. Women are oppressed due to cultural practices and are more vulnerable to the HIV virus not only because of biological factors:

> Traditional African culture regards women as inferior to men and relegates them to the private sphere of life. Both in private and in public life, the traditional decision-makers are men. Women experience great difficulty in negotiating sexual practices in their relationships. Because of their subordinate cultural status, it is accepted that women's role is to please men sexually, and they have little say over the kinds of sexual practices they engage in. (Haddad 2005:35)

There is a section on **gender** where the power relations between men and women as well as the differences between men and women are mostly discussed. The section on gender is only nine pages long and forms a separate section of the manual (Manual 4.5/1 – 4.5/9), which makes reference to the impact of gender on infections and culture as a challenge. There is also no real reference to the influence of culture and poverty for example on the lives of women and men respectively. In Africa, it is important to look at culture as Kanyoro (2001:36) teaches all areas of life are part of culture and religion. "Harmful traditional practices are passed on as 'cultural values' and therefore are not discussed, challenged or changed" – these practices include the stigmatization of single women, of barren women of widows and female mutilation for example (Kanyoro 2001:159). Feminist cultural hermeneutics brings a critical lens to bear on the oft-used phrase "it is part of my culture" (Phiri and Nadar 2011:83). Seeing that women are the more vulnerable gender with regards to HIV and AIDS, culture and the way women are socialized needs to be challenged in the manual. Unfortunately the voices of women, who are often the powerless, are heard much less than men through the manual. Culture often plays a leading role in the roles individuals in a community play and who has power. Unfortunately, very little attention is given to the role that culture plays. By including less women voices, the status quo of culture is kept in

the manual and not challenged enough. "In both the private and public spheres, the role and images of African women are socially and culturally defined. Within this framework of operation, women have been socialized into a state of numbness where questioning the culture is perceived to be a dangerous trend" (Kanyoro 2002:15). This "state of numbness" is what Young and Jones[72] describe as oppression. It is important to highlight the oppression of culture on women as challenging cultural practices is difficult for women. Kanyoro (2001:37) raises the dilemma of women, who have been the custodians of cultural practices as they work at keeping communities together: It is therefore a great threat to community security to be critical of culture, for there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of these communities are nurtured". "Harmful traditional practices are passed on as 'cultural values' and therefore are not discussed, challenged or changed" – these practices include the stigmatization of single women, of barren women of widows and female mutilation for example (Kanyoro 2001:159).

Valuing women's experiences through story-telling.

Story-telling as identified in Chapter 3, is important in the theology of African women. Phiri, Govinden & Nadar (2002) explains the importance of story-telling and highlight five reasons why we need to tell stories: (1) "To complement African church history" (2) "To revise and retell our stories from women's perspectives" (3) "Telling our stories shifts women from being observers and victims into participants and actors in history" (4) "Telling the stories will be therapeutic and be a process of 'narrative therapy' so that healing and wholeness can come to African women" (5) "The importance of telling the stories is so that we can find ways forward – transforming our society to one that values the humanity of all people". For example, in the manual the following story is told:

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[72] As discussed in Chapter 3, Jones uses the "Five Faces of Oppression" of Young where this state of numbness would be described as oppression through powerlessness.

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STORY TO DEMONSTRATE PREJUDICE (Story told by James Michener)

James Michener wrote the book *The Fires of Spring*. In the book he tells the story of a young boy who grew up in a home for all the outcasts of society – homeless people, old people, people with mental problems and people like himself - a young orphan. During weekends this boy would help with the old and mentally handicapped people. There he saw a lady whose compulsive behaviour fascinated him. The old lady spent her days catching flies. She would catch the fly without killing it. Then she would take off the wings of the fly, and put this fly on the table in front of her. Then she would wet her finger in her mouth and draw a little spit circle around the fly, after which she would sit back and watch the fly.
The fly would walk around on the table within the little spit circle. As long as it stayed within the spit circle, she would let it be, but as soon as the fly walked through the spit circle, she would crush it with her finger and put it aside.

Later in his life, at the age of about eighteen, he met a girl and fell in love with her. The more they became involved with one another, the more he experienced a great deal of negativity and rejection from the community. He could not understand why, until the girl told him her life story. She was forced as a child, due to various circumstances, to become a child sex worker. She did not have much choice.

The people in the community knew only that she was a sex worker but they knew nothing of the circumstances that had forced her into prostitution. For them, she was just the "prostitute", and their body language, reactions and remarks showed how they felt about her. Then this boy said: "Now I understand what that old lady was doing."

What that senile, old lady was doing is exactly what society does everyday. Society draws a little spit circle around each one of us. As long as we stay within that little spit circle and do what is acceptable according to society, we are accepted, but if for some reason we overstep the boundaries that society sets – that little spit circle – they crush us.

Figure 2

In the story above (Figure 2), the girl James Michener fell in love with, is able to tell her story her to him. By telling the story, according to Phiri, Govinden & Nadar, she is sharing it with somebody and the experience of telling somebody else could be therapeutic and lead to wholeness with the girl. By telling the story herself, she is moving away from being a victim, to being a participant.

By highlighting the importance of the telling of stories for women, men are not excluded. **Telling stories** collectively includes stories of men as well. Kanyoro (2002:23) reminds us that, "...our stories are a basis for theology. Women are encouraged to tell their stories and discover for themselves the impact culture has on their lives. Kanyoro (2001:168) encourages the use of story-telling, in order to examine the cultural conditioning of African women's thinking in order to discover the rooting of their belief system. Seeing that story-telling is

valued as a resource for theology as well as a resource for information about communities, it is good that stories are included in the manual. Stories can be found on different pages, however not throughout the manual. In Section 5 (HIV and AIDS: Competent faith communities) there are no stories. In Section 4 (HIV and AIDS: A Christian Response) there is 1 story (p 4.2/16) told from the perspective of a man. In Section 3 (Living with HIV and AIDS) there are no stories. In Section 2 (HIV and AIDS Information that Empowers) there are 4 stories. One story is told from the woman's perspective, one from a man's perspective and two are told by the narrator, who cannot be identified. In Section 1 (HIV and AIDS and Me) there are 6 stories, four from men's perspectives, one from a woman's perspective and one told by a narrator.

 Kanyoro (2002:23) highlights the importance of story-telling as a way of sharing people's different experiences and thus doing liberation theology. When examining the stories found in the manual, the majority of the stories are, however, **told from a man's perspective** – of the 11 stories, 6 are told from a man's perspective. Only 2 of the 11 stories are told from a woman's perspective. The majority of the stories are from men and therefore there is focus on the experiences of men. It is not possible to examine the cultural conditional of African women's thinking, due to the absence of stories of African women. It would also be helpful if women were encouraged through the manual to **share their own stories** during the training. By listening to the stories of people during the training, cultural conditioning could be identified. Story-telling is used in a theology of inculturation from a women's perspective while drawing on the wisdom used by African and feminist theologies of liberation. The **feminist methodology** "challenges cultural socialization by rejecting the assumption that the roles of men and women have been fixed either by the Creator or culture" (Kanyoro 2001:45). For example in the story on page 2.2/36 Peter and Judy are a couple and Judy is described as being a virgin, while Peter had "one previous partner". This is an example of a couple, which enforces the traditional roles of men and women. It also does not take the LGBTIQ community into account when describing the couple or their previous partners. It furthermore follows the stereotypical values, of women, but not men, needing to stay virgins.

"Stories help to make connections between faith and action because they make use of experience and reflection as the intervals of connection" (Kanyoro 2002:23). It would however be difficult for women to reflect on the experiences of men, seeing that the majority of stories are from men's experiences. This is especially a challenge as the majority of people who tend to be involved in NGO's and HIV and AIDS groups usually are women, which

would mean that the majority of people attending training would be women. It is important to be aware of women's stories often being interpreted for them. Women then cannot tell their own personal stories. This is important as "the status of women within their church is a microcosm of their status within the society of which the church is part of" (Kanyoro 2002:81). Kanyoro reminds us "for a long time, print media has marginalized the voices of African women. African rural women are singing songs; they are also creating poetry, proverbs and dirges. Their reflections should challenge us to undertake theology in a different way. We who can write must explore new areas and new avenues for the works of our sisters to be heard beyond the confines of our borders" (Kanyoro 2001:175).

Phiri (2004:20) challenges the few women's stories: "there is a need to include the voices of all women, not just theologians, because it is acknowledged that the majority of African women are engaged in **oral theology**". Kanyoro (2001:175) agrees and adds, "Many women on our continent cannot read and write but they sing, they dance and they speak". She adds an important fact which is related to scripture, but can also be brought into relation to other texts we use. "When it comes to the written scriptures as the basis for belief, (many women) will always depend on other people interpreting the scriptures for them. Thus, the image of who they are in the story of faith largely depends on the teaching they receive".

The African context - Particularity and Universality

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Oduyoye (2001:18) emphasises that "issues of particularity and universality are as critical to the understanding of Africa as they are to the understanding of all African sources. It is necessary to know what can be generalised for all Africa and what pertains to a single language or ethnic group." It is important, therefore, to keep the **particularity of South Africa** in mind when looking at the manual, as it was indeed developed in South Africa. It is also important to continuously check whether the universality of Africa was also taken into consideration in the development of the manual for other contexts apart from South Africa. Furthermore, when looking at the particularity of South Africa, one needs to check how far the diversity of people[73] in South Africa was considered. How far was particularity and universality of the African context considered when this universal manual - used not only in South Africa, but also in the wider African context was developed?

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[73] South Africa has eleven official languages in an attempt to address the diverse population.

South Africa as part of Africa particularly has a history of *apartheid.* This separate development of the different cultural groups, within the same country caused people to be at different levels of development – especially levels of education. Heaton, Amoateng, Dufur (2014:101) highlights the fact that "from the 1950s to the mid-1990s, no other social institution evidenced the government's racial philosophy of apartheid more clearly than the education system. Schools were required both to teach and to practise apartheid, making them both an instrument for and a victim of racism". It was therefore not possible to attend school and not be influenced by apartheid as learners were exposed to it every day. *Apartheid* encouraged people to think in a certain way and experience life and the people of South Africa in a certain way. We were trained to first see race before we saw anything else. Haddad (2013:11) remembers,

> As a Lebanese South African, I have overtly shaped and reshaped my racial identity(ies) as the South African political landscape has shifted. Uncomfortable with my apartheid classification as a white woman, in the early years I chose to name myself a "white woman of colour", and now in the post-apartheid period I comfortably call myself a woman of colour (or "coloured") as I own my Arab heritage and resist the old racial categories that afforded me economic privilege yet left me socially marginalised because of the colour of my skin.

The CABSA facilitator's manual, was developed within this particular South African context. The initial authors who worked at putting the framework for the manual together were white South Africans[74]. Historically, **race was understood along hierarchical lines** – Whites being superior, then Indians, then Coloureds and then Blacks – a legacy which often still affects our daily interactions. There was no interaction between the different groups and therefore symbols, rituals, language and culture for example would be different. In order to bridge this gap, the authors decided to use English as language for the manual. This was a wonderful effort in working towards finding a common method of communication. However, English is one of the eleven languages of South Africa, which means that for the majority of citizens of South Africa, English is their second, third or even fourth or fifth language. The Facilitator's manual consists of 345 A4 pages. All information is in English, as mentioned, and therefore the **language** of facilitation and instruction is also English. This information is

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[74] As mentioned in Chapter 2, the initial authors were Revd Greyling and Mrs Logy Murray**.**

worked through over a period of five days. That is an average of 69 pages per day as two mornings are used for two written assessments and two facilitation assessments with peer assessment. The training starts at 8:00 in the morning with worship, followed by breakfast and then continues till 18:00 with a lunch break and tea breaks in-between. Being instructed in English for hours in one's second or third language, while struggling to understand, caused the researcher to wonder whether the training could be experienced as empowering or whether such an experience could rather lead to people feeling oppressed.

Ackermann reminds us of the importance of language: "I share Habermas' concern that language contributes towards the formation of consciousness" (Ackermann 2013:8). This may furthermore be linked to the notion of power:

> Power is the ability to make things happen. Our experience of power, our sense of how it feels, who has it and where it comes from, has everything to do with the way we experience reality. Power does not expect favours; it expects results. Power is a means to action and is experienced in diverse ways, as power-over, power-to, power-for, power-with, as related to knowledge, love, difference, and embodiment. There is power to influence, power to include or exclude, economic, social, political and religious power. Life is saturated with power.
>
> (Ackermann 2003:73).

In addition, each person attending the training is assessed during the training as a level 1 or 2 or 3 facilitator and educator, as an educator only or they might only receive an attendance certificate, depending on the level of competence achieved:

- Highly competent   80-100%
- Competent   65-79%
- Moderately competent   50-64%
- Not yet competent   30-49%
- Not competent   less than 30%

Although people attending the training might believe that they will be empowered with "the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills" they might discover that they are "not competent" after the training due to not performing well during assessment.

Ackermann reminds us that "if the past is always with us, its wounds remain present wounds" (Ackermann 2003:70). In a country where education levels of people are still very diverse due to our **history of *apartheid***, being told that you are "not good enough" could trigger old feelings of "not being good enough" – not white enough, or educated enough. Heaton, Amoateng, Dufur (2014:102) reminds us what the education system under *apartheid* did:

> In addition to its role as transmitter of social values, the education system assumed economic importance in the twentieth century as it prepared young black Africans for low-wage labour. However, the system also protected the privileged white minority from competition. Essentially, the 1953 Bantu Education Act served the interests of white supremacy by denying black people access to the same educational opportunities and resources enjoyed by white South Africans

With the dawn of the new democracy in South Africa, many changes were implemented and attempts were made to address the legacy of *apartheid*. However, there are still many challenges in the new South Africa. Heaton, Amoateng, Dufur (2014:114) discusses post-*apartheid* education in South Africa:

> As a result of the deliberate policy of the *apartheid* government to create an unequal society through the manipulation of the education system, subsequent governments since the inception of democracy in South Africa have made concerted efforts to undo the damage done to the education system by ensuring both access and equality in education. But despite these policy interventions, data from post-*apartheid* South Africa demonstrate that substantial educational inequality still exists.

Ackermann (2003:70) also notes that people's **memories** are important. "Our memories of pain and evil are a vital shield against future wrongs. Forgetting past wrongs only pleases those who have inflicted them. We must remember in order to redeem. Otherwise there will be no justice".

For people not from South Africa, the experience and the use of the English language would most probably be different, as there are a number of African countries where English is used as language of instruction.

Communal sharing of power

Oduyoye (2001:17) states that, "There is a marked emphasis on relations because African culture is very **community-oriented** and therefore requires all to be sensitive not only to the needs of others, but also to the well-being of the community as a whole". It is therefore good that the manual introduces section 3 with the sentence "Living with HIV and AIDS" followed by the statement that **"HIV and AIDS does not affect only individuals. They affect families and friends and even communities. They affect each one of us directly or indirectly" (Manual 3/1).** The section then continues by making people aware of the challenges of people living with HIV and AIDS and the lack of understanding, love and care of communities in general. It also challenges the participants of the workshop to look at their own reactions to being informed that a loved one, or stranger is HIV positive through scenarios and discussion. There is a section; "From Diagnosis to Acceptance" (Manual 3/5-3/10), which explains the different emotional stages a person infected with HIV goes through as well as the stages of being infected from diagnoses till death. The following two sections; "Living Positively" (Manual 3/11-3/17) and "Antiretroviral Treatment" (Manual 3/17-3/27) give comprehensive information on treatment and reminds the reader that the person living with HIV is more than only a body and has "a body, a soul and spirit" (Manual 3/16), therefore the treatment needs to include the entire person. The section on antiretroviral treatment not only gives basic information about antiretroviral treatment and the benefits, but also includes the danger of developing resistance to drugs if the treatment instructions are not followed to the letter.

Although the introductory sentences to the section "Living with HIV and AIDS", creates the expectation that there will be focus on the whole community and not only the individual, the in general the focus is mostly on the individual being infected. This individual could be either male or female, part of the LGBTIQ community or heterosexual, old or young, Christian or not, but the manual does highlight the possibility of different experiences due to these differences identified. The manual implies that the experiences are identical - the emotional turmoil after diagnosis, the individual seeking treatment and living positively. It is however good that children, as part of community, is offered specific mention (Manual 3/27-3/29). The only specific reference to community is at the last part of the section (Manual 3/36-3/37) when referring to grief after the person has passed on. The faith community is then introduced in offering support and care for the family members left. The sensitivity to the "needs of others and to the well-being of the community as a whole" which Oduyoye

(2001:17) refers to is not present. Ackermann (1993:24) explains that this sensitivity derives from a "different consciousness":

> Feminism does not benefit any specific group, race or class of women, neither does it promote privilege for women over men. It is about a different consciousness, a radically transformed perspective which questions our social, cultural, political and religious traditions and calls for structural change in all these spheres.

This "different consciousness" which Ackermann refers to, enables one to consciously be aware of power relations at play which invites some voices and silence others. This "different consciousness" challenges our beliefs around what is important and what not – what needs to be discussed as issues of relevance and what not. However women remind that, "the personal is political". The stories and experiences of the old grandmother, who takes care of her sick child and the issue of financial oppression of the fruit vendor not being able to leave her shop to collect her antiretroviral treatment for example are important. Phiri and Nadar (2011:82) explain the slogan, "the personal is political":

> The slogan was meant to communicate to women that their oppression was not individual but, in fact, part of a larger system of sexism and patriarchy by which women were governed. The slogan was used by consciousness-raising groups, so that individual women could identify the "patterns" of problems that existed across the board for women – such as lower incomes, minimalist education, gender violence, etc. The slogan was meant to help to bring to the public, those things society wanted to keep private.

Although the discussion highlights the absence of a "different consciousness" and a seemingly limited awareness of community and its diversity, there is however a focus on community present. **Section 5 of the manual, "HIV and AIDS: Competent faith communities"** encourages the participants of the training to reflect on their faith communities and the broader communities they come from. The section, however, again starts with the individual and their personal journey and relationship with God. This is followed by a discussion on community and "what God is already doing" in the community – the congregation (faith community) as well the wider community which leads into a discussion on each person's connections and participation in their community.

The whole discussion on community is, however, channeled as highlighting the fact that the communities are not HIV competent communities yet and encouraging the participants to identify the need to work towards becoming HIV competent communities. In order to be a HIV competent faith community, the manual encourages the community to have:

- Accountable Leadership
- Meaningful Community Interaction
- Transformative Justice
- Relevant and Responsible us of Scripture
- Compassionate Care and Support
- Comprehensive Prevention
- Understanding and Acknowledging Vulnerabilities (Manual 5/17-5/25).

These competencies are relevant to the discourse of HIV and AIDS and could certainly improve community life. However, there is no mention of how social issues (poverty, unemployment, poor education, crime, drug abuse etc) would interact with and prevent or encourage some of these competencies. Neither is there any interaction with gender issues and unequal division of power in communities and the access or lack of access to resources. The particularity of South Africa with its history of *apartheid*, would also play an important role in whether communities would be able to focus on working towards becoming HIV competent communities. Again a "different consciousness" seems to be absent.

Liberation with suspicion of patriarchy

In Chapter 3, Rakoczy (2004:10) explains that patriarchy means to the rule by fathers and it refers to way of life where everything enforces male dominance and power. Firstly by looking at the illustrations in the manual, there is evidence of patriarchy".

There are also a little blocks (Figure 4) used to indicate where information is for the facilitator - these blocks, with the word "facilitator" and a picture, are found throughout the manual. The illustration used for the "facilitator" is of a white man. Through choosing to use a white man as the facilitator, it is implied that the facilitators would rather be male, and further more white males.

On **page 2.2/14 there are photographs** showing opportunistic infections. An effort was made to include both a black body and a white body. However, the white body does not have a face which can be seen in the photo while the black body's face is totally visible in the photograph. In challenging the African colonial past and its influence, Imathiu (2001:28) writes about photographs taken during colonial times and how the photographer make decisions based on his/her own context and mindset. "Have you noticed that these photographs identify Europeans by name and often refer to African as 'natives' or ignore their presence altogether?" Imathiu (2001:29) comes to the conclusion "that the photographer, a European, composed pictures based on what he thought was of importance". In following this argument, the initial authors on the manual decided what the pictures or illustrations would look like, based on their context and mindset. These deductions are made by "reading between the lines". Imathiu (2001:31) explains "For those who live on the margins, the focus in the narrative would be the unnamed persons and the silent characters of the narrative. The reading strategy of those who live on the periphery of power is very different from those in power".

Section 4 of the manual is called "HIV and AIDS: A Christian Response" and starts off with the guiding principles identified by CABSA as the "biblical foundation of a Christian response to HIV and AIDS" (Manual 4.1/7). Using the bible as the foundation, could be seen as both a positive and a negative – positive as the bible (or scripture) is the one pillar of the Christian faith all denominations agree on and negative as South African Christian women are often trapped between two 'canons' according to Masenya (2003:114). They have to grapple with the negative impact of received interpretations of both the African culture and the Christian Bible. Both the Christian Bible and the African culture are experienced as authorities in the lives of African Christians (Masenya 2003:114)[76]. Added is the fact that "a

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[76] As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 3.2.

particular understanding of the place of men in the Christian tradition, has resulted in continued inequity for women" Ackermann (2004:37)[77]. The church becoming a space where transformation can happen is, however, not an easy process due to the fear of stigma and layers of oppression and abuse through patriarchal leadership in the church, the misuse of scripture and silence around issues of power.

It is however important to note that the **voices of women** are often silenced in the Bible and that we fail to hear the voices of the women who are sometimes "victims of rape or agents in their own right. Everything about women is filtered through the voice of the narrator, who is male" (Nadar 2006:78).

> The church should also critically revisit the androcentric[78] interpretations of the Bible since these interpretations have contributed to the perpetuation of the view that the female is inferior, and that the latter is God-ordained. Such a view has enabled dangerous cultural saying, reinforced by apparently similar sayings from the Bible, to be applied indiscriminately to powerless girl children and women. These women-unfriendly Bible interpretations should be substituted with empowering life-giving ones" (Masenya 2003:125).

Each of the guiding principles has biblical texts written underneath it which can be used "for biblical exploration". Guiding Principle 2 is "Our identity: We are the body of Christ" and has biblical texts under the heading indicating where in the bible references to "the body of Christ" are made.

The bible verses are followed by some explanation of what it means to be the "body of Christ" (See Figure 5) especially in relation to HIV and AIDS. The explanation is then followed by challenges linked to the explanation instructing people on practical ways of living being "the body of Christ". The instructions prescribe how people should be living according to the guiding principle of "we are the body of Christ". Below is a copy of guiding principle 2 as an example of how each of the principles is explained in the manual.

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[77] As mentioned in Chapter 3

[78] is the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing male human beings or a masculine point of view at the centre of one's world view and its culture and history. .https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Androcentrism.

In this particular principle reference is made to the body of Christ which can be a positive **metaphor** in showing connectedness and diversity. However, the church, as the body of Christ is reminded of its connection to Christ as the leader of the church. Christ is described as the head of the church and just as the head and the body cannot function without the other, the church cannot function without Christ. This relationship of the Church being under the authority of Christ is, however, used for patriarchal control to oppress women in the church. Men are put in the same position as Christ and women as the church – the bride. Facilitators, who attend the training, will therefore have been introduced to this patriarchal understanding which keeps women often oppressed and there does not seem to be any challenge to this way of thinking and methods offered to problematize it. Haddad (2013:155) notes that for centuries the patriarchy of the church has provided almost solely male leadership, which has resulted in the silencing of women's voices and theological justifications often being used to encourage women to "be faithful" to their marriage vows.

4.3   Conclusion

The church is still struggling with patriarchy and its inability to look beyond its hierarchical structures and dualistic understandings of humanity. Haddad (2009:16) argues that as the church, "we have been ill-equipped to deal with the moral complexities of the crisis, precisely because we are ill-equipped to deal with questions of sexuality and patriarchy". Haddad's comment is a challenge to the church. The church needs to address the fact that it is ill-equipped to deal with questions of sexuality and patriarchy. The manual was developed within the FBO sector and therefore the question is – could a manual developed free from these influences be developed in such a context?

Furthermore, would such a training manual encourage people to grow and to flourish? African women's focus is not only on challenging theories and thought about life. African women's theology also wishes to encourage liberation of communities, especially women - from oppression, from patriarchy which has entered all facets of life. Furthermore, African women theology then encourages flourishing. "From this perspective they identify what enhances, transforms or promotes in such a way as to build community and make for life-giving and life-enhancing relationships. Women do theology to undergird and nourish spirituality for life" Oduyoye (2001:16)

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

As a priest in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, I was challenged by the compartmentalised way the Church seemed to be dealing with people. It seemed like a gap between the spiritual instruction during services on a Sunday held at the church building and the life experiences of people during the rest of the week. Seeking for ways to bridge the gap between the spiritual and the material led me to Faith Based Organisations (FBO's), which seemed to be bridging this gap between the spiritual and the material. Within the NGO sector I was introduced to the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA) and its Churches, Channels of Hope (CCoH) programme. The CCoH programme trains facilitators to become channels of hope in their communities – people are trained to be empowered themselves and then to share the knowledge and skills they gained with their communities, supporting them to flourish. In this thesis I have therefore attempted to analyse the training manual used during the CCoH programme and see whether the material used to train people does empower them and cause them to flourish. In this chapter I begin by summarising the findings of the study, followed by recommendations with regards to the manual and finally a short section on possible further study in this regard.

5.2 Summary

The process of reading and analysing the training manual was developed as follows:

A problem statement had to be developed from which to analyse the manual: it reads as follows: "In which ways could an African Woman's Theological reading of the text (the manual) enhance the programme Churches, Channels of Hope?".
From this statement, five objectives were identified. These objectives were the following:

- To explore the context and discourses within which HIV and AIDs is to be found within a South African context.

- To describe the content of the HIV and AIDS programme, Churches, Channels of Hope.

- To describe what is understood by African Woman's Theology.

- To use African Woman's Theology as a lens to do a Critical Discourse Analysis of the HIV and AIDS programme Churches, Channels of Hope.

- To make recommendations as to how the programme Churches, Channels of Hope could be enhanced by reading the manual through an African Women's Theology lens.

In exploring these objectives, a literature review was done to highlight research done in this field, as well as the need for continued research. **Chapter 1** was therefore a summary of what the researcher was attempting, while supporting the choice through a brief literature review as well as outlining the methodology that would be utilised within the study.

In **Chapter 2** the context of the manual was explored. Not only was the context where the manual was developed explored, but also the context where the content of the manual is positioned. The content of the manual is positioned within the discourse of HIV and AIDS and therefore the HIV and AIDS discourse needed to be explored. However the manual was developed a few years ago in South Africa and, therefore, the discourse in South Africa at the time of the development of the manual specifically also needed to be investigated. As HIV and AIDS is gendered, special attention was paid to the gendered nature of HIV and AIDS, which encourages a multifaceted response to the pandemic.

Through the exploration of the context, the following was highlighted:

- From the survey released on HIV and AIDS in 2014 it is clear that HIV and AIDS continues to be a challenge to our communities. It is also important to understand that the challenge of HIV and AIDS is multi layered and a method which is "interdisciplinary and multi-faith" needs to be used (cf. Phiri and Nadar 2011:86).

- It is clear the Church is involved in addressing HIV and AIDS in some ways, but there continues to be room for improvement, as there are factors which have an impact on the spread of the virus where the Church continues to be silent. One example is the connection between culture and HIV and AIDS, which continues to be a challenge. It is important to note that there are cultural practices that enhance

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African women's risk of HIV as women are often powerless in sexual relationships, oppressed due to cultural practices and more vulnerable to the HIV virus because of biological factors (cf. Denis & Haddad in Phiri 2003:10).

- The manual was developed during the 1990's in South Africa. This period was a period of change in the history of South Africa, with the dawn of democracy in 1994. Although it was the end of apartheid, the people of the country were impacted and in some ways continue to be impacted by *apartheid* as the legacy continues. "*Apartheid*, legitimated by religious convictions, is the "life story" of South Africa, a country which has been transformed yet is still in need of resilience" (Dreyer 2015:658).
- The context where the manual is positioned is thus complex. "The challenge of HIV and AIDS is a health issue, an issue of justice and needs to be approached by all disciplines and studied and analysed in an intersectional manner" (Dube 2003:13).

I realised that the issue of HIV and AIDS would need a multi-faceted interaction with reflection. The processes of seeking such interaction led me to Denise Ackermann. Through the work of Denise Ackermann and her feminist theology of praxis, I realized that "doing theology from the bottom up" empowered me and so I started on the journey of developing a lens which would encapsulate the experiences of a "coloured" woman from South Africa. Through the Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians I began to discover a whole landscape of women's voices in Africa. This eventually led me in **Chapter 3** to a theology of African women - a rich conversation with diverse voices from all over Africa. The Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians was the main source for women from Africa doing theology. The Circle has developed into one of the main resources of the diverse disciplines of theology in Africa which challenges theological reflection. Through theological reflection, the Circles' Transformative Acts were developed which are summarized by Dube (2001:11):

- For the empowerment of women and the recognition of human dignity. It: "confronts all the factors that deny African women and others on the continent their human rights and dignity".
- It seeks to keep the interconnectedness of life: "Life as a continuous flowing force must continuously be nurtured by all and at all times".
- It emphasises the African context as a specific context: "African women are also part of the life force of creation".

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- Power is shared by all in the Circle: "It seeks to ensure that power flows from all and to all".

- It is about liberation and therefore stands within liberation theology: "It seeks to clear a space for transformation".

The voices of women from Africa were then developed into an African woman's theological lens which took the following into consideration:

- **Cultural hermeneutics**

  Kanyoro (2001:164) has been working on the role culture plays in the lives of people from Africa. When looking at cultural practices through the lens of oppression, it is evident that oppression through exploitation is often present in the lives of African women. Although the women might be aware of these discrepancies, the African understanding of living in community, and the fact that women have been the custodians of culture, makes it difficult for women to address these cultural challenges culture. "Harmful traditional practices are passed on as 'cultural values' and therefore are not discussed, challenged or changed" – these practices include the stigmatization of single women, of barren women, of widows and female mutilation for example (Kanyoro 2001:159). These harmful practices as highlighted by Kanyoro can be interpreted as oppression through marginalisation.

- **Valuing women's experiences through story-telling**

  The telling of stories, dating back to the oral tradition, is the way instruction in African communities continues to happen today. Kanyoro (2001:168) encourages the use of story-telling in order to examine the cultural conditioning of African women's thinking and thus to discover the roots of their belief system. Women are encouraged to tell their stories and discover for themselves the impact culture has on their lives. Kanyoro (2002:23) reminds us, "...our stories are a basis for theology. However, if women feel powerless due to years of oppression through cultural practices, they will find it difficult to have a voice and tell their stories".

- **The African context - Particularity and Universality**

  Oduyoye (2001:18) emphasises that "issues of particularity and universality are as critical to the understanding of Africa as they are to the understanding of all African

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sources". It is important to understand that there is one continent of Africa, and yet there are different contexts within the one continent. One needs to be aware of the diversity of the voices from Africa, as well as the communalities between the diversity. There is opportunity for oppression of marginal voices.

- **Communal sharing of power**

  Oduyoye (2001:17) reminds us that: "There is a marked emphasis on relations because African culture is very community-oriented and therefore requires all to be sensitive not only to the needs of others, but also to the well-being of the community as a whole". Although community is important and sensitivity towards the needs of others is encouraged, cultural norms often work against this sensitivity towards others and against a focus on building community. Often it seems as if culture is higher on the list of priorities than a sense of the well-being of the community, e.g. cultural norms are observed for widows and single women. These cultural norms cause oppression through marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence which is not working towards "the well-being of the community as a whole".

- **Liberation with suspicion of patriarchy**

  Oduyoye (2001:16) emphasises the flourishing element of African women's theology. "From this perspective they identify what enhances, transforms or promotes in such a way as to build community and make for life-giving and life-enhancing relationships". Communities can only become life-giving and life-enhancing if patriarchy – which has entered all facets of life - is acknowledged and challenged.

As a "coloured" South African, I was challenged to look at my situatedness and its impact on me, my view of others and my faith. In South Africa, with its legacy of *Apartheid*, we have been exposed to a different understanding of being human - of human dignity[79]. My "situatedness" caused me to be aware of our challenges around human dignity and

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[79] Koopman (2010) challenges our understanding of faith to include human dignity.
This faith has at its heart and core, the flourishing and wellbeing, worth and value, esteem, honour and dignity of all humans – and indeed the whole of creation. Human beings are created in God's image. We are saved by Jesus Christ, and we are renewed by the Holy Spirit. This Trinitarian work in our lives is the deepest source and foundation of our dignity.

encouraged me to include oppression as part of the lens. The "Five Faces of Oppression" by Young (2009:13-22) was used:

- Exploitation

  Once the value attributed to labour is lessened by those other than the people offering the labour, people are oppressed through exploitation.

- Marginalisation

  People are oppressed through marginalisation when they are side-lined and ignored by another group, because they are different.

- Powerlessness

  The powerless experience oppression due to the fact that they no longer experience inner authority to be confident and speak and do for themselves.

- Cultural Imperialism

  When the norms, values and way of life of one group is used as a lens through which all other groups are looked at. The dominant group's way of life is used as the standard against which all other things are measured.

- Violence

  Violence as oppression is when physical or sexual violence is used to manipulate and use people as commodities. However, it is also much more and includes the language we use to refer to people different from ourselves. Each of the five faces of oppression discussed above could be regarded as violent – any action will be experienced as violent when aggression is added.

This lens of an African woman's theology, in conversation with Young, was used in **Chapter 4** to do a close reading of the training manual of CABSA by using Ackermann's feminist theology of praxis as a methodological point of departure. The training of CABSA is offered to empower the facilitators to be 'channels of hope'. In order to be a 'channel of hope', one needs to first become a person of hope. One cannot lead others to where one is not able to go. The growth and development – the change - needs to happen within the person first, and this is what the goal of the training is. By working through the training manual during the week of training, the facilitator will be changed. The knowledge received and skills practiced would facilitate this change. The manual was developed through a long process of collecting information and testing what works and what does not work. The knowledge offered and skills practiced in the manual are therefore supportive of growth and change.

The next section explores the findings of chapter 4 in relationship to recommendations for the improvement of the manual.

5.3   Recommendations

In Chapter 4, through the process of action-reflection which Ackermann also uses, it was discovered that stories are important in Africa; community can be explored as a space for change; context is important; the role of culture should not be neglected and there needs to be an awareness of the power of patriarchy.
 The following recommendations are made about each:

5.3.1 Storytelling is important, especially in Africa.

It seems that stories are valued as important, as stories are often used throughout the manual. However, storytelling is an important method of communication in Africa as it was a fundamental part of the oral tradition and continues to be used to teach. Phiri, Govinden & Nadar (2002) explain the importance of story-telling and highlight five reasons why we need to tell stories: "(1) To complement African church history (2) To revise and retell our stories from women's perspectives (3) Telling our stories shifts women from being observers and victims into participants and actors in history (4) Telling the stories will be therapeutic and be a process of 'narrative therapy' so that healing and wholeness can come to African women (5) The importance of telling the stories is so that we can find ways forward – transforming our society to one that values the humanity of all people".

The stories included in the manual need to address the reasons identified above. There also need to be more stories told by women. When women tell their own stories around HIV and AIDS, the stories can be used to bring wholeness through women finding a voice. The process of telling your story can be therapeutic and support healing. Their healing comes from narratives, "… to deal with our past pastorally we [therefore] need 'to make our memories redemptive" Marias quotes Botman (2015:205).

When women tell their own stories, women would also be included as participants, rather than being victims or only observers. *The stories of*

women would include cultural practices and offer the opportunity to discuss those practices included in the stories. The stories of women included in the manual could support healing with the facilitators who attend the training and read the stories. "Telling our stories, hearing the stories of others, allows our stories to intersect. Sometimes they conflict, accuse and even diverge greatly; sometimes they attract, connect and confirm. As our stories touch one another, they change, and we too are changed" (Ackermann, 1998b:24).

5.3.2 Community can be explored as a space for change

Oduyoye (2001:17) highlights the importance of community in Africa: "There is a marked emphasis on relations, because African culture is very community-oriented". The community is the space where lives are lived and where culture is practiced. *It would be helpful if the importance of community is highlighted through the method of organising information in the manual. There is information focused towards children and also towards women, however it is included in different sections of the manual. This does not encourage a community to read the material together, where a community is made up of different ages and different genders.* The information in the manual is focused on the individual – infection of the individual and the development of the individual's infection. *The impact on a community is therefore not explicitly shown in the manual – the impact of adults dying and the orphans who remain who often need to head the household, the impact on women who are left without income when husbands die. The importance of needing to look at the dynamics of the community's power relations and decision making, when many people are HIV positive in a community, is also key.* The women, who are usually the nurturers, caregivers and supporters of the community, are also the powerless, and kept in that position by cultural practices.,

It is therefore a great threat to community security to be critical of culture, for there are elements in these cultures which are the very veins through which the solidarity of these communities are nurtured" (Kanyoro 2001:37). As the cultural beliefs form the veins through which communities are nurtured, women are the custodians of these beliefs. Therefore meeting women in community could be a safe space. The

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communal space needs to be explored as a safe space where the building blocks of the community can be discussed. Community seem to be the structure where culture is practiced. Kanyoro (2001:163) emphasises that the task for women theologians from Africa is to find ways to, "incorporate discussions on culture in our African communities so that women find it safe to speak about issues that harm their well-being" – issues which prevent women from flourishing. The manual therefore needs to highlight the fact that for women, telling their stories about HIV and AIDS causes them to be vulnerable. Koopman (2013:43) explains vulnerability to include being open to be wounded or under threat and vulnerability needs to be addressed in order to experience life to the fullest. The whole community needs to be open to the vulnerability of those sharing their stories – there needs to be a shared vulnerability which can then lead to a starting point for authentic community.

5.3.3 Context is important

The manual was developed in Africa, South Africa, specifically from one cultural perspective although South Africa has multiple cultural groups. *It is, therefore, important to have an objective look at the images of people used in the manual for example. All pictures of the facilitator in the manual are of a white man. It would show a greater awareness of the diversity of people who will be using the manual – mostly from Africa - if other races and genders are used in the images or pictures of the facilitator as well.* There are pictures included where other cultural groups are represented, but the facilitator is indicated as a white male throughout the manual. A specific understanding of the issue of particularity and universality are critical. It is necessary to know what can be generalised for all of Africa and what pertains to a single language or ethnic group. It is especially important when the training material is used in different countries, although all on the same continent. *The types of examples and stories included are also important.* For example, there is a story pointing to people's prejudices (page 1/5-1/6). There is a note indicating that people should "be culturally sensitive" as the scenario was written for a South African context. However, there are still assumptions made, even if it is used with a South African audience. In the scenario, an effective drug was discovered which could increase the life span of people. The facilitators are asked to decide who needs to get the opportunity to use the drug and three people are introduced. Information about the

three people is gradually supplied and every time after information is supplied, the facilitators are asked to vote for somebody to receive the drug. The characters are Charles, a homosexual, Sally, a health care worker and Nomsa, a domestic worker. *The names given to the characters, will cause assumptions to be made by the facilitators along racial lines which has nothing to do with HIV infection.*

5.3.4 The role of culture should not be neglected

Culture plays an important role in uniting people – it connects people and links them into community. Culture therefore is also the lens through which people interpret information. The impact of culture should not be underestimated as culture could determine whether information is accepted or not. *The same information can be offered to different contexts with different cultures and, due to the influence of the cultures, be interpreted in different ways. For example the use of condoms in one cultural group can mean protection against sexually transmitted infections, while the use of condoms in another cultural group can mean distrust. Therefore the use of condoms needs to be introduced with insight into the cultural psyche of people.* Furthermore, the manual was developed by people from a certain cultural group, with more openness towards talking about sex and sexuality while the manual is used by people from various cultural groups where talking about sex and sexuality in public is labeled as being disrespectful. *Insensitivity about these cultural taboos can cause alienation with some of the facilitators and an inability to interact with the manual.* This is an important factor to be sensitive to, as we need the facilitators to get involved and interact with the content of the manual. As Haddad (2005:33) emphasizes, "the church has been given a moment of grace and opportunity to rethink its mission and transform its structures in order to become a place of redemption, hope and healing". We need to ensure that the opportunity is used,as the manual (5/22) encourages churches to work towards becoming HIV-competent faith communities

5.3.5 There needs to be an awareness of the power of patriarchy

Rakoczy (2004:10) explains that patriarchy is a way of thinking, feeling and organising human life in a way which legally, politically, socially and religiously

enforces male dominance and power. Patriarchy has been internalized to the extent that both women and men are often totally unaware of it. Patriarchy is therefore present in the way information is presented as well as interpreted. In the section on statistics, mention is made of what the picture looks like in the rest of the world, what the picture looks like in sub-Saharan Africa and then the percentage of women living with HIV is given, followed by a section on the vulnerability of children. No mention is made of infections of men specifically. Furthermore, the pictures used to illustrate how the immune system, for example, is attacked are all of male characters. The immune system is illustrated by a strong, macho white male who is a fighter and defender of the smaller-built white male, while the virus looks very female with body curves which strengthens the idea that women carry the virus and infect men.

We therefore need to think critically when reading, when speaking and when interacting with others. More importantly we need to be aware of our own belief systems and subconscious mind.

5.4   Conclusion

From the discoveries made by using an African woman's theology as lens, it is clear that it can be used to enhance the training manual of CABSA and help to support more people becoming 'channels of hope' for their communities.

 The fact that the discoveries could help to enhance the programme and cause more people to flourish, is in line with African women's theology; as Oduyoye (2001:16) emphasises, "it therefore does not stop at theory but moves to commitment, advocacy and transforming praxis".   African women doing theology always strive to bring about change for the community. Bring fullness of life – life abundantly. For women from Africa, flourishing refers to, "every sphere of the human life" Robson (2014:2). To flourish therefore means to be able to experience being fully human – including all the facets of being human and being able to celebrate ones' humanity. All which enriches humanity is therefore included when thinking about flourishing in Africa. "From this perspective (women from Africa) identify what enhances, transforms or promotes in such a way as to build community and make for life-giving and life-enhancing relationships. Women do theology to undergird and nourish spirituality for life" (Oduyoye 2001:16). Life for all people, also those living with HIV.

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