

**A feminist pastoral approach to gender-based violence in  
intimate partner relationships within marriage**

**By**

**Melaney Ann Klaasen**



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**Supervisor: Prof. C.H. Thesnaar**

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## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

From my experience as a minister in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, I have observed that gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships is prevalent in society. Pastoral care focusing on intimate partner relationships tends to address the symptoms rather than the root cause of the violence. If the pastoral care that is offered ignores or entrenches the root cause of the violence, the care that is offered may be limited. This may result in the need for an alternative approach that will provide recommendations that will facilitate a more responsible pastoral care strategy. To investigate this possibility of limitation and the resultant need for an alternative approach, I will use my own denomination as a background to this study, focussing specifically on intimate partner violence within marriage. To validate this theory of limitation and need, it is important to determine and acknowledge the root cause and risk factors of intimate partner violence, which is proposed as male dominance rooted in gender inequality. The official pastoral response of my denomination will be investigated to determine whether it acknowledges the root cause of gender-based violence. A lack of doing so will result in the diagnosis of a problem of limitation to pastoral care. This problem will be exacerbated should the said church denomination entrench the root cause through the theological framework of its pastoral practices. This possibility is investigated through the critique of certain pastoral practices. In finding this possibility of limitation to be true, a feminist pastoral approach is investigated to offer recommendations that will assist in the development of a responsible pastoral care strategy that will enhance care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.

## OPSOMMING

In my ondervinding as 'n leeraar in die Anglikaanse Kerk van Suider Africa, is geslagsverwante geweld wyd versprei in gemeenskappe. Pastorale sorg in hierdie verband nyg om op die simptome liewer as die hoof oorsaak te fokus. Wanneer hierdie oorsaak geignoreer of bevestig word, sal dit beperkinge op die sorg wat gebied word plaas. 'n Alternatiewe benadering tot sorg mag benodig word om voorstelle te maak vir 'n verantwoordelike pastorale sorg strategie. Ek sal my eie denominasie gebruik om die moontlikheid van beperkinge te ondersoek, en sal spesifiek op geweld binne die huwelik fokus. Om waarde aan die teorie van limitasie en behoefte te gee, moet die hoofoorsaak van geslagsgeweld ondersoek word. Dit word voorgedhou as manlike dominansie wat 'n oorsprong het in geslags ongelykheid. Die amptelike reaksie van my denominasie word ondersoek om vas te stel of dit die hoofoorsaak van geslagsgeweld erken en aanspreek. 'n Gebrek daaraan sal as 'n probleem van beperking van pastorale sorg voordoel. Die probleem sal vererger word as die genoemde denominasie hierdie hoofsaak bevestig of versterk deur die teologiese raamwerk van die pastorale praktyke wat dit beoefen. Hierdie moontlikheid word ondersoek deur kritiek te lewer op sekere pastorale praktyke. Met die bevinding van 'n moontlike beperkinge wat waar blyk te wees, sal 'n feministiese pastorale benadering ondersoek word vir moontlike aanbevelings. Hierdie aanbevelings sal gebruik word om 'n verantwoordelike pastorale sorg strategie daar te stel wat die sorg vir slagoffers en oortreders van geslagsgeweld binne die huwelik kan verbeter.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND REASONING

### 1.1 Introduction

In my experience as a minister and feminist within the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA)<sup>1</sup>, gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships is prevalent in society across cultural and socio-economic divides. The following statement by Bennett Moore (2002:32) confirms this experience: “Violence against women is global, horrifically extensive and varied.” Du Plessis (2015:1) echoes this situation when she more recently noted: “In many developed countries the situation has improved but there are numerous countries where it is still unbearable. South Africa is no exception when it comes to violence against women.” She continues to indicate that violence against women, including violence at the level of intimate relations, affects all communities.

The church, both within the Anglican denomination and in general, is likely to entrench male dominance in intimate relationships through its hierarchical structures, scriptural and doctrinal teachings, and liturgy. Bons-Storm (1996:26) argued more than twenty years ago that any hierarchy could force people, especially women, into silence, which constitutes a form of violence. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:173) affirm the harmful effects of hierarchical models in religion in the context of male dominance. They further state that “the church is sometimes guilty of reinforcing norms of traditional religion and culture.” To support this statement, they cite Miller-McLemore: “Without a doubt, Christianity has taught and continues to teach male headship. In fact, it is impossible to worship in the vast majority of Christian congregations today, even in the more liberal churches, without endorsing it, however subtly or indirectly” (Van den Berg & Pudule, 2007:175).

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Church of Southern Africa is also called by its acronym, ‘ACSA’. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

Pastoral care that focuses on intimate partner relationships tends to address the symptoms of violence rather than the root cause. An example of this is contained in a document called Pastoral Standards, which was adopted by ACSA in 2002, and pertains to leadership (lay and ordained) in the church. The document encompasses wide-ranging issues such as sexual abuse as a form of gender-based violence. It outlines detailed processes to be followed when abuse has occurred, with action always to be taken at the discretion of the bishop. These actions include discipline and reconciliation, but they fail to address the cause of the violence.<sup>2</sup> Another example of addressing the symptoms of gender-based violence is the necessary establishment of safe houses for women, such as St Anne's Home, which was started by a group of Anglican people, and which is still under the patronage of the Archbishop of ACSA.<sup>3</sup>

Pastoral care in itself has the tendency to entrench male dominance. Bons-Storm (1996:18) asserts that pastoral care is done in an androcentric way, with the experiences of men forming the theological basis for pastoral care and counseling. She continues to note that many pastors are not used to considering the consequences of all-male language and imagery (Bons-Storm, 1996:23). Almost two decades later, Miller-McLemore notes that pastoral care programs do not do much at the public level, such as challenge God images that perpetuate abuse (cited by Ramsay, 2004:61).

This situation gives rise to the need for an alternative approach, offering recommendations that can be presented to ACSA to enable responsible pastoral care for both males and females caught up in violent intimate partner relationships. Responsible pastoral care includes: healing, sustaining, reconciling, guiding, resisting, empowering, nurturing and liberating, through continuous hermeneutical engagement with practices, theology and theory. To this effect, Bennet Moore (2002:14) states that "pastoral theologians will

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<sup>2</sup> Church of the Province of Southern Africa, *Pastoral Standards: Practices and procedures for all in ministry in the CPSA*. Authorised by Provincial Synod 2002. The CPSA is currently known as the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

<sup>3</sup> Viewed from: <http://www.stanneshomes.org.za>. [Date accessed: 17 May 2015]

have to examine in a self-critical way their own theologies and their own church communities.” ACSA<sup>4</sup> therefore provides the backdrop for this study.

The term “intimate partner” is used to refer to a committed relationship between two people, and it is a more inclusive concept. As pastoral care takes place within the context of the church, it is important to note that the church at large still upholds marriage as the pinnacle and ideal of intimate partner relationships. It is also within the framework of the church that gender constructions in marriage might be upheld. I will therefore specifically focus on marriage within the broader framework of intimate partner relationships.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

1.2.1 To provide motivation for, investigate, and present an alternative approach offering recommendations for pastoral care, it is important to acknowledge the cause of gender-based violence in marriage, as well as the effect that it has on women’s health.

Gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships refers to “any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozana, 2002:89). Not denying that there are women who are violent towards men, for the purpose of this study, I will specifically focus on male violence towards women within marriage. It is widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is caused by male dominance rooted in gender inequality. Authors such as Poling (2003:17) assert that feminist theory has unmasked the purpose of male violence as the maintaining of male dominance. Jewkes (2002b:1426) echoes this understanding as she mentions male dominance and superiority as an ideological base point for gender-based violence in

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<sup>4</sup> ACSA is a Province within the Anglican Communion, which means that it is an autonomous regional group of Anglican churches. Viewed from: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/about.aspx>. [Date accessed: 20 June 2016] As a province, it has one overarching legislative body, which is called “The Provincial Synod.” (Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2007:7). It makes use of common liturgies, which are contained in “An Anglican Prayer Book 1989”. ACSA, as an autonomy, will therefore be used as the backdrop to this study.

intimate partner relationships. Watts and Zimmerman (2002:1232) further claim that gender-based violence serves to maintain the unequal balance of power between men and women, and is used as a mechanism for subordination.

This phenomenon also has an impact on women's health: "A growing body of research evidence is revealing that sharing her life with an abusive partner can have a profound impact on a woman's health. Violence has been linked to a host of different health outcomes, both immediate and long-term" (Krug et al., 2002:100). Davies and Dreyer (2014:2) are more specific, stating: "A woman's psychological functioning is increasingly affected by domestic violence".

1.2.2 The patriarchal theology undergirding pastoral practice creates a shortfall in pastoral care, possibly resulting in the inability of the church to responsibly care for women and men in violent intimate relationships in marriage.

According to Poling, the above-mentioned possible inability of the church sprouts from the refusal to see gender-based violence, particularly male violence, as a major threat to the health of women, children, and families. Instead, the trend is to call for a return to "family values" as a solution to this scourge. These "family values" refer to the "male-dominated, heterosexual nuclear family." This is so because of the patriarchal theology of the church, which gives priority to the rights of men over women (Poling, 2003:8). A religious interpretation of the cause of male violence in line with this notion is that male violence is a sign of the breakdown of God's natural hierarchy of the headship of men over women (Poling, 2003:16). Connell (2002:5) agrees that there are "whole social movements dedicated to re-establishing the 'traditional family.'" Theology and practice are interrelated, with practical theology working at the intersection of theology and practice (Mikoski, 2011:562, 564). In pastoral care, as a sub-discipline of practical theology, theological theory will thus influence practice (Mikoski, 2011:562). Theological theories such as those mentioned above, will have an influence on pastoral care practice,

creating a shortfall. Graham (2011:562) affirms that theological theories that shape pastoral care and counseling are riddled with patriarchal sexism. In light of the above, it is necessary to investigate, for example, the theology undergirding the marriage liturgy, which will have an influence on pastoral care with regard to gender-based violence within marriage in a specific context.

1.2.3 The perceived shortfall in pastoral care gives rise to the need for an alternative approach.

With pastoral care being done from within the context of theology, it will continue to have serious limitations, unless an alternative approach is adopted that takes into consideration gender inequality and male dominance. Maluleke and Nadar (2002:16) are of the opinion that it has become necessary to deconstruct the theology and teachings of the church with regard to power and oppression in order to deal adequately with this pastoral concern. Haddad (2002:98-103), speaking from the context of ACSA,<sup>5</sup> states that the church cannot deal with issues of gender-based violence without addressing men's abuse of power in relating to women, and while patriarchy continues unabated. The church needs to reform its theology. This needs to be done in relation to pastoral and marriage practices. Bons-Storm (1996:17) states that the theological assumptions underlying the theory and practice of pastoral care are patriarchal in nature. These assumptions need to be exposed to "avoid the pitfalls of a patriarchal bias in pastoral care."

1.2.4 In terms of the suggested need to reform the theological framework from within which pastoral care is done, I suggest the investigation and integration of feminist theory and a feminist pastoral approach in order to see how its core values can contribute in making recommendations for an alternative pastoral approach.

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<sup>5</sup> Beverley Haddad is an ordained minister in the Anglican Church.

When the deconstruction and reforming of theology is necessary for an alternative pastoral approach, the incorporation of feminism in such an approach becomes relevant. Feminism is described as a “movement to end sexist oppression” (Ackermann, 2003:20). Doing feminist theology means to be critical, constructive, and collaborative (Ackermann, 2003:21). A feminist pastoral approach will thus be useful in being critical of the teachings that uphold patriarchy, constructive in reshaping theology, as well as collaborative with the church in providing new insights for pastoral care. A feminist pastoral care approach will integrate feminist theory into the pastoral approach and practice. Bennett Moore (2002:12) underlines that this approach operates “within the dynamic of critique and reconstruction.” Adding to this dimension, another aspect of feminist practical theology is that it seeks the transformation of the church and society through reconstructing practice (Graham, 2012:194). Feminism is therefore an essential lens through which to view pastoral care. It needs to be investigated to determine how its core values can contribute to making recommendations for an alternative pastoral approach to gender-based violence within marriage.

Based on the above, the problem statement of this study is as follows: The possible inability of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence within marriage due to the patriarchal nature of the theological framework of its pastoral practice.

### **1.3 Research question**

The research question for this study is: “If the ability of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to pastorally address gender-based violence within marriage is limited, how can a feminist pastoral approach assist the church to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage?”

## **1.4 Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to enable pastoral caregivers within the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to deal with gender-based violence within marriage in a responsible and caring way.

## **1.5 Goal**

The proposed goals of this thesis are:

- To offer recommendations that can be presented to the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to enable responsible pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.
- To provide these recommendations as a networking and lobbying tool for ACSA.
- To promote agency in ACSA with regard to intimate partner violence.

## **1.6 Methodology**

### **1.6.1 Research methodology**

This study will employ a literature research methodology. Bhattacharjee (2012:115-116) recommends that data is gathered and analyzed for usage through a four-pronged process. Firstly, the body of data is divided into primary texts that are selected for inclusion based on their relevance in terms of the question under investigation. This is referred to as sampling. Secondly, the texts are divided into groups according to specific criteria. Each of these units is treated as a separate “unit of analysis”; this process is referred to as “unitizing.” Thirdly, each unit is conceptualized and coded. Fourthly, the data is analyzed and prominent themes, values or phenomena that appear most frequent are identified.

Data that will be gathered will include literature concerning pastoral care, theological theories, liturgical material, feminist theories, and feminist pastoral care. It will also include specific literature and documents pertaining to the

Anglican Church of Southern Africa, such as the canons and constitutions, various Synod books, the prayer book, as well as marriage literature and liturgy.

### **1.6.2 Practical theological methodology**

In line with the study and application of a feminist pastoral approach, I will make use of a feminist analysis as methodology.

The purpose of this analysis is the transformation of the church and society (Graham, 2012:194). Bennet Moore (2002:29) explains that “a feminist analysis implies both the acceptance of the patriarchal nature of society and the commitment to change it”. It assists with the development of new patterns of practices of ministry, which will take into account ways in which women actually inhabit lives of faith and their lived experience in society (Graham, 2012:198). This is done by finding “a basis in doctrine for the practice of affirming women’s full subjectivity,” thereby finding new ways of doing and acting (Graham, 2012:194, 199). The purpose of a feminist analysis is summarized as “to forge a new dynamic of a practical theology that examines the complexities of women’s existence, and which summons and articulates the theological resources for the journey from invisibility to visibility” (Graham, 2012:201).

Graham describes this analysis as including the dynamics of diagnosis, critique, and reconstruction that form a recurrent thread in this process. She uses different metaphors for these stages, such as listening, seeing, speaking, and acting. Other metaphors include protest, affirmation, and new creation (Graham, 2012:194).

In the diagnosis stage of the research, current practices and experiences are investigated (Bennet Moore, 2002:22). This is done to determine any potential problem that may present itself, albeit implicitly, in the practices and experiences that are investigated.

In the critique stage, the theological tradition inherent in the intentional practices of the Christian community is investigated and critiqued (Bennet Moore, 2002:22). Graham (2012:201) states that these intentional practices are “theologically disclosive.” This critique is done to find any theological framework that might undergird or confirm the problem presented in the diagnosis stage. Core values and beliefs are unearthed. More specifically, hidden patriarchal distortions such as power relations or a suppressed perspective of information, which affect believing communities, are illuminated (Bennet Moore, 2002:25). This critique may take the form of scrutinizing material that is used in a pastoral context.

In the reconstruction stage, both the theology and the practice become potentially open to mutual transformation. Suggestions are made for the reconstruction of both. Bennet Moore, citing Ruether, says that this reconstruction is done in a way that will include “that which makes for the full humanity of women” (Bennet Moore, 2002: 22, 28).

Integral to this methodology is the term “praxis,” which Ackermann (2003:35) describes as “the inseparable relationship between reflecting and acting”. It holds together theological theory and practice, or as Gorsuch puts it “theology and situation” (Ackermann, 2001:7). There is a recurring movement from action or practice to reflection on the practice and theology. Praxis results in a practice that has been informed by theory (Klein, 2004:45).

This theology of praxis engages Christian doctrine primarily with regard to hermeneutics (Ackermann, 1997:65). In this hermeneutical process, which Ackermann describes as “the continuous questioning of Christian doctrine,” she focuses not only on suspicion, but also on creative reconstruction (Ackermann, 1992:17; 1997:66).

The feminist analysis methodology holds the “praxis and narrative in creative tension with a more systemized, analytical mode” (Graham, 2012:198).

According to this methodology, this research thesis will be structured as follows:

### **1.6.3 Outline of chapters**

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction and reasoning**

This chapter provides the motivation for this study. It includes a description of the problem statement, and the resulting research question. The methodology is explained as a feminist analysis with the dynamics of diagnosis, critique, and reconstruction.

#### **Diagnosis:**

#### **Chapter 2: Investigating the root cause of intimate partner violence**

This chapter seeks to investigate the root cause of intimate partner violence. For ACSA to engage in responsible pastoral practice, it has to respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence. If there is a correlation between the root cause of intimate partner violence and the theological framework of the pastoral practices of ACSA, the said ability will be compromised. Whether ACSA engages in responsible pastoral practice and whether its possibility to do so is compromised, will only be determined once the root cause has been established.

#### **Chapter 3: An investigation into the pastoral response of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to intimate partner violence**

For ACSA to have the ability to engage in responsible pastoral practice, it needs to respond to and address the root cause of intimate partner violence. Having investigated the root cause and risk factors of intimate partner violence, this chapter will seek to investigate whether the church in its pastoral practice responds to and addresses the root cause of intimate partner violence, the structural support of intimate partner violence by patriarchy, and possible institutional patriarchy.

#### **Critique:**

## **Chapter 4: An investigation into the pastoral practices of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa**

If the theological framework is patriarchal in nature, there will be a correlation between the framework and the root cause of intimate partner violence, which will compromise the ability of ACSA to exercise responsible pastoral care towards victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. This will call for an alternative approach, which will assist the church to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy.

### **Reconstruction:**

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations for an alternative feminist pastoral approach**

A feminist pastoral approach, based on reconstructing tradition and practice in order to transform the church and society, will be investigated and used as a source of recommendations to ACSA. These recommendations will be offered to assist ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy that will enhance its ability to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.

### **1.7 Key words**

Pastoral care: It can be broadly defined as the overall ministry of the church, including healing, sustaining, guiding, liberating, nurturing, and reconciling people to God and one another. It is motivated by the devotion to the well-being of people, and is done from a theological perspective (McClure, 2012:269; Bennet Moore, 2002:1; Van Arkel, 2000:148).

Feminism: A socio-political movement committed to the praxis of the liberation of all women, to end all sexist oppression and to the flourishing of women (Ackermann, 1993:23, 24; Miller-McLemore, 1999:79; Jones, 2000:6).

Gender: The social construction of the relations between women and men (Connell, 2001:34; Tolbert, 2000:99).

Patriarchy: Institutionalized ideological social structures, beliefs and practices that give men power over women, exploiting and subjecting them (Rakoczy, 2000:13; Thatcher, 2011:26).

Power: The ability to have an effect (Poling, 1991:24).

Violence: Oppressive physical power causing physical, psychological, or sexual harm (Krug et al., 2002:89).

Marriage: According to ACSA, the sacrament of Christian marriage is a lifelong union into which a woman and man enter by making vows before God and the church (An Anglican Prayer Book of Southern Africa 1989).

Church: The identifying community for Christians, giving expression to institutionalized Christianity. The universal church can be referred to as the whole Christian religious tradition. The local church is the gathering of the universal church within different denominations (Bennet Moore, 2002:5).

Dominance: A claim to authority. It is also called “power over” (Thatcher, 2011:26).

Masculinity: The gender ideology and practices through which men engage their place in gender relations. It is effected in bodily experience, personality, and culture. Masculinity can be understood as a fluid gendered concept of what it means to be a man within a specific cultural and societal context (Hendriks, Mouton, Hansen & Le Roux, 2012:57).

Feminist pastoral care: A feminist pastoral care approach will integrate feminist theory into the pastoral approach and practices. It involves a critique of existing beliefs and doctrines, with the aim of reconstructing beliefs and practices (Bennet Moore, 2002:4).

## **1.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided the motivation for this research study, which focuses on the ability of ACSA to offer responsible pastoral care to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. It also explained how a feminist pastoral approach can possibly assist the church to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy that will enhance the pastoral care offered in these situations. To determine this ability of ACSA, the root cause of intimate partner violence first has to be established, before any further research can be done. This root cause will be investigated in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

# INVESTIGATING THE ROOT CAUSE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

### 2.1 Introduction

This research study seeks to assist the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance its practice of pastoral care to victims and perpetrators of intimate partners within marriage, should the ability of ACSA to do is found to be limited.

This chapter seeks to investigate the root cause of intimate partner violence. For ACSA to engage in responsible pastoral practice, it has to respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence. If there is a correlation between the root cause of intimate partner violence and the theological framework of the pastoral practices of ACSA, the said ability will be compromised. This situation will require recommendations for an alternative pastoral approach to be proposed. It is therefore necessary to determine what the root cause of intimate partner violence is, in order to determine the possible inability. This knowledge of the root cause and its dimensions will also assist in determining recommendations, should an alternative approach be necessary. Although the research in this chapter was not done in the context of ACSA, its findings will impact on the following chapters.

It has been determined that intimate partner violence is a widespread phenomenon in the South African context. Authors such as Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana (2002:11)<sup>6</sup>, Davies and Dreyer (2014:2)<sup>7</sup> and Gass et al (2011:2766)<sup>8</sup> refer to research statistics and documentation to indicate the

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<sup>6</sup> Jewkes et al. refer to a cross-sectional study of violence against women that was undertaken in three provinces of South Africa, which found that the lifetime prevalence of experiencing physical violence from a current or ex-husband or boyfriend was 24, 6 percent.

<sup>7</sup> Davies and Dreyer refer to a study documented by Peltzer, Mashego and Madeba in 2003 indicating that one out of every eight women in South Africa is beaten by her partner.

<sup>8</sup> Gass et al. refer to a study seeking to analyse gender differences in risk for intimate partner violence, using data from a cross-sectional, nationally representative South African Stress

extremely high prevalence figures of intimate partner violence in South Africa. According to Statistician General Pali Lehohla (cited in Makhubu, 2016<sup>9</sup>), the rate of spousal abuse has risen from 2011 to 2015, with 11 % of assault and murder of women at home rising to 31 % in 2015. Phiri (2000:85) states, “Domestic violence affects the majority of women regardless of race, educational background and economic status.”

Given the extent of this phenomenon across the scope of race, educational background and economic status, as indicated by Phiri, it is understandable that the causes of intimate partner violence would also be extensive in its scope.

Jewkes describes the causes as a “constellation of factors,” and cites Heise, who describes the causes as an “ecological framework,” the meaning of which becomes clear in the following paragraph (Jewkes et al., 2002:13). What is clear from both Jewkes and Heise is that the main cause of intimate partner violence is male dominance, expressed in the power and control of men over women. Jewkes (2002b:1424) refers to male dominance, which is rooted in gender inequality and masculinity, as an “ideological base point.” This base point of male dominance is at the root of and forms a “constellation” or an “ecology,” intertwined with a number of risk factors such as socio-economic circumstances, a culture of violence, tradition, culture, alcohol abuse, and conflict. These risk factors make it clear that intimate partner violence is “entirely a product of its social context” (Jewkes, 2002b:1423). It can be concluded that it is a complex social phenomenon resulting from a set of complex inter-related causes.

The methodology used for this research study is a feminist analysis, which includes the dynamics of diagnosis, critique, and reconstruction. This chapter falls under the dynamic of “diagnosis,” as it will assist in determining the

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and Health Survey. Examining 1 715 currently married or cohabiting adults, 26.5 percent of men reported being perpetrators, while 29.3 percent of women reported to be victims.

<sup>9</sup> Viewed from: <http://mini.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/sa-leads-in-number-of-women-killed-by-their-partners-2018455> [Accessed on 06 May 2016]

possible inability of ACSA with regard to pastoral care. The investigation will focus, firstly, on male dominance as the root cause of intimate partner violence within its context of the construction of gender and gender roles; secondly, it will focus on the risk factors in relation to male dominance; and thirdly, it will look at the effects of intimate partner violence.

## **2.2 Male dominance as the root cause of intimate partner violence within its context of the construction of gender and gender roles**

In order to understand the relationship between gender and male dominance, which lies at the root of intimate partner violence, it is important to investigate the construction of gender and gender roles.

### **2.2.1 Gender construction**

The perpetration of intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships “almost entirely by men,” indicates the relevance of a gender imbalance in this phenomenon of intimate partner violence. This imbalance suggests “important social structural causes that go beyond simple differences between men and women” (O’Toole, 2007:263).

These social structural causes are rooted in what is called the construction of gender. The postmodernist constructionist theory of gender entails that gender is a “socially constructed set of behaviours” and “arrangements of relation amongst people and groups based on the reproductive arena,” i.e. biological sex (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001:34; Tolbert, 2000:99). This theory stands in contrast with the modernist perspective of essentialism, whereby gender is understood as “a set of innate social traits that naturally accompany biological sex” (Tolbert, 2000:99). In the latter view, the female body produces feminine behavior and a feminine identity (Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stravropoulos & Kirkby, 2003:3).

Authors such as Connell (2002:9), Dworkin, Colvin, Hatcher & Peacock (2012:114), as well as Cranny-Francis et al., (2003:3) agree that gender is a social construct of what it means to be a woman or a man within a specific

social context. Connell (2002:9) interprets that being a man or a woman is not a fixed state, but rather “a becoming, a condition actively constructed.” In reference to the classic phrase coined by the pioneering French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, “One is not born, but becomes a woman,” Connell (2002:4) states: “One is not born masculine, but acquires and enacts masculinity, and so becomes a man.” Expected masculine and feminine behavior is learnt in society.

As indicated, gender pertains strongly to the social relations between individuals and between groups. According to Connell (2002:54, 55), these relations are brought into being in everyday life; in other words, the relationships are constructed or constituted. When these relationships are enacted and perpetuated, they form gender patterns, indicating how people relate to one another in everyday activities and practices. It is these enduring or extensive patterns among social relationships that social theory calls “structures.” These structures in turn define possibilities, restrictions and consequences in relationships. Social structure therefore “conditions practice.” An example of such a structure is patriarchy.

The becoming of a woman or a man with certain acquired behavioral traits, together with the enactment of relational patterns, is learnt through what Judith Butler terms “performativity.” According to Cranny-Francis et al., (2003:4), Butler argues that “gender is the process of embodiment which results from the repeated performance of acts of gendering.” Gender is produced when it is performed through the repetition of regulated gendered behavior. Language is a tool through which gender is performed (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001:10). The idea is that “certain things we say perform certain functions just by saying them (Thatcher, 2011:21). Gender can thus be spoken into being.

It is the social construction of gender relations that shapes the gender imbalance which gives rise to male dominance, and therefore, intimate partner violence.

### 2.2.2 Gender socialization

Gender relations are socially constructed according to a binary gender order. Cranny-Francis et al., (2003:1) states that “gender divides human beings into two categories: male and female,” with the male being privileged over the female.

The result of this divide is an unequal gender order, which is socially constructed as a gender hierarchy. According to this order, men are the dominant class and the primary beneficiaries of the hierarchical arrangement, with most men basing their personal identities on being members of the dominant class (Poling, 2003:17; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001:12).

Societal roles for women and men are constructed according to this hierarchical order. With men being viewed as the dominant class, societal norms prescribe that men should be “leaders, authority figures, independent, strong and aggressive, sexually assertive and successful, ambitious and competitive,” while women are expected to be “followers, obedient, dependant, weak and passive, chaste, gentle, nice and kind” (Rakoczy, 2000:15). In line with these binary polarities, Whitehead & Barrett (2001:22) further state the expectation for men to be “wilful, controlling, determined and competent,” while women have to be seen as “fragile, incompetent, precious” and in need of being protected and controlled.

The inherent inequality of this hierarchical order impacts on the societal roles that are ascribed to women and men. This inequality is prevalent in political authority. The United Nations Women’s organization indicates that “only 22 per cent of all national parliamentarians were female as of August 2015, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995”.<sup>10</sup> According to Connell, production relations display inequality, as men have been seen to belong in the economic sphere, while women belong in the domestic sphere. She states that “customary ideas about the division of labor in family life define women as

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<sup>10</sup> Leadership and political participation 2016. Viewed from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#sthash.g8HJozLk.dpuf>. [Accessed on: 06 May 2016]

housewives and carers of children,” resulting in dependence on a male breadwinner (Connell, 2002:56, 62). Labor divisions and the resultant income privilege men: “Most wealth is in the hands of men. Most big institutions are run by men, most science and technology is controlled by men” (Connell, 2002:5).

These roles and inequalities within the hierarchical gender order illustrate the binary divide of the human race into feminine and masculine polarities. The male side of the divide is “generally coded as the positive one, and so becomes the standard by which all others are judged; in effect it becomes the norm” (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003:2). Masculinity has to be set against ‘the other,’ which is femininity. In order to understand male dominance as the root cause of intimate partner violence, it is necessary to further investigate the specific phenomenon of masculinity within gender socialization.

### **2.2.2.1 Masculinity**

- **Defining masculinity**

Masculinity can be understood as a fluid gendered concept of what it means to be a man within a specific cultural and societal context (Hendriks et al., 2012:57). Whitehead & Barrett (2001:15) describe masculinities, which is the application of masculinity, as “those behaviours, languages and practices, existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine.” The contextual nature of masculinity underscores it as a social construction.

Masculinity may be a plurality, but central to all masculinities are the dynamics of power and domination. According to Kiesling (2001:113), “Power is usually cited as the most important factor when discussing the ways in which men’s identities are constructed.” Connell (2002:58) agrees that the key element of masculinity is power, and contrasts this with the association of femininity with weakness and victimization.

Anderson (2016:38) specifically speaks of physical power having been a defining characteristic of being a man. According to this understanding, Poling (2003:15) asserts that men are encouraged to be violent. This constructed expectation of physical power is imposed, as O'Toole (2007:263) states: "The exercise of violence is more likely to be part of boy's and men's experience than girls' and women's – in sport, fantasy play and real-life conflict."

Together with power and domination, "a sense of control is central to the masculine identity" (Cornelius, 2013:180). This sense of control entails self-control and self-reliance. "Real men, some still believe, hide feelings, talk tough, like football, keep distance, swallow tears, avoid dependence, ignore fear, and value action over thought. These patterns have endured so long that men still assume it is their nature to dominate" (Anderson, 2016:36). Masculinity not only requires self-control, "but presumes control over other people" (Anderson, 2016:28). Notwithstanding the gendered power dynamics amongst groups of men, this control is mostly exercised over women. Connell (2001:36) is of the understanding that "the main axis of power in the gender order is the subordination of women and the dominance of men." Furlan (2009:234) agrees that with regard to power, supremacy is in favor of the male gender. With power being central to masculinity and the male identity, it becomes important to further explore the dynamics of power and its pertinence to intimate partner violence.

- **Masculinity and power**

Power can be described as the ability to have an effect. The exercise of power is realized through "acting in effective ways with the objects and people that make up our perceived world" (Poling, 1991:24). Cornelius holds to and broadens the understanding of power being realized through acting in effective ways. She concludes that it is the capacity to "modify the conduct of other individuals or groups," and further adds that it includes the ability of an individual to "prevent his or her own conduct from being modified" (Cornelius, 2013:178). Power, therefore, has a personal, relational, and social impact.

Anderson (2016:38) states that “in itself, power is good.” Personal power in itself enables decision making and resistance of oppression. Power retains its goodness when it is shared with others and used to enable and empower others. Thatcher refers to shared power as “power-with.” It does not negate the self or other; it operates by equality and negotiation, and honors mutuality, rather than control (Thatcher, 2011:26).

Having stated that power in itself is good, Anderson (2016:38) determines that “power becomes a problem when it is used to control or dominate or abuse others.” In contrast to “power-with,” Thatcher terms power used to dominate as “power-over.” With power being causal, “power-over” comes into effect when those affected by the exercise of power do not choose or desire the effect (Thatcher, 2011:26).

With regard to the supremacy of male power, Thatcher argues that where there is domination, there will be subjugation. “Power-over” is causally used by men to coerce women into submission, as in the case of intimate partner violence. Domination requires violence or a threat of violence to maintain itself. “Power-over” also reinforces women’s perceived vulnerability and need for protection (Thatcher, 2011:26). “The more powerful individual creates the role the less powerful must play” (Cornelius, 2013:178).

The social impact of male power is vast. Whitehead and Barrett (2001:17) makes the point of the importance of discourse as a means by which power is exercised and resisted. Power would influence the social process by which dominant and subordinate discourses are produced. The dominant “maleist” discourse would inform and legitimize gender knowledge such as male supremacy and power inequalities. Those who are powerful can organize societies to benefit themselves (Poling, 1991:29).

With Anderson (2016:38) asserting that hierarchy and domination have been connected with the exercise of male power, it can be concluded that male power operates in the sphere of “power-over” rather than that of “power-with” women.

Male power is maintained through the practice of hegemonic masculinity. The concept of hegemony refers to “the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life” (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003:16). Within this concept, a man would engage in certain gendered practices that enforce male dominance “as a way of ensuring that all men keep their position over women” (Connell, 2002:57). These practices not only ensure that men keep their dominant position over women, but also validate and legitimize this position in the social, economic, and cultural sphere (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003:16).

- **The challenge to masculinity**

It has been established that power is central to masculinity and the male identity. When men perceive their power to be undermined, they may experience the perceived undermining as a challenge to their masculinity and male identity.

With the emergence of a democracy based on the Constitution, South Africa has undergone changes with regard to gendered rights, for example, in the economic, employment, and occupational sphere. These changes have brought implications for the perceived ideas of masculinity, posing challenges to male domination over women (Dworkin et al., 2012:100). These challenges to male domination and control inherent in the masculinity construct have potentially left men with the disempowering sense of irrelevance in the domestic sphere (Wood, Lambert & Jewkes, 2008:47). The result of this perceived loss of gendered power is what Jewkes terms a “crisis of male identity” (Jewkes, 2002a:253).

Whitehead and Barrett (2001:6) are of the opinion that the idea of a “crisis in masculinity” is an assumption. While many men still yearn to perform and validate the perceived masculinity construct through dominant, aggressive, and emotionally repressed behavior, the assumption is also that men are reduced to a confused, dysfunctional, and insecure state through women’s “assault” on bastions of male privilege. According to Whitehead and Barrett (2001:7), “Men retain a capacity to resist and threaten this challenge” of an

assumed “crisis” in masculinity. It should be kept in mind that the gender discourse remains dominated by men who have the power to legitimize male supremacy and organize society to their own benefit (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001:7; Poling, 1991:29).

For Dworkin et al., (2012:100), it is important that the notion of a “crisis” in masculinity should not be validated, as this could potentially undermine progressive change. This notion is also questionable, given the fact that masculinity is a social construction and therefore contextual. It is “not fixed,” and therefore should be open to change (Whitehead & Barrett, 2001:8). Connell (2001:45) rather refers to a “disruption” of masculinity.

Brittan (2001:52) offers the suggestion that while masculinity is variable and can be redefined, it is “the justification and naturalization of male power” in the masculine ideology that does not easily change. It is then, indeed, male power, domination, and control that is challenged through democratic transitions such as that in South Africa. This challenge is relevant in both patriarchal authority and dominance in family life, as well as in many spheres of public life.

While scholars disagree regarding the notion of a crisis in male identity, the perceived challenge to masculinity still have an impact on those who impose or maintain male dominance. This challenge elicits a response from those affected by it.

#### **2.2.2.2 Gender and intimate partner violence**

In order to establish the link between gender and intimate partner violence, the purpose of violence needs to be established. Rakoczy (2000:28) states that the purpose of violence is “to exert power and control over another human being”. Davies and Dreyer (2014:2) add that violence serves to induce submissiveness in others, while Connell (2001:44) describes it as “the art of a system of domination.” From these scholars, it can be derived that the aim of violence is the exertion of power, control, domination, and submission.

With power, control, domination, and submission being central to the construction of masculinity and the masculine identity, the correspondence between masculinity and the purpose of violence becomes evident. Intimate partner violence by men towards women then serves to exert or maintain male dominance, control, and power over women (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:2). O'Toole, 2007:257) as well as Nielsen, Hardesty and Raffaelli (2016:206) describe this as "coercive control" – one partner's violent attempt to take or maintain control over the other.

This perpetration of violence towards women by men is a response to a perceived challenge to dominance, power, and control inherent in masculinity and the male identity. Cornelius (2013:179) argues that the perpetrators "abuse women in an effort to gain control over their environment" when they experience a reduced sense of personal control, which they perceive as central to their masculine identity. This reduced sense of control acts as a trigger for violent episodes. Anderson (2016:38) and Du Plessis (2015:6) term this reduced sense of control "vulnerability." To be human implies being vulnerable to external factors that cannot be controlled. With societal norms prescribing men to be in control, independent and strong, vulnerability becomes a challenge to masculinity. "When men perceive themselves to be threatened from without or feel small or in danger of being humiliated, they are likely to act, sometimes violently, to dominate or defend. When men presume to be invulnerable in the exercise of personal power, they are likely to treat with disdain what they believe cannot wound them" (Anderson, 2016:38). The desire to construct an invulnerable life induces violence.

Within intimate partner relationships, noncompliance by the female partner is seen as a challenge to masculinity. This perceived challenge is met by violence as a tactic to retain and exercise general control over the non-compliant partner (O'Toole, 2007:263). Noncompliance is experienced when women do not behave as men expect them to, or whenever a woman dissatisfies a man in any way, speaks up to him, or slights his male esteem (Wood et al., 2008:64; Rakoczy, 2000:10). Intimate partner violence thus serves to maintain the male privilege of superiority and headship. Johnson

interprets this headship as: “I am the head of the household, the king of my castle” (cited O’Toole, 2007:260). This means that the word of “the man of the household” is law, and should not be challenged. This should hold true even more rigidly in public, where the man should not be humiliated by his spouse (O’Toole, 2007:261). Watts (2002:1232) agrees that violence against intimate partners is often used to demonstrate and enforce a man’s position as head of the household or relationship. At the same time, women are forced into “specific roles of powerlessness and helplessness” (Cornelius, 2013:178).

This understanding was demonstrated by a research project called the One Man Can Campaign.<sup>11</sup> The men who formed part of the focus groups had a perceived right to “household authority,” which was understood as “being the head of the house”. They experienced the introduction of gendered rights to women in South Africa as a loss of power and control. They believed that these rights were imposed from the outside into the domestic sphere of the home. This was in tension with their “household authority.” This loss of power within the household was indicated as the reason for high levels of intimate partner violence in South Africa. “Men argued that male violence frequently erupts over conflict about rights and that women have newfound power within the judicial system to make right-based claims against abuse.” Many men linked increasing levels of intimate partner violence with the constitutional rights of women (Dworkin et al., 2012:110, 111).

From the above arguments, it can be deduced that intimate partner violence is evoked and serves to maintain “the unequal balance of power” between women and men (Watts, 2002:1232). According to Wood et al., (2008:47, 62), anthropological work demonstrates that violence in marital or non-marital relationships is primarily related to the organization of gender inequality, and that it can be interpreted as an attempt to assert superiority. In assuming superiority and power over women, men who abuse women are unlikely to

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<sup>11</sup> The “One man Can” campaign is a formative research project that sought to explore men’s attitudes about gender relations in the context of the development and implementation of an anti-violence and HIV prevention intervention. It was designed and implemented by Sonke Gender Justice Network, an NGO in South Africa. This research was done during 2008 and 2009 over six provinces in South Africa.

think of themselves as deviant. “They usually feel that they are entitled, that they are exercising a right. They are authorised by an ideology of supremacy” (Connel, 2001:44). Cross-cultural research suggests that societies with stronger ideologies of male dominance have more intimate partner violence (Jewkes, 2002b:1425).

Nadar (2005:19) is thus correct in her opinion that gender socialization and its resultant power dynamics has a role in the perpetuation of violence against women. Intimate partner violence is fundamentally related to the unequal gender order, which is socially constructed as a gender hierarchy. Men are attributed supremacy according to this gender order, and are the primary beneficiaries of the hierarchical arrangement. In line with male supremacy, societal gender norms prescribe that men should be strong, aggressive, and controlling, while women are expected to be obedient, dependent, and in need of being controlled (Rakoczy, 2000:15). With the dynamics of power and domination central to the construction of masculinity within gender, power over women needs to be retained in order to maintain the masculine identity. When male power is challenged or threatened by a partner, masculinity becomes vulnerable. The violent abuse of physical power towards an intimate partner is then used to affirm and “restore” masculinity through the domination, control and submission of the partner.

### ***2.2.2.3 The structural support given to intimate partner violence by patriarchy***

The meaning of patriarchy is derived from the Latin terms *arche*, which means “rule,” and *pateres*, which means “fathers.” It can thus be directly translated as “the rule of the fathers.” “It is a type of power-over,” which entails domination and subjugation, i.e. the domination of men and the subjugation of women (Thatcher, 2011:26). It can be defined as an institutionalized, ideological social structure that gives men power over women, exploiting and subjecting women, both in the home and in public life. It encompasses and legitimizes the beliefs and practices that ensure the upholding of the unequal gender arrangement, whereby men have power over women in cultural, political,

social, and economic positions (Rakoczy, 2000:13; Cranny-Francis et al., 2003:15; Thatcher, 2011:26; Cornelius, 2013:180).

O'Toole (2007:250) refers to feminist analysis in saying that “patriarchal power relations produce gender ideologies and cultural conditions that create and sustain domestic violence”. Tracy (2007:567) further states that within feminist theory, “the perspective developed that patriarchy, in any and all forms, is the ultimate cause of all abuse against women, for patriarchy is seen as the overarching social construct which ultimately engenders abuse.” This can be viewed against the background that patriarchy as a structure defines possibilities, restrictions, and consequences in relationships, thereby conditioning practice (Connell, 2002:54, 55). Tracy (2007:577) presents the argument that if men have a right to practice power and control over women, they also have the right to enforce that control. Rakoczy (2000:13) puts it that “patriarchy as a belief allows a man to regard a woman as his property; hence inflicting violence upon her is often justified as the right of the one whom owns her.”

Patriarchal social norms, beliefs and practices of male dominance over women reinforces violence perpetrated by males to take control over women (Nielsen et al., 2016:207). Cornelius (2013:181) concludes that “this patriarchal ideology becomes an energy source of patriarchal domination. For most feminists violence against women is only possible in a context that defines women as subordinate to men. The more patriarchal the norms are, the higher the level of wife beating”. Patriarchy provides the context that defines a woman as subordinate to a man, thereby providing structural support for the phenomenon of intimate partner violence.

### **2.3 Risk factors**

There are a number of risk factors that contribute to the occurrence of intimate partner violence. These are all relevant to the social context. On their own, these risk factors do not give rise to intimate partner violence, but they

enhance the already existing purpose of exercising and maintaining male dominance.

### **2.3.1 Socio-economic circumstances**

Poverty per se is not a risk factor for intimate partner violence, as it “occurs in all socio-economic groups” (Jewkes, 2002b:1424). In fact, a South African study showed that intimate partner physical violence “was not associated in the expected way with indicators of socio-economic status,” which is that it is more frequent and severe in lower economic groups (Jewkes, 2002b:1424).

The link between poverty and intimate partner violence is mediated by masculine identity. Male identity is “associated with power,” which is maintained through providence, and which in turn enables control and headship. When poverty and unemployment disallow the male partner to be the provider, it becomes a threat to perceived notions of masculinity, causing a “crisis” or “vulnerability” in the masculine identity (Jewkes, 2002b:1424). The ability to live in a manner that is regarded as successful is reduced (Jewkes, 2002a:253). In the research done by the One Man Can Campaign, “all the focus group participants shared the common belief that men should provide economically for their families.” (Dworkin et al., 2012:103). These men expressed considerable frustration at being unable to live up to this perceived expectation. It was understood that this experience explicitly took away their power, and made it difficult for them to maintain dominance over their wives (Dworkin et al., 2012:103). Intimate partner violence then becomes a means to affirm masculinity, to regain power, and to “live out certain gender positions that might privilege some men through the exercise of power” (Wood et al., 2008:65).

Violence is not only associated with an inability to provide as a result of poverty and unemployment, but also with inequality in income, “whether in the form of advantage to either party” (Jewkes, 2002b:1424). The economic dependency of women enhances men’s control over women’s entrapment in abusive relationships (O’Toole, 2007:264). While this is true, the risk of intimate partner violence is increased when the woman is employed while her

partner is not (Jewkes, 2002b:1424). Even when both partners are employed, if the woman brings more money into the household than her male partner, the situation becomes particularly threatening to his masculinity (Dworkin et al., 2012:104). When women are able to secure their own material belongings, men find it harder to “assert their control over them” (Dworkin et al., 2012:106). Intimate partner violence could thus increase with the heightened autonomy of women (O’Toole, 2007:251), thereby assuring the dominance, supremacy and control of the man.

Poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality between partners thus presents a challenge to masculinity, which may be perceived as a “crisis.” Through intimate partner violence the “crisis” in masculinity is resolved, as it returns control to the male partner. These socio-economic circumstances then become a risk factor for intimate partner violence.

### **2.3.2 A culture of violence**

Intimate partner violence appears to be more common in a context where violence is “being accepted as a social norm,” thus creating a “culture of violence” (Jewkes, 2002b:1426). “Crosscultural studies of intimate partner violence suggest that it is much more frequent where violence is usual in conflict situations and political struggles” (Jewkes, 2002b:1426). “South Africa’s complex history of colonialism, industrialization, and militarization has produced the conditions for interpersonal and criminal violence of multiple kinds to flourish” (Wood et al., 2008:44). Its past of “violent state repression and community insurrection” has led to an understanding of violence being accepted as a social norm, thereby creating a culture of violence (Jewkes, 2002b:1426).

In a much narrower sense than the broader culture of violence in a society at large, the experience of violence on a personal level, such as in the home, may lead to an understanding of violence being acceptable. Gass, Stein, Williams and Seedat (2011:2765, 2767) refer to “intergenerational learning of violence,” which may include both witnessing parental violence and childhood physical abuse. “Experience of violence in the home in childhood teach

children that violence is normal in certain settings. In this way men learn to pursue violence and women learn to tolerate it or at least tolerate aggressive behavior” (Jewkes, 2002b:1426). Gass et al., (2011:2767) indicates that there is a “stronger relationship between growing up in a violent home and victimization for women and perpetration for men.” There is a consistent association between male perpetrators’ childhood experiences of violence and the occurrence of intimate partner violence against women. This experience may be being physically abused. “Exploration of male violence against women by feminists and nonfeminists shows a connection between childhood experiences of being hit by loved ones and the later occurrence of violence in adult relationships” (O’Toole, 2007:271).

Childhood experiences of intimate partner violence, as well as the personal experience of being physically abused, become normative. These experiences teach that violence can be used to exert power, control, and domination over other human beings and to gain control over their environment. The intergenerational transmission of violence whereby women become victims and men become perpetrators, as indicated by Gass et al., (2011:2767) and Jewkes (2002b:1426), indicate the unequal gender construction according to which men are the aggressors and women the passive submissives. When masculinity is challenged, the perpetrator reverts to the learnt behavior in order to re-establish male domination.

Rakoczy (2000:5-6) affirms the influence of a culture of violence on intimate partner violence. Whilst the public dimension of a culture of violence is widely condemned, it is the private dimension, experienced in intimate partner violence that is more insidious and life-denying.

### **2.3.3 Tradition and culture**

Culture, as the systematic organization of the way of life of a specific group of people, becomes a risk factor for intimate partner violence if its embedded beliefs and customs create an environment conducive to it. According to Pillay (2015:559), many women suffer in cultures where patriarchy is condoned and defended as the natural order of things.

The form that intimate partner violence takes may be culture and society specific (O'Toole, 2007:251). Writing from a South African context, Maluleke and Nadar<sup>12</sup> (2002:9) are of the opinion that “cultural influence” plays a strong role in perpetuating violence and preventing women from standing up to it. In this context, there are two issues that must be given some attention here: The first is that of authority and the demand of respect, and the second is that of ownership and obedience.

“The African view of authority is hierarchical, centralised and according to seniority or status” (Baloyi, 2008:7). Women are on the level of a slave or a child (Baloyi, 2008:3). Hierarchy is reinforced through “the culturally embedded notion of *ukuhlonipha* (respect), which was a defining feature of any social relationship defined by hierarchy: between children and adults, men of different age sets, married individuals, and youth and elders” (Wood et al., 2008:60). Dworkin et al., (2012:105) concluded that the narrative of respect is central to and defining in the construction of masculinity in South Africa. The mediating discourse here is a moral one, in which men are in a hierarchical corrective relationship to women. Violence constituted a tactic employed by men “to achieve characteristics that were directly associated with manliness, in particular success in maintaining control over women and enforcing respectful relationships deemed to underlie the proper (hegemonic) gender order.” In the context of the prevailing hierarchy, with its inherent expectation of respect, the objective of intimate partner violence is not to fight, but to punish or teach respect (Wood et al., 2008:61, 66)<sup>13</sup>. According to the narrative of respect, intimate partner violence is justified if that respect is violated (Dworkin et al., 2012:107).

The idea of ownership of a wife, and the resulting expectation of obedience, is linked to the cultural practice of offering a bride price. While this practice may have originally meant well, it has become open to blatant abuse and an instrument for oppression and violence (Nadar, 2005:19). To illustrate this

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<sup>12</sup> Maluleke identifies as a Black African male, and Nadar identifies as a South African Indian woman. They both consider themselves as Black, but write from the cultures associated with their identities.

<sup>13</sup> This finding is from a study by Wood et al. in the setting of an urban township in the former Transkei region of the Eastern Cape, a predominantly Xhosa-speaking area.

understanding, Phiri (2002:24) refers to the following quotation: “In African culture my wife is not my equal. She is my property. She is like one of my children. I have paid ‘lobola’<sup>14</sup> for her. Therefore we cannot be equals.” The impression is given that the man has paid for the woman (Rakoczy, 2000:16). The belief in the African culture is that a man owns the woman in a marriage relationship, and that there is no partnership between husband and wife, but rather male domination and female submission (Phiri, 2002:24). Traditionally, the woman’s duty is to submit herself blindly to the man (Baloyi, 2008:2).

According to findings of the OMC Campaign, the paying of lobola demands obedience from the wife, as she is under the “ownership” of her husband. When the woman refuses to be obedient to the man, this cultural expectation is not fulfilled (Dworkin, 2012:107). In response to this refusal, violence is used as a disciplining technique and a method of control and punishment (Wood et al., 2008:45, 47). Rakoczy (2000:8, 10) states that a common attitude is that men have the rights to beat their wives due to the understanding of “ownership.” As “head of his family,” a man has every right to “conduct his family affairs the way he deems fit” (Maluleke & Nadar, 2002:9). Baloyi (2008:2) quotes from the City Press of 18 February 2007: “I do not understand why I am arrested for beating my own wife, because she must submit herself to me since I paid lobola for her.”

It can be concluded that culture shapes the role of men and women in society. In certain South African cultures, it is acceptable and expected that men discipline and women submit to the discipline. Cornelius (2013:180) cites Kirkwood, saying that cultural hierarchies afford men greater cultural status, which supports the historical legacy of men’s right to punish their wives. The use of physical violence is condoned as long it stays within certain boundaries of severity (Jewkes, 2002b:1426). Intimate partner violence is defended in the cultural terms of authority and ownership of women in marriage. These beliefs show the relevance of including culture as a risk factor for intimate partner violence.

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<sup>14</sup> The Xhosa term for the practice of offering a bride price.

#### **2.3.4 The abuse of alcohol**

The effects of alcohol consumption, such as the reduction of inhibition and the clouding of judgment often serves as a backdrop for or allowance of antisocial behavior. As such, “Alcohol consumption is associated with increased risk of all forms of interpersonal violence” (Jewkes, 2002b:1425).

In the case of intimate partner violence, this risk is closely associated with the notions of obedience and punishment. Johnson states that being a good wife and mother is being understood as obedience and doing what the husband says (cited in O’Toole, 2007:261). Many men are of the understanding that it is a socially expected of them to discipline their wives for matters such as insubordination and disobedience (Jewkes, 2002b:1426). In striving to fulfill this expectation, men admit to using alcohol in a premeditated way to build up courage and anger to execute the punishment (Wood et al., 2008:57).

The consumption of alcohol is often blamed for the infliction of severe injuries, as the original intent is presented as discipline and not fighting. Control is said to be lost through intoxication (Wood et al., 2008:65).

The risk factor presented by the abuse of alcohol is closely related to male domination, as alcohol consumption enables men to exercise physical domination while in a state of reduced inhibition.

#### **2.3.5 Relational conflict**

Violence in intimate partner relationships is strongly associated with frequent verbal disagreements and high levels of conflict.

Although physical violence is associated with the expression of frustration and anger (Wood et al., 2008:65), it is often employed as a “tactic in relational conflict” (Jewkes, 2002b:1425). High levels of conflict are likely to be associated with “women’s transgressions of conservative gender roles or challenges to male privilege, as well as matters of finance” (Jewkes, 2002b:1425). “Conflict about transgressions of gender norms and failure to fulfil cultural stereotypes of good womanhood are amongst the most important

variables for risk of intimate partner violence” (Jewkes, 2002b:1425). Violence is employed in an attempt to resolve the conflict through control and domination. Wood et al (2008:47) mention that violence is used to finalize the conflict.

Marital instability, with the consideration of leaving the relationship, increases the risk of violence. A woman is most at risk when she “attempts to report the abuse or leave an abusive relationship” (O’Toole, 2007:252).

The tactic of violence in relational conflict serves as a means of control and domination over women, forcing them into submission, rather than resolving the conflict.

## **2.4 Effect**

With regards to the victim, intimate partner violence affects the whole person. It results in the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual suffering of the victim, and ultimately impacts negatively on society as a whole (Phiri, 2000:85; Watts et al., 2002:1232; Gass et al., 2011:2765; Davies et al., 2014:1).

The grave physical health consequences include damage to reproductive organs, infertility, and even mortality due to injury (Cornelius, 2013:176; Jewkes, 2002a:253). If the violence occurs during pregnancy, it may result in suffering and have a wide range of deleterious health consequences (O’Toole, 2007:253).

Victims live with the psychological reality of pain (Rakoczy, 2000:28). This is likely to result in the development of common psychological problems such as fear, confusion, anger, post-traumatic stress disorder, concentration problems, mood swings, anxiety, shock, and general vulnerability to stress, feelings of loss, powerlessness, and a lack of security (Davies et al., 2014:2). Intimate partner violence is strongly associated with depression, substance abuse, and suicide (Jewkes, 2002a: 253; Gass et al., 2011:2782; Cornelius,

2013:176). Kubeka finds that in violent domestic situations, battered women may demonstrate weak parenting skills and might not attend to their children sufficiently because of the strain of being battered (cited in Davies, 2014:2). The victim's psychological functioning is increasingly impacted by feelings of guilt.

Intimate partner violence has a huge emotional impact as it seeks to overpower, dominate, control, and ultimately force the victim into submission. It leaves the victim feeling devoid of any personal control, which is replaced with feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. Assuming submissiveness, the victim seeks to appease the perpetrator, but is unable to predict the escalation of the violence. The victim thus has no control over her personal safety (Cornelius, 2013:179). Physically, she is controlled by the perpetrator.

These women are degraded, filled with fear, objectified, socially and economically deprived, and overwhelmed by responsibility as their perpetrators play power roles. The woman accepts the perception that she is valued less than others. As a result, her personal value diminishes (Cornelius, 2013:179). In turn, she loses her sense of dignity. The woman is therefore objectified as she becomes the property of her abuser, relinquishing control over her own life, being, and identity.

It is common for the perpetrator to blame the victim for the relational problems. As the position of power is maintained through violence, the woman starts to "question her own subjective reality." "The woman is thus emotionally controlled by her abuser as she loses touch with her own needs, wants and perceptions" (Cornelius, 2013:179).

The reality of losing human dignity and worth has a huge spiritual impact. Du Plessis (2015:2) underlines the importance of human dignity together with integrity, and the profound religious importance of protecting both. She highlights the important aspects of morality, character, and identity within human dignity and integrity, with integrity described as "the whole thing as working well, undivided, integrated, intact and uncorrupted". Van Schalkwyk,

Boonzaier and Gobodo-Madikizela (2013:324) refer to the experience of victims struggling with their identity and morality in the context of desiring to harm the abuser. Their dignity and integrity seem to be compromised as they struggle with a “negative identity” and a “positive self.”

For Rakoczy, these experiences of the denial of dignity, integrity and worth, result in the denial of sacredness, and the desecration of the image of God within. “When the abuse is systematic and ongoing, and there is little information or encouragement to see the *imago dei* within oneself, the desecration is internalized” (Rakoczy, 2000:28).

At the social level, intimate partner violence affects society, as it leads to the perpetuation of male dominance and female submission. This happens through what Gass et al., (2011:2765) term “intergenerational learning of violence,” whereby violence becomes normative through childhood experiences of violence in the home. Davies et al., (2014:2) cites Kubeka (2008) saying that “exposure to violence at home during the learning phase of childhood contributes to violent behaviour. It leads to violent relationships, post- traumatic stress and dating violence among adolescents”. Exposure to violence at a young age makes it difficult for children to learn non-violent behavior. The child becomes an indirect victim through witnessing the violence, and “the victim often becomes the perpetrator” (Davies, 2014:3). The cycle of intimate partner violence and the gender construction of male dominance are enforced through the exposure to intimate partner violence during childhood.

The various and comprehensive effects of intimate partner violence are invariably interconnected, with the one impacting on the other. The ultimate effect remains the submission and disempowering of women, not only in the home, but also in society. Thereby, the unequal gender relationship between women and men, presenting in male superiority, privilege, and headship, is maintained.

## 2.5 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the causes and effects of intimate partner violence are extensive in their scope. The purpose, and thus, the cause of intimate partner violence is to maintain male dominance and female submission, which is rooted in the unequal gender construction of what it means to be a female or male. Gender relations are constructed according to a hierarchical order, with males being dominant and females submissive. With power being the single most important factor in defining the male identity, it becomes imperative for men to exercise power in order to maintain masculinity. With women being viewed as of lower social standard and value, masculinity needs to be maintained. When masculinity is challenged through either societal circumstances or insubordination of a partner, a response is elicited. This response may include intimate partner violence as a means to restore a sense of power, dominance and control. This occurrence is structurally supported by patriarchy, which provides the context that defines the female as inferior and the male as superior. This core purpose is intertwined with a number of risk factors that increase the possibility of intimate partner violence. The root cause, together with the risk factors, form a set of interrelated causes.

The effect of intimate partner violence is destructive to the whole being of the victim and all that encompasses being human: body, mind, and spirit. The societal impact should also not be undermined, as it serves to maintain the unequal relationship between women and men. Intimate partner violence thus succeeds in its purpose of maintaining male dominance.

With the root cause and effect of intimate partner violence having been established, the next chapter will investigate whether ACSA responds to these causes in its pastoral response to intimate partner violence.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PASTORAL RESPONSE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This research thesis seeks to assist the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance its pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage, should this enhancement be necessary. In order to determine whether this is necessary, it has to be researched whether the current pastoral response and practice is responsible, meaning that it is directed toward: healing, sustaining, reconciling, guiding, resisting, empowering, nurturing and liberating. For ACSA to engage in responsible pastoral practice, it has to respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence, which has been determined as male dominance supported by the societal structure of patriarchy.

This chapter seeks to explore the pastoral practice and response of ACSA in relation to gender-based violence. For ACSA to engage in responsible pastoral practice, it has to respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence, which in the previous chapter was determined as male dominance supported by the societal structure of patriarchy. It has to engage hermeneutically with its own practices, theology and theory to determine any possible institutional patriarchy that will limit its ability to exercise responsible pastoral care in this context.

Having investigated the root cause and risk factors of intimate partner violence as male dominance supported by patriarchy, this chapter will seek to ascertain whether the church in its pastoral practice responds to and addresses the root cause of intimate partner violence, the structural support of intimate partner violence by patriarchy and possible institutional patriarchy. Based on the findings, together with additional research, it will be determined

whether ACSA is able to engage in responsible and adequate pastoral practice and if there is a need for recommendations for an alternative approach.

Cooper-White (2011:839) advises of the importance of exploring battered women's own experiences of pastoral care, as well as the responsiveness of religious communities when research is done to investigate pastoral practice and to advance pastoral approaches. It is therefore important not only to investigate the pastoral response of the church, but also how victims experience this response. Their experience will also highlight the theological issues that ACSA should engage in as part of its response. Not having access to the specific experiences of women from within ACSA, and given that the methodology of this thesis is not empirical research, this investigation of women's experiences is based on general literature pertaining to the topic, with the understanding of the generalizability of intimate partner violence.

This research follows a feminist analysis methodology, which includes the dynamics of diagnosis, critique, and reconstruction. This chapter forms part of the "diagnosis" phase, as it seeks to reveal the pastoral response of ACSA and assists to determine whether there is a need for an alternative pastoral approach.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: First, I will explore the experience of the pastoral response of victims of intimate partner violence, and secondly, I will explore the official pastoral response and practice of ACSA. This will be done by investigating the discussions and resolutions at official synods, official responses from leaders in the form of bishops and clergy, as well as a survey done on behalf of ACSA.

### **3.2 Women's experience of pastoral care in response to intimate partner violence**

I will investigate how women experience the pastoral care offered to victims of intimate partner violence. This investigation will be based on a general literature search. The finding will provide an indication of general pastoral

practice and will assist in the development of a responsible pastoral care approach.

### **3.2.1 Prayer and faith**

One of the common responses that women get from clerics is that they should pray about the abuse and that they must have faith in God to stop the abuse. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:174) uses the example of a woman who shared the response of her pastor who told her that “these things happen in marriages, but with prayer, God would respond”. In this response, the responsibility for the abuse to stop is placed on the victim, whilst the responsibility of the perpetrator is minimized. Shanon-Lewy and Dull (2005:650) refers to a similar response experienced by victims, whereby “God would honour her action by either stopping the abuse or giving her the strength to endure it.” It appears that the onus to stop the abuse rests on the ability of the victim to pray and on her level of faith.

### **3.2.2 Marriage and divorce**

Marriage is considered sacred, and intimate partner violence may not be considered a justifiable reason to leave the marriage. Victims leaving the marriage “may lose the support of members of her congregation and clergy because she is the one perceived as breaking up the marriage” (Shanon-Lewy & Dull, 2005:651).

Due to the upholding of the permanency and sacredness of marriage and the condemnation of divorce as a response to their plight, battered women commonly express guilt for failing their families and God in not being able to maintain their marriages by enduring the abuse (Nason-Clark, 2004:304). Nadar (2005:19) uses an example from a case study to illustrate how an abused woman believed that she would be committing “a grave sin against God if she were to leave her husband,” because upon seeking help, the cleric informed her that divorce would be wrong. The knowledge of the sacredness and permanency of marriage imposed on victims makes it very difficult for them to seek help.

### **3.2.3 Headship of the husband**

According to her research, Shanon-Lewy and Dull (2005:651) indicates that victims' reports of violence are often minimized in pastoral responses, and a lack of submissiveness on the part of the victim is viewed as partly responsible for the violence. The husband is portrayed as the spiritual head of the family to whom the woman must be obedient. As an example of this response, Maluleke and Nadar (2002:9) refer to an incident where a pastor cited supposed Biblical mandates to a victim in order to justify the abuse, as following: "The first was the headship of the male over the female; the second the lack of submission on the part of Kerina toward her husband". Maluleke and Nadar (2002:11) relate another incident: "Often Khensani appealed for the pastors intervention, but he would only show her scripture verses that 'proved' that she was wrong to complain and to question her husband's right to violate her. Instead she would be advised to adjust to his moods, his likes and dislikes and in that way avoid beatings."

### **3.2.4 Suffering**

Louw refers to what Eiesland calls "virtuous suffering." Suffering is perceived as a sign of grace, whereby the sufferer, which would be the victim in the case of intimate partner violence, is divinely elected to be "purified and perfected through painful trails" (Louw, 2008:431). The abuse is seen as "a temporary affliction that must be endured to gain heavenly rewards." Submitting to and enduring the abuse is therefore upheld as "a praiseworthy disposition for a Christian" (Louw, 2008:431). Virtuous suffering is seen as obedience to God. It encourages passivity and resignation, leaving the victim with feelings of helplessness. Nason-Clark (2004:304) notes the following question: "Could battering be a religious woman's cross to bear?" Authors such as Shannon-Lewy and Dull (2005:651) agree that virtuous suffering is held before victims as a pastoral response. The victim is encouraged to accept the suffering as a follower of Christ, which would result in the victim struggling in her relationship with and image of God (Cornelius, 2013:184). The encouragement to endure suffering and the result thereof makes it easy to understand "why women may choose to remain silent about domestic violence" (Cornelius, 2013:187).

### **3.2.5 Forgiveness**

Petersen (2009:464) cites Fortune and Eger, who state that “it is either by its silence or its instruction that the church has too often communicated to battered women that they should stay in abusive relationships, try to be better wives, and ‘forgive and forget’.” According to Shannon-Lewy and Dull (2005:651), the pastoral response of forgiveness flows from the understanding of virtuous suffering. The religious belief of forgiveness is interpreted that the victim must forgive her abuser immediately and seek reconciliation with him. She offers the opinion that the act of forgiveness without justice or true repentance facilitates the cycle of violence (Shannon-Lewy and Dull 2005:651). Nason-Clark (2004: 305) cites Hudson saying that the words “Father, forgive them. For they do not know what they are doing” is often used as a model by which victims ought to approach their perpetrators. By advising the victim to forgive, the responsibility is once again placed on the victim, while the abuser avoids responsibility and accountability.

### **3.2.6 Reflection on responses**

The pastoral responses experienced by women appear not to be helpful and responsible. These responses lack the ability to heal, liberate, sustain, guide, transform, reconcile, and nurture. Instead, they silence, seclude, burden, and subdue women, forcing them to endure and accept the abuse. Shanon-Lewy and Dull (2005:653) state that in general, clergy are more likely to be initially contacted over every other resource after a violent episode, but the involvement of clergy decline with each succeeding incident. The suggestion is that women perceive clergy to be unhelpful in stopping the abuse (Shanon-Lewy and Dull, 2005:653). These experiences by women indicate the need for the development of a responsible pastoral care approach. It also indicates the theological issues that the church should be engaging with.

## **3.3 The response and practice of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa**

In seeking to investigate the response and practice of ACSA to determine whether it addresses the root cause of intimate partner violence, no specific

and exclusive response to intimate partner violence within marriage has been found to be available. With intimate partner violence being a subsidiary to gender-based violence, the response of the church to gender and gender-based violence in general will be explored. Lotvonen (2015:18) states that “generally there seems to be limited statistical information available on gender within the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.” This study will investigate the official pastoral response of the church as indicated through its synods and resolutions, statements from bishops, diocesan responses, clergy responses, and a survey on gender done on behalf of the church.

### **3.3.1 Chronological overview of the official pastoral response of the ACSA to gender-based violence**

In investigating the official pastoral response of ACSA, it has been found that gender-based abuse has been on the agenda of the Provincial Synod of ACSA since 1989. The Provincial Synod is the highest legislative and decision-making body of ACSA, and should deal with questions of common interest to the whole Province (Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2007:7, 9). Any resolutions that are taken at such synod gatherings will impact the practices of the church. To gain insight into the official pastoral response and therefore practice of the church with regard to intimate partner violence, it is important to investigate the synodical resolutions and the implementation thereof with regard to this matter. This will be done according to the dates that these resolutions were made.

In 1989, under the heading “Sexual abuse,” it was noted that the Resolution on Sexual Abuse of the 1988 Lambeth Conference<sup>15</sup> expressed concern about the frequency of domestic violence and the sexual abuse of children and adults, and that it asked Christian leaders to devise a means of support for victims and perpetrators. The department of training for ministries was asked to recommend appropriate and contextual awareness programs for dealing with these abuses (Acts and Resolutions of the Twenty Sixth session

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<sup>15</sup> The Lambeth Conference has become a ten-yearly meeting of bishops from the world-wide Anglican Communion. It is not an executive which imposes doctrine or discipline but it is a forum where the mind of the Communion can be expressed on matters of controversy. Viewed from: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org>. [Date accessed: 20 June 2016]

of the Provincial Synod, 1989:71). Whilst the concern of the Lambeth Conference focuses on domestic violence and the sexual abuse of children and adults, and the response is inclusive of sexual and domestic abuse, the heading was “sexual abuse”. The heading appears to limit the discussion to sexual abuse, exclusive of domestic violence, or indicates that domestic violence is not acknowledged as a separate occurrence. In 1992, also under the heading “Sexual abuse”, the focus of the resolution was exclusively on rape: assistance of rape victims, prevention through cautioning children of dangerous areas and enhancing security, and the availability of counseling for rape victims (Acts and Resolutions of the Twenty Seventh session of the Provincial Synod, 1992:76, 77).

With the focus on sexual abuse, no mention is made of domestic violence as during the previous synod. The resolution clearly focuses on the assistance of the victim after the abuse, and on prevention through cautioning and security. There is no focus on the perpetrator, theological reform, or teachings on rape. The responsibility for prevention is placed on the possible victim.

In 1995, under the heading “Domestic violence,” the synod noted with concern the silence surrounding domestic violence, especially spouse and child abuse. The church was called upon to break the silence by preaching and teaching that all forms of violence are contrary to the gospel of love, and to find resources to equip and train people to minister in these situations (Acts and Resolutions of the Twenty Eighth session of the Provincial Synod, 1995:84). In the resolution passed, the focus shifted to domestic violence, although inclusive of child abuse and all forms of violence. The call to break the silence is commendable.

In 1999 a much more detailed resolution was passed under the heading “Violence against women.” The synod confessed its shame at the violence taking place against women, especially within homes and congregations. It recognized that violence against women derives from the abuse of power, and that the abuse of power is possible because of the ways society, culture and religion have defined the roles of men and women. Recommendations

included the development of training programs for clergy, sermon guidelines and liturgies of healing, the exploration of abuse against women and ways to deal with it, and the formation of a “Women’s Desk” in each Diocese. It requested the archbishop to call upon governments to train more police to deal with the problem and to provide suitable interview rooms for victims. It urged the establishment of safe houses, support groups, information availability, healing rituals and liturgies, as well as self-protection strategy programs for women (Acts and Resolutions of the Twenty Ninth session of the Provincial Synod, 1999:97, 98, 99).

Despite the recognition of the role of religion in defining the roles of women and men and the impact it has had on the abuse of power, no attention is given to the theology undergirding the defining of the roles of women and men, and the reform thereof. The recommendation of the formation of a “Women’s Desk” and the suggested establishment of safe houses and self-protection strategy programs place the responsibility of prevention and of the resultant effects of abuse squarely on the victim, indicating that the problem is an issue for women. No attention is given to the transformation of the perpetrator, but rather that of the victim.

In 2002, under the heading “Violence against women, children and men,” the synod noted the escalation of violence against women, children, and men, including in Christian homes. A resolution was passed requesting the setting up of a task team to identify and compile resources for appropriate education, inclusive of gender equity and justice issues (Acts and Resolutions of the Thirtieth session of the Provincial Synod, 2002:131). The synod also requested a commission to be set up to investigate the church’s response to the high incidence of domestic violence (Acts and Resolutions of the Thirty First session of the Provincial Synod, 2005:92). No record or report of such commission is obtainable.

In 2005, under the heading “Gender desk,” the synod resolved to request the metropolitan to set up a task team to investigate the possibility of the creation of a “Provincial Gender Desk” in response to the requests contained in the

resolution passed at the 2002 synod, as well as other gender related matters, such as the prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst women. The task team would consolidate material for “gender-sensitive guidelines in teachings and practices” and conduct a visioning exercise for the work of a gender desk. The gender desk would serve as a “challenge group” to keep gender issues before the church (Acts and Resolutions of the Thirty First session of the Provincial Synod, 2005:92).

A decision taken at the Provincial Standing Committee<sup>16</sup> in September 2008, reads as follows: “That a Provincial Gender desk be established as soon as possible; that a Provincial Working Committee comprised of experts in the field, including a liaison bishop be appointed; and that this committee reports to the Archbishop as soon as possible on the way forward” (Pillay, 2011:3).

During the 2010 synod, gender, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and violence in general was absent as an agenda point, and no specific resolutions were passed with regard to these matters. However, “women and gender” was identified as one of the Provincial priorities that the church committed to, and was set as one of the strategic objectives for 2011 to 2020 (Acts and Resolutions of the Thirty Second session of the Provincial Synod, 2011:83).

A strategic plan has been drawn up under the leadership of a person appointed to champion this process. The plan includes combatting gender-based violence, counseling and support, inclusive language, and human sexuality. The term “women and gender” is an indication that gender and gender-based abuse may still be perceived as a matter pertaining to women.

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<sup>16</sup> The function of the Provincial Standing Committee are, amongst others: To take action on such matters as may require attention, from time to time, between sessions of synod; assist in the direction of and co-ordinate the work of publications, mission, religious education, justice and reconciliation, youth, spirituality, communication and other matters in which the church may be engaged, and to establish appropriate structures, where necessary; to report to and make recommendations to synod as it may think fit (Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2007:103).

In 2013 all matters pertaining to gender or gender-based abuse were absent from the agenda.

Hope Africa<sup>17</sup> conducted an online survey between December 2014 and January 2015, exploring gender in The Anglican Church of Southern Africa. This survey explored existing gender desks, gender-focused programs and activities in the Province.<sup>18</sup> The results will be included in this study.

In 2015 the report on the survey was presented to a provincial gender consultation. Arising from the gender consultation, the Provincial Standing Committee noted the previous resolutions passed at the synods in support of a gender desk. It also noted the challenges in the practical implementation of these resolutions and that the result was that very little progress was made in terms of addressing issues of gender in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and in society by the Church. A resolution was passed whereby the meeting would request “Hope Africa to facilitate the work of the gender desk, that the gender desk be reinstated as a budget line item, to ensure that a gender officer/coordinator is appointed to participate in provincial programmes and discussion” (ACSA Provincial Synod Agenda Book, 2016:29).

The agenda book of the synod scheduled for September 2016 indicates that the gender consultation and the resultant resolution passed by the Provincial Standing Committee will be tabled as an agenda item.

### **3.3.3.1 Reflection on the chronological overview of the official pastoral response of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to gender-based violence**

The official pastoral response to gender-based violence through resolutions passed at the provincial synod since 1998 appears not to be consistent and

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<sup>17</sup> HOPE Africa is the social development programme of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, and is registered as a non-profit organization. It has a specific focus on enabling the church to reach out to the most marginalized and vulnerable people. The name derives from the words: “Health, Opportunity, partnership and Empowerment in Africa”.

<sup>18</sup> A Province is an autonomous national or regional group of Anglican churches, i.e. ACSA. Viewed from: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/identity/about.aspx>. [Date accessed: 20 June 2016]

specific in its focus. The discussions through a twenty-seven-year period centered around and fluctuate between sexual abuse, domestic violence, violence against women, children and men, as well as gender. The aim of what needed to be achieved through these resolutions is unclear.

The lack of focus on the perpetrator, as well as the call for a “women’s desk” and the reference to “women and gender” as a priority point for the Province, offers an indication that gender is perceived to be a matter concerning women.

The request for a gender desk has been repeated in 1999, 2005 and 2008. The findings of the survey by Hope Africa concludes that although there is a provincial gender desk, the term is unclear, as the survey found that there is no actual office or person who is administering the provincial gender desk (Lotvonen, 2015:8). Pillay (2011:1) relates that when it came to light that a “gender desk” would be established, she was asked the following question: “So, will the gender desk be checking up on us to see that women are included in the leadership of the church?” This response is a clear indication of the uncertainty of the purpose of such an establishment. It also further emphasizes the understanding that gender is exclusively focused on women, rather than being a social construction of the roles of both women and men. It also indicates the lack of understanding of the need for the church to engage with these norms in a transformative manner.

Pillay (2011:1) critiques the term “gender desk” in that it creates another hierarchy of power – “the power of knowledge (and officialdom) of those behind the desk. Also ‘desk’ is very static and does not reflect the relationality and mutuality (of communion) which ought to underscore the church’s response to gender equality.”

Pillay (2011:3) offers the possibility that the Provincial gender desk would have “a co-ordinating function, identify regional, national and transnational resources, disseminate information and give general direction for gender ministry in the Province.”

The resolutions further express a need for training and equipping of clergy, as well as resources for education on gender equity and justice issues.

### **3.3.2 Responses of bishops**

Various bishops have made statements about gender and gender-based violence, especially after the brutal rape and murder of Anene Booysen in the town of Bredasdorp in 2013. This study includes responses and statements from bishops selected for their involvement with the topic of gender and their role in the church.

At the 2005 Provincial Synod Archbishop Ndungane<sup>19</sup> drew attention to the fact that both men and women in the church have bought into patriarchy. He encouraged those present at the synod to turn away from the practice, saying: “We [the CPISA]<sup>20</sup> must declare that the gospel hope of abundant life is as much for women as for men. We must repent of the historic patriarchy of our faith, which so often colludes with discriminatory attitudes in our culture (Sparrow, 2006:37). Ndungane continued: “We must expose and oppose gender violence and all forms of inequality in our midst” and “We must declare and demonstrate the dignity, respect and honour of all, regardless of gender” (Pillay, 2011:2).

The synodical statement by Archbishop Ndungane with regard to the need to “repent of the historical patriarchy of our faith” holds an admirable and rare admission of the historic patriarchy of the Anglican Church, but fails to engage possible current patriarchal practices of the church. Although he encouraged members to turn away from the practice, there is no indication of the way in which this should be done. Pillay (2015:563) states that for her, the question of how to repent of the historic patriarchy is what matters if the church hopes “to move beyond public statements captured in official documents.”

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<sup>19</sup> Njongunkulu Ndungane is an Archbishop emeritus of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

<sup>20</sup> The Anglican Church of Southern Africa was known as the “Church of the Province of Southern Africa” before 2006.

After the violent rape and death of Anene Booysen, the provincial dean, Bishop Rubin Phillip, released a media statement addressing the “scourge of rape” on behalf of ACSA. He stated that “leaders in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) have called on all members of the Church to use the season of Lent to recognize that every time we fail to act against gender-based violence, we are complicit in its perpetration.” Ways of acting out were offered in that “Anglican churches are being requested to light a candle on Wednesday in memory of Anene and all women who have suffered the violence of rape. Male members are being asked to declare “not in my name. This violence may not continue.”<sup>21</sup> These suggestions, although good, do not necessarily require any long-term commitment from participants (Lotvonen, 2015:14). No other forms of acting against gender-based violence were offered.

The bishop of False Bay, Margaret Virtue,<sup>22</sup> identified the root causes of gender-based violence as apartheid, education, and gang culture. She further states: “In some circles and cultures, scripture and ‘headship’ are used to beat women into submission. Boys grow up being more respected than girls. It is in our power to confront those who use religion to dehumanise. Often it is about the perceived status of being male. Faith is against treating others as objects or inferior.” It is her opinion that the given root causes should be addressed through children in schools, relationships and patterns of support, biblical texts, inner healing of men, and moral and theological leadership (Lombard & Petersen, 2015:30, 31).

Virtue (2015:30, 31) rightfully addressed the issues of the justification of beating women into submission through the use of Scripture and “headship,” as well as the issues of discrepant respect for boys and girls and the status of men. However, she fails to identify the root cause of intimate partner violence as male dominance, expressed in the power and control of men over women.

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<sup>21</sup> Viewed from: <http://www.anglicanwomensfellowship.co.za/media-statements>. [Date accessed: 20 June 2016]

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Virtue is the liaison bishop for “Gender” in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa since 2014. She is one of two female bishops in the Province. She identified the perceived root causes as part of a publication on theological reflection on root causes of abuse of women in intimate relationships.

What Virtue identify as root causes, are in fact what Jewkes terms risk factors that contribute to the occurrence of intimate partner violence (Jewkes et al., 2002:13). These risk factors on their own do not give rise to intimate partner violence, but enhance the already existing purpose of exercising and maintaining male dominance.

The bishop of Saldanha Bay, Raphael Hess,<sup>23</sup> also issued a statement in response to the violent rape and death of Anene Booysen. After a meeting with senior advisors during which gender-based violence was a key topic, Hess and his team asked the following questions: “Why the never-ending spiral of violence against women in our society? Why the constant rape, battering and gender-related violence? What is happening within our families, our schools, the faith communities and other institutions of socialization that men, in particular, are not being taught to care, protect, show compassion and live in healthy relationships with women and children?”<sup>24</sup> The statement failed to offer answers to these questions.

The question posed by Hess, referring to men not being taught to care and protect, confirms and upholds the socially constructed binary gender order whereby men are privileged over women. Societal roles and norms prescribe that men should be leaders, independent, strong, controlling and competent, while women are expected to be dependent, weak, fragile, precious, and in need of being protected (Rakoczy, 2000:15; Whitehead & Barrett, 2001:22). The expectation for men to care and protect enforces male dominance and superiority, which is ultimately the root cause of intimate partner violence.

In a separate pastoral letter to parishes in the Diocese, he stated that the then recent spate of rape of women reflects a violent society and that there is a need to speak out against gender-based violence (Pillay, 2015:558). Pillay is of the opinion that “speaking out against gender-based violence is a necessary response but, the challenge of living in an AIDS era requires more than just ‘speaking out’ at times only when the rape of women are made

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<sup>23</sup> Raphael Hess served as liaison bishop for “Gender” at the time of making the statement.

<sup>24</sup> Viewed from: [www.anglicannews.org](http://www.anglicannews.org). [Date accessed: 20 June 2016]

public” (Pillay, 2015: 558).<sup>25</sup> This opinion remains relevant irrespective of an AIDS era. The prevalence of gender-based violence, and specifically, intimate partner violence, requires the church and its leadership to go beyond speaking out and address the root cause of gender-based violence in a constructive and transformative way.

### **3.3.3 Diocesan responses**

ACSA is divided into twenty-eight governances called “dioceses.” Lotvonen reports that twenty-three out of the twenty-eight dioceses partook in the survey conducted by HOPE Africa. Fourteen of these had resolutions pertaining to gender passed at their diocesan synods. The most commonly stated focus groups of these diocesan resolutions were women, children, and the elderly (Lotvonen, 2015:12). The lack of the inclusion of men and institutional transformation again shows the perception that addressing gender is focused on women, as indicated by the experience of Pillay (2011:1). The grouping of women with children and the elderly is also an indication of the perception of women as powerless.

Issues that these resolutions were to address included domestic and gender-based violence, circumcision, sexuality, substance abuse, and same sex marriages. The resolutions in general aimed to “raise awareness on gender issues, demystify gender and to initiate conversations around gender,” while some “aimed towards actively addressing gender inequality in the church and the community and ensuring equal rights for both genders” (Lotvonen, 2015:13).

Lotvonen (2015:13) reports that the most common expectation was that “the resolutions would promote gender equality in the diocese followed by changes in the church leadership towards being more gender representative and an

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<sup>25</sup> Miranda Pillay (2015:560) identifies herself as a “Christian, South African woman of colour whose understanding of gender discrimination, inequity and injustice is informed by experiences of racism, classism and sexism and as one who identifies (sometimes) subtle and obscure patriarchal power in marriage, family, church and society through feminist eyes.” She is a member of the Anglican Church, where she is a licensed lay minister. She has been a canon in the Diocese of Saldanha Bay, serving as a member of the Chapter (governing body) of the Diocese. She is also a member of the Circle of Concerned Women Theologians.

expectation that the resolution would create a forum to openly talk and address gender inequality in the diocese.”

Although the dioceses could be commended for their intentions to address gender inequality and the inclusion of gender-based violence amongst the issues to be addressed, there is no clear indication of what is understood by gender equality. The aim and expectation appear to be focused on gender equality within the church as expressed in leadership and numerical representation. There is a lack of indication for the need of reflection on and transformation of the theological understanding of gender.

The survey done by HOPE Africa also indicated that eighteen of the twenty-three respondent dioceses had gender programs. These programs included the drafting of resolutions, campaigns and conferences, as well as training and workshops. Despite the resolutions passed, “the finding suggest that there are very few training or workshops that actually address the gender issues such as gender inequality or gender-based violence” (Lotvonen, 2015:14). “Participation in campaigns is often a once off event and does not necessarily require any long term commitment from the participants” (Lotvonen, 2015:14).

Although the indication is that dioceses are more aware of gender and are starting to include gender in their policies, the report also indicates that “dioceses are not yet addressing the gender issues but rather starting to show interest toward gender issues by participating in conferences and discussions during specific times and awareness rising campaigns” (Lotvonen, 2015:18).

### ***3.3.3.1 Responses from specific dioceses***

- **The Diocese of Cape Town**

At the 2003 synod, the Diocese of Cape Town recognized the increase of violence against women in South Africa. As part of a resolution under the heading “Violence against women,” the synod acknowledged and appreciated the work of the Diocesan Task Team, ‘Tamar,’ in their efforts to raise

awareness and to support women affected by violence. The Archbishop was requested to commend the work of Tamar to parishes and archdeaconries and to launch a “gender sensitizing” program in the Diocese for both clergy and laity (Sixtieth session of the synod of the Diocese of Cape Town, 2004:47).

According to Sparrow, a working group was established in the Diocese of Cape Town. After experiencing difficulties, the group decided to operate as an autonomous body. Sparrow (2006:12) states that “the working group progressed into other non-profit initiatives such as Tamar.” The group offered a training program to empower women whose lives were or still are affected by the issue of violence, as well as gender sensitization workshops for church member, not necessarily Anglican. “While the church acknowledged the valuable work conducted by Tamar, no budget is allocated to this outreach” (Sparrow, 2006:12). Acknowledging that the church intended to commend the work of Tamar and to launch a “gender sensitization” program in the Diocese, the lack of funding makes the seriousness of the intention questionable.

- **The Diocese of Natal**

In the Diocese of Natal, a motion was passed at a synod in 2013 under the heading “Sexual Violence and Abuse.” The synod confirmed its abhorrence of all forms of abuse of women and children, and it’s calling to be at the forefront of helping those who have been abused. The synod resolved that a steering committee be established. The mandate of the committee included training to do counseling, as well as the forming of relationships with relevant state organizations and stakeholders to facilitate first response, counseling, and support for victims and their families. It also included working with congregations to undertake prevention through proactive gender and life skills education. The resolution included the arranging of “some form of Diocesan Protest event” to raise awareness, and writing to government institutions asking for funding for policing and advertising to further awareness.

Although the mandate of the steering committee included proactive gender and life skills education, it is notable that the synod viewed its calling to be at

the forefront of helping those who have been abused, without including addressing the abuser and what gives rise to abuse and causes it to be perpetuated in society, culture and religion. It is the contention of Maupa (2016:56) that the church declares its missionary mandate on gender-based violence and yet remains silent on its own role in perpetuating it. He focuses attention on the fact that the house of synod and the synod resolution make no direct mention of domestic violence and yet the church promotes an uncritical narrative of marriage and the family. This may suggest complicit behavior (Maupa, 2016:39).

The resolve to arrange a diocesan protest event is in line with the finding of the HOPE Africa survey indicating that “participation in campaigns is often a once off event and does not necessarily require any long term commitment from the participants” (Lotvonen, 2015:14). Maupa relates that a gender commission was established after the synod. After three meetings “other church matters were allowed to override the Gender Commission’s responsibility to take forward the resolution on gender-based violence suggests what scholars call fatigue on gender-based violence. The fatigue displayed in failure to attend Gender Commission committee meetings could easily translate into lack of interest by clergy in parishes” (Maupa, 2015:59).

#### **3.3.4 Clergy responses**

The role and positioning of clerics as pastors holds potential for addressing intimate partner violence as they “play the role of interpreting and shaping people’s understanding of the world in the context of their religion” (Shannon-Lewy & Dull, 2005:649). Having an ongoing relationship with a cleric may result in an expectation of trust and confidentiality. There is also the existence of the perception that “clerics are trustworthy authorities in family matters,” thus making them the reasonable choice for guidance (Shannon-Lewy & Dull, 2005:649).

Petersen confirms that in the ACSA victims are more likely to seek help from a minister than from any other helping profession (Petersen, 2009:450). The church thus has “an enormous opportunity to respond intentionally to

humanity regarding domestic violence/intimate partner violence” (Petersen, 2009:449).

Having a lack of empirical insight into what pastoral care clergy throughout ACSA are offering to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence, research by Petersen provides insight into the responses to intimate partner violence by clergy in the Diocese of Cape Town.<sup>26</sup> The study by Petersen aimed at exploring challenges experienced by clergy within the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town when dealing with domestic violence.<sup>27</sup>

Clergy had varied understandings of the causes of intimate partner violence. Some of the clergy participating in the study acknowledged the role of patriarchal societal practices in the occurrence of intimate partner violence, as well as the role of Christianity in the occurrence of patriarchy (Petersen, 2009:455). Others blamed the empowerment of women for men becoming “confused and insecure in terms of what their role should be.” Some associated maleness with strength, courage, determination, initiative, and drive (Petersen, 2009:457). This understanding exhibits an exclusive view of masculinity, thus indicating that these traits are not inherent in women. Although the role of patriarchy in intimate partner violence is acknowledged, patriarchy is unwittingly condoned. Poverty and unemployment is also mentioned as a cause, due to the frustration of not being able to provide for their families (Petersen, 2009:457). The dominant role of men as provider is emphasized by the responses of some of the clergy. These theological understandings of the role of men and women in marriage will have a bearing on how these clergy persons pastorally care for and council victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Shanon-Lewy and Dull, (2005:647) state: “Cleric theological beliefs may hinder their ability to counsel victims, and the effectiveness of cleric ability to counsel victims varies greatly.”

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<sup>26</sup> Each province is divided into dioceses under the leadership of a bishop. The Archbishop of ACSA is also the bishop of the Diocese of Cape Town.

<sup>27</sup> The study was conducted amongst participating clergy from the Cape Town Diocese of the Anglican Church with permission from the Archbishop. All participants had working experience as a parish priest in poor socio-economic and affluent communities.

Petersen (2009:451) found that “the challenges reported primarily related to the lack of training in dealing with real life issues such as domestic violence during their theological training,” as well as “the lack of theological guidelines offered by the church to address patriarchal societal practices, beliefs and gender stereotyping, and the lack of guidance on contextual interpretation of scripture.” This challenge will inevitably influence or limit the response of the cleric. The lack of training “may lead to ignorance regarding the scope of the problem as well as how to handle it (Shanon-Lewy & Dull, 2005:655). It will also directly impact theological understanding and religious belief, which in turn may hinder support and adequate pastoral care and counseling.

Participants were of the opinion and suggested that clergy should be equipped to preach about intimate partner violence, as well as gender equality and issues of power and abuse of power (Petersen, 2009:462). With clergy feeling ill-equipped to preach about these matters, they will remain absent from the public discourse, resulting in victims seeing the issue as their own personal struggle. Referring to the processes of transformation with regard to reducing intimate partner violence, Rakoczy (2004:34) emphasizes the need to be equipped, saying that “the Christian churches must be active in these processes of transformation through preaching, teaching, public advocacy and counselling.” With clergy not feeling equipped, the church will not be able to be active in processes of transformation.

A recommendation by Cooper-White (2011:809) regarding domestic violence awareness, prevention and intervention strategies in pastoral care and counseling is to “consistently, intentionally integrate the issue of domestic violence in seminary education.”

Clergy reported that intervention would include referral to a professional non-religious marriage counselor or a social worker. Often the necessity of referral would leave the priest with a feeling of inadequacy. Frustration about the personal limitations and the limitations of the church also arise (Petersen, 2009:458, 459). These feelings of inadequacy and frustration tie in with the lack of training and therefore inadequate knowledge that has been identified.

Shannon-Lewy & Dull (2005:653) has found that clergy who had received additional and specific training with regard to intimate partner violence were more likely to make secular referrals. Petersen (2009:461) came to the conclusion that there was “no specific guidelines offered by the church to help participants deal with domestic violence.”

Although Petersen’s research was limited to the Diocese of Cape Town, it has to be acknowledged that the College of Transfiguration<sup>28</sup> is the only residential seminary of ACSA in South Africa.<sup>29</sup> Ordinands may be trained at secular institutions, but are likely to undergo a part of their training at the official residential institution. Petersen’s research can thus be seen as fairly representative of the training received by Anglican clergy.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

With regard to the resolutions passed by the synods of the church since 1989, Virtue admits that “It is good to pass resolutions and have policies on gender but if we are not living/implementing them it is futile” (Virtue, 2015:35).

The resolution passed at the provincial synod of 1995 has noted with concern the silence surrounding domestic violence, especially spouse and child abuse. The church was called upon to break the silence by preaching and teaching that all forms of violence are contrary to the gospel of love. Twenty-one years later, a finding of the survey conducted by HOPE Africa is that “although gender-based violence is affecting a great number of individuals and families, the church is silent on gender-based violence” (Lotvonen, 2015:6). Petersen (2009:464) cites Nason-Clark saying that denial and silence in religious communities about intimate partner violence immobilizes the victim and encourages the behavior of the perpetrator.

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<sup>28</sup> The College of Transfiguration has since been offering a course on “Gender,” but does not have a specific course on gender-based violence.

<sup>29</sup> Viewed from: <http://www.anglicanchurchsa.org>. [Date accessed: 05 May 2016]

Another finding of the survey done by Hope Africa is that “survivors considered the Church to be judgemental and ill-equipped in addressing gender-based violence,” with church leaders acknowledging that they do not know how to address gender-based violence in their congregations (Lotvonen, 2015:8). Resolutions passed by various synods have called for the development of training programs for the clergy and resources for education. Despite this, the clergy still felt ill-equipped to exercise effective pastoral ministry towards victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence, specifically domestic violence.

These two examples of issues raised in the resolutions of the synods of the church are an indication that they have not been fully implemented. In this regard, Virtue states, it is therefore “futile” (Lombard & Petersen, 2015: 35). With the silence around gender-based violence and the lack of training for clergy, it can be concluded that the exercise of responsible pastoral care is doubtful. Thus, the following finding of the survey by HOPE Africa can be accepted: “Currently the church is not active enough, not vocal enough and has little if any impact in changing the statistics of gender-based violence in the communities that it serves. This further highlights the importance of not only addressing the matter with church members in the pews and in the community but also within the leadership of the church” (Lotvonen, 2015:8).

Sparrow (2006:10) found: “Historically the church has proved that, on gender related issues, progress is slow.” Her research suggested that the approval of a provincial gender desk and the approach to gender issues by Archbishop Ndungane (2006:98) might, “to some extent, challenge internalised attitudes and mindsets of ordinary people and their understandings of the appropriate roles for men and women, but the church’s track record suggests that structural transformation emerging out of such challenges is likely to be very slow in coming.” The reality of the slow pace and lack of implementation of synodical resolutions, the survey done by Hope Africa, and the findings of Petersen’s research, bears testimony that “the structural transformation emerging out of such challenges” as intimate partner violence, is indeed very slow in coming.

To demonstrate an understanding of the gender construction of the roles of women, and to challenge and transform internalized attitudes and mindsets in response to gender related issues such as gender-based violence as suggested by Sparrow (2006:98), the church has to engage with and respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence. This study will therefore also deduce whether ACSA engages with, addresses, and responds to the root cause of intimate partner violence in its pastoral response and practice. It is relevant to briefly recall these points.

The root cause of intimate partner violence towards women is male dominance, expressed in the power and control of men over women, and rooted in gender inequality (Jewkes et al., 2002:3). It is in the social construction of gender relations that the gender imbalance, which gives rise to male dominance, and therefore, intimate partner violence, is shaped.

Intimate partner violence by men towards women serves to exert or maintain male dominance, control and power over women (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:2). It also serves to maintain male privilege of superiority and headship in a family or household (Watts, 2002:1232). The ideological social structure of patriarchy encompasses and legitimizes the beliefs and practices that ensures the upholding of unequal gender arrangements whereby men have power over women in cultural, political, social, and economic positions. Patriarchy provides the context that defines women as subordinate to men, thereby providing structural support for the phenomenon of intimate partner violence.

Various writers are of the opinion that the church, particularly ACSA, continue to be patriarchal in their practices. Rakoczy (2004:31) states that patriarchy is interwoven in the Christian tradition in distinct and pervasive ways. Referring to ACSA, Maupa (2015:32) agrees that patriarchy is pervasive in the institution of the church, and states that the church is a socio-religious structure that perpetuates patriarchal social structures, values and traditions. This agreement is a reminder of the opinion of Haddad that the church cannot deal with issues of gender-based violence without addressing men's abuse of power in relating to women, and while patriarchy continues unabated. The

church needs to reform its theology, especially in relation to pastoral and marriage practices (Haddad, 2002:98-103).

In its official response to gender-based violence, the church does not officially acknowledge the role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse. The synod of 1999 recognized that violence against women derives from the abuse of power, and that the abuse of power is possible because of the ways society, culture, and religion have defined the roles of men and women. Despite this acknowledgement, the condemnation of violence against women and the repeated efforts to address the issue of gender, the church fails to address and respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence. The church also fails to recognize the causal, sustaining, and legitimizing role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse. Archbishop Ndungane drew attention to patriarchy at the 2005 synod, encouraging those present to turn away from the practice, and stated the need for repentance of the historic patriarchy of the Christian faith. This address, however, did not translate into an official resolution or practice. Virtue states that the church can “identify and challenge harmful attitudes and beliefs within society that perpetuate GBV” (Lombard & Petersen, 2015:36). The church fails to admit possible institutional patriarchy, and to engage possible current patriarchal practices within the church.

Also absent from the provincial synod resolutions is the need for theological reform with regard to gender. There is no suggestion for engagement with theological issues that facilitate the oppression, violation and abuse of women, such as unequal gender relations, power, control, and male dominance. Issues raised by victims, i.e. headship, submission, marriage, faith, forgiveness and suffering are not addressed. According to Maupa (2015:39), “The church promotes an uncritical narrative of marriage,” which “may suggest complicit behavior.” There is no call for liturgical reform, including the exclusive use of male dominant language, which justifies the oppression of women. According to Pillay (2015:566), patriarchy is entrenched in the liturgy of the church.

In her opening remarks to ACSA gender consultation of 2015, Virtue admits: “I however got to hear the voice of the wounded women but they will tell you that they had conquered because they survived. The sadness was hearing the role that the church has played in their pain, we have failed them” (Virtue, 2015:35). There continues to be a strong call for addressing gender-based violence in the Province (Lotvonen, 2015:17, 18). This is a clear indication that the response of the church is not adequate. Pillay (2015:566) is of the opinion that “It is imperative that the church (in all its manifestations) uncover the patriarchy of our faith.” Perhaps the church failing the victims can be ascribed to the lack of uncovering the patriarchy of the church, as well as the lack of addressing the root cause of intimate partner violence which is upheld by patriarchy.

The church fails to admit possible institutional patriarchy, and to engage possible current patriarchal practices within the church. Also absent from the provincial synod resolutions is the need for theological reform with regard to gender. There is no suggestion for engagement with theological issues that facilitate the oppression of women.

With the church not admitting to the role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse, the structural support of gender-based violence given by patriarchy, or possible institutional patriarchy, the ability to provide responsible pastoral care will be limited. The question needs to be asked if the theological framework of its pastoral practice is indeed patriarchal in nature. The need for theological reform that will eliminate the oppression of women also needs to be assessed. A review of the theological framework of ACSAs pastoral practice will be carried out in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PASTORAL PRACTICES OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to investigate and critique the practices that provide the theological framework for the pastoral care of victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within the context of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. The purpose is to determine whether the theological framework and practices of ACSA are indeed patriarchal in nature, resulting in the inability of ACSA to exercise responsible pastoral care to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. This will result in the need to make recommendations for an alternative pastoral approach.

This investigation and critique is done in line with a feminist analysis methodology, which includes the dynamics of diagnosis, critique, and reconstruction (Graham, 2012:201). Ackermann (1992:17) emphasizes the importance of “suspicion” as part of the hermeneutical process that she describes as “the continuous questioning of Christian doctrine.”

It has been established that the root cause of intimate partner violence is male dominance, expressed in the power and control of men over women, which is in turn rooted in gender inequality. Structural support is given to male dominance and therefore intimate partner violence is an outcome of patriarchy. Research has shown that the pastoral responses experienced by women have not been helpful and responsible. The suggestion is that women perceive clergy to be unhelpful in stopping the abuse (Shanon-Lewy & Dull, 2005:653). These experiences by women indicate the need for the development of a responsible pastoral care approach. They also indicate the theological issues that the church should be engaging with, such as headship, submission, marriage, and divorce.

In its official response to gender-based violence, ACSA does not acknowledge the causal, sustaining, and legitimizing role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse. Despite the condemnation of violence against women and the repeated efforts to address the issue of gender, there is a failure on the side of ACSA to acknowledge, address, and respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence. ACSA also fails to admit possible institutional patriarchy, and to engage possible current patriarchal practices within the church. Absent from its response is the need for theological reform with regard to gender and any suggestions for engagement with theological issues that facilitate the oppression, violation, and abuse of women, such as unequal gender relations, power, control, and male dominance.

Various authors, for example, Haddad (2002:98-103), Maupa (2015:32), and Pillay (2015:566), to name a few, are of the opinion that ACSA continues to be patriarchal in its theological framework and practices. With the church not admitting to possible institutional patriarchy, the questions need to be asked if the theological framework and practices are indeed patriarchal in nature and if there is a need for reform to eliminate the oppression of women. If this is found to be true, given the lack of acknowledgment of the root cause of intimate partner violence or any institutional patriarchy, its ability to offer responsible pastoral care and to pastorally address intimate partner violence within marriage will be limited. It will be irresponsible to condemn intimate partner violence while at the same time maintaining patriarchal practices. The opinion of Haddad that the church cannot deal with issues of gender-based violence while patriarchy continues unabated rings true (Haddad, 2002:98-103).

People who are affected in mind, body, and spirit as a result of intimate partner violence are in need of healing, support, guidance, sustaining, transforming, reconciling, and nurturing. These healing practices are offered through pastoral care, but can only be done responsibly when the pastor engages hermeneutically with the practices, theology, and theory of the relevant church community wherein the pastoral care is practiced. This engagement is necessary in order to ensure that the care offered is not limited

due to the theological framework of these practices, theology, and theory. Bennet Moore (2002:17, 18) speaks of a “pastoral context” in reference to care being understood as part of “a wide cultural, social and religious context.” She highlights the necessity of the analysis of the theology of the pastoral context, mentioning liturgy as a form or practice for the expression of theology. Examples of other practices giving expression to theology and providing a “pastoral context” or framework include prayer, polity, and commemorations.

In order to answer the question of whether the theological framework and practices of ACSA are indeed patriarchal in nature, and if there is a need for reform to eliminate the oppression of women, the following practices that give expression to the theology of the church and provide a context wherein pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence take place will be investigated and critiqued in this chapter:

Firstly, the understanding of marriage: This aspect will be used as a base for the investigation of whether ACSA is maintaining patriarchal practices and a patriarchal theology. This analysis is necessary as the understanding of marriage is reflected and applied in the liturgy of the marriage service and will influence pastoral care and the response to intimate partner violence within marriage.

Secondly, the liturgy of the marriage service: With liturgy giving expression to theology, the liturgy of marriage will be investigated in order to: determine whether the theological understanding of marriage is patriarchal; establish its influence on the construction of gender relations within marriage, and the impact thereof on pastoral care.

Thirdly, polity: The polity of ACSA will be investigated and critiqued to determine whether it is patriarchal in nature or contributing to patriarchy. With ACSA having a hierarchical governance structure, the correlations between hierarchy and patriarchy will be investigated. Its possible contribution to the construction and maintaining of unequal gender relationships, its impact on

marriage, and its influence on leadership will also be investigated. With polity having profound implications for understanding the nature of the church, this investigation will indicate whether the polity of ACSA is conducive to or detracting from pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence within marriage.

Fourthly, Anglican commemorations: The teaching of Augustine of Hippo (d430) and Thomas Aquinas (d1274) will be investigated in relation to gender relations. Their commemoration may indicate that ACSA supports and maintains patriarchal teachings.

#### **4.2 The understanding of marriage in ACSA**

The definition, purpose, and understanding of marriage in the ACSA will be used as a base to establish whether ACSA is maintaining patriarchal practices and patriarchal theology. The understanding of marriage will be reflected on and applied to marriage practices and the liturgy of the marriage ceremony. It is therefore important to investigate, critique, and clarify the understanding of marriage in order to investigate the liturgy. The understanding and the theology of marriage will influence pastoral care and the response to intimate partner violence within marriage. It might also inadvertently be impacting negatively on the victims of intimate partner violence.

The laws of ACSA concerning marriage is contained in the “Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa,” specifically in canon 34 under the heading “Of Holy Matrimony.” The laws are further exemplified and applied in “An Anglican Prayer Book 1989”.<sup>30</sup> These documents will form part of the investigation to determine ACSAs understanding of marriage.

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<sup>30</sup> Hereafter referred to as APB.

#### **4.2.1 The definition, purpose and understanding of marriage according to ACSA**

The definition of marriage according to ACSA reads as follows: “The Church of the Province of Southern Africa affirms that marriage by divine institution is a lifelong and exclusive union partnership between one man and one woman.”<sup>31</sup>

The three chief purposes of marriage are set out in the APB as mutual love, companionship and support, the expression of God’s gifts of sex and affection in an indissoluble relationship, and procreation (APB, 1989:458).

Marriage is understood as “a sign of the union between Christ and his Church.” “The inseparable bond between a man and his wife thus mirrors the relationship between Jesus and his bride the Church” (APB 1989:457-458). With the relationship between Christ and the Church being an unequal one of initiating and responding, the expected pattern of the marriage relationship is portrayed as unequal. The portrayed understanding of the marriage relationship as unequal and hierarchical is further exemplified in the repeated use of the phrase “the man and his wife” in reference to the relationship or bond between the marriage partners (APB, 1989:458-459). The phrase puts women in a subjective position to men indicating a patriarchal approach to marriage.

The understanding of marriage is applied to the liturgy of the marriage ceremony. The impact of the understanding of marriage will be further discussed under the said application.

#### **4.2.2 Permanency of marriage**

According to the definition of marriage provided by ACSA, strong emphasis is placed on the permanency of marriage. The extent is such that applicants for the solemnization of marriage have to complete prescribed forms to state their understanding of the teaching of ACSA concerning marriage. The question on

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<sup>31</sup> This affirmation serves as introduction to Canon 34.

the form is phrased as follows: “Do you clearly understand that marriage by divine institution is a lifelong and exclusive partnership between one man and one woman and that therefore the Church will not permit a person whose marriage has been dissolved by secular authority to enter into a second marriage during the lifetime of the partner to the first marriage (except in the particular circumstances laid down in the Canons of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa); and that divorced persons who remarry during the lifetime of the spouse of a former marriage, and those married to them, will be excluded from Holy Communion (unless the bishop directs otherwise in terms of the canons aforesaid).”<sup>32</sup>

The permanency of marriage is further enhanced by the understanding that marriage is a sacramental rite (APB, 1989:440). Sacraments are described as “outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as a sure and certain means by which we receive that grace”, which in turn is described as “unearned and undeserved favour” (APB, 1989:438). In marriage the outward signs are “the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring (rings)” (APB, 1989:459). It is understood that inwardly the partners are joined together by God and that they receive grace to help them fulfill their vows (APB, 1989:466, 441).

#### **4.2.3 The process of marriage after divorce**

The strong emphasis on the permanency of marriage has implications for a divorced person wishing to remarry. Should a divorced person or persons wish to remarry, application must be made to the bishop of the Diocese for permission to be granted for the solemnization of the marriage. The bishop has the right to grant or decline such application. No member of clergy is under obligation to solemnize such a marriage.<sup>33</sup>

For permission to be granted for a divorced person to remarry, the conditions of repentance and forgiveness are included in the canons. The bishop to whom the application is made has to be satisfied that amongst other factors

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Church of the Province of Southern Africa: Form of application for marriage.

<sup>33</sup> cf. Canon 34. 6b; 7.

“the person desiring to enter into a new marriage acknowledges a share in the sin which led to the breakdown of the former marriage, is repentant for the failure to keep vows made in such a marriage.”<sup>34</sup> The bishop also has to be satisfied that “such person considers that he or she can in good conscience make new vows and is genuinely forgiving.”<sup>35</sup>

Once permission has been granted by the bishop, an alternative liturgy to that of the usual marriage service has to be used for the marriage ceremony of a divorced person. “The service to be used for the solemnisation of such a marriage shall be that put forth by the Synod of Bishops for this special purpose.”<sup>36</sup>

This service, as set out in the APB 1989, contains various elements such as addressing divorce, repentance and forgiveness. Divorce is referred to as the breaking of a civil contract, and in relation to the said breaking of a contract, it is stated that “It is much more serious to break a vow which one has made for life before God.” In terms of divorce it is further stated: “The breakdown of a marriage is always a falling short of the ideal of marriage” (APB, 1989:484-486).

The canonical directive, referred to earlier, that a person desiring to enter into a new marriage has to acknowledge a share in the sin which led to the breakdown of the former marriage, and is repentant for the failure to keep the marriage vows, is repeated in the inclusion of the following statement in the liturgy of the service: “The Bishop is assured that there is due penitence for the failure of the previous marriage(s) and a knowledge of God’s forgiveness as well as a readiness to forgive” (APB, 1989:485). Confession and absolution is introduced as part of the introduction to the rest of the service (APB, 1989:485-486).

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Canon 34: 6bii (aa)

<sup>35</sup> cf. Canon 34: 6bii (bb)

<sup>36</sup> cf. Canon 34: 6 e

Divorced persons who remarry without permission from the bishop for such a marriage to take place, will be excluded from receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion. Conditions are set for being admitted to Holy Communion, amongst which it is stated “they have received permission from the Bishop, who shall determine the conditions under which such admission may be granted.”<sup>37</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Implications of the understanding of marriage in ACSA in terms of intimate partner violence**

The strong emphasis on the permanency of marriage could be perceived as a teaching that victims of intimate partner violence should remain in an abusive relationship. The anti-divorce sentiment expressed in the understanding of divorce as failure and falling short as indicated in the laws and liturgy of ACSA may cause women to feel trapped in abusive relationships. Nason-Clark (2004:307) agrees that the anti-divorce sentiment reinforces an abused woman’s sense of failure and vulnerability. This religious approach forces women to keep silent, seeing their abuse as a personal struggle that has to be endured. It supports Van den Berg and Pudule’s (2007:172) findings from a case study on African women. For instance, women are forced to go back to abusive husbands because “he was still my husband.”

Stringent measures put in place to encourage or enforce permanency of marriage could be threatening and prohibit abused women from leaving their partners. Practices such as the documentation for the application of marriage, the process of application for remarriage including repentance and forgiveness, the demand for recognition of culpability in the breakdown of the marriage, and the exclusion from Holy Communion after remarriage without permission, would contribute to the feelings of responsibility and guilt. Due to the upholding of the permanency of marriage and the condemnation of divorce as a response to their plight, battered women commonly express guilt for failing their families and God in not being able to maintain their marriages by enduring the abuse (Nason-Clark, 2004:304).

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<sup>37</sup> cf. Canon 34.9 (d)

No allowance is made for or consideration given to intimate partner violence and other forms of abuse as reasons for the breakup of the marriage and the resulting act of divorce. The non-adherence of the abuser to the purpose of marriage set out as mutual love, companionship and support, “which is God’s intention for them,” as the sole reason for the divorce is not allowed for, as the victim is apportioned shared responsibility for the breakup of the marriage. This is evident through the expectation that all divorced persons wishing “to enter into a new marriage acknowledges a share in the sin which led to the breakdown of the former marriage, is repentant for the failure to keep vows made in such a marriage.”<sup>38</sup> With this expectation of acknowledgement, the victim is burdened with the blame for the abuse as it can be derived that the victim somehow has a part in causing the abuse.

The understanding of “a share in the sin” places a heavy burden on the victim of intimate partner violence, which may prevent her from leaving the abusive relationship. Sin is described in the APB (1989:426) as “the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and all of creation.” Against the belief of marriage as a sacrament, should the victim consider to leave the relationship for her own safety, the understanding could be that the victim is going against the will of God, which would constitute sin. This could result in the practice of the concept of virtuous suffering as described in the previous chapter.<sup>39</sup>

Refusal to “acknowledge a share in the sin that lead to the breakdown of the marriage” could by implementation prevent another marriage or lead to a victim being excluded from Holy Communion if she should remarry without the permission of the bishop. It is believed that a benefit of Holy Communion is

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<sup>38</sup> cf. Canon 34: 6bii (aa)

<sup>39</sup> Virtuous suffering is experienced as an expectation by women in the religious sphere. As stated in Chapter 3: “Louw refers to what Eiesland calls “virtuous suffering.” Suffering is perceived as a sign of grace whereby the sufferer, which would be the victim in the case of intimate partner violence, is divinely elected to be “purified and perfected through painful trails” (Louw, 2008:431). The abuse is seen as “a temporary affliction that must be endured to gain heavenly rewards.” Submitting to and enduring the abuse is therefore upheld as “a praiseworthy disposition for a Christian” (Louw, 2008:431). Virtuous suffering is seen as obedience to God. It encourages passivity and resignation, leaving the victim with feelings of helplessness.

“the strengthening of our union with Christ and one another (APB, 1989:440). The exclusion may be experienced by the victim as punishment for leaving an abusive partner in a previous marriage. Shanon-Lewy and Dull (2005:651) refers to the exclusion of victims from the community and the resulting fear of victim that she “may lose the support of members of her congregation and clergy because she is the one perceived as breaking up the marriage.”

The canonical procedure whereby the bishop has to grant a divorced person permission to remarry and to receive Holy Communion, as well as the possible refusal by a cleric to officiate the marriage of a divorced person, is indicative of a hierarchical governance practice. Hierarchical governance gives credence to hierarchical relationships, including marriage. This is already indicated in the marital relationship being equated to the relationship between Christ and the church as indicated before, and the use of the phrase “the man and his wife.” The impact of a hierarchical governance structure will be discussed under a separate heading in this chapter.

The ACSAs theological understanding of marriage, as discussed above, will have a bearing on the practice of pastoral care, as indicated in the experiences of victims in the previous chapter. With the strong emphasis on the permanency of marriage, it is to be expected that pastoral care will focus on the preservation of marriage as the ideal. This understanding will also be reflected in the liturgy of the marriage service, which will be investigated to determine any further indication of the maintaining of patriarchal practices by ACSA.

### **4.3 The liturgy of the marriage service**

Liturgy gives expression to the theology of the worshipping community (Bennet Moore, 2002:17, 18). The liturgy of the marriage service will therefore give expression to the understanding and theology of marriage. Liturgy, as the rite of worship, does not only give expression to theology, but also contributes to the formation of the worshippers who partake in the liturgy. Pillay (2015:565) confirms this, stating: “Local congregations are communities of

people who come together to worship in fellowship. Collective identity is shaped during worship services.” She also stresses that worship shapes the relationships of the worshippers with God and amongst themselves.

Liturgy of worship will contribute to the construction of the world, self, and other. If the liturgy of the marriage service is found to be patriarchal and male dominant in nature, the collective identity of the worshippers will be shaped accordingly. Furlan (2009:235) agrees that a society in which the Christian tradition exists is shaped by it. According to Pillay (2015:566), patriarchy is entrenched in the liturgy of the church. If this is found to be true, the pastoral ability of the church in response to intimate partner violence within marriage will come into question. The liturgy of the marriage service will be investigated and critiqued to determine if it is patriarchal in nature, if it supports and maintains male dominance, what the possible influence will be on the construction of gender relations within marriage, and the impact it could have on pastoral care.

#### **4.3.1 Liturgical acts**

As part of the investigation of the marriage liturgy, particular attention will be given to liturgical acts. These acts are the actions performed during the marriage service. They include the woman being received, the pledging of obedience, and the giving and receiving of a ring.

##### ***4.3.1.1 The woman is received***

The understanding of marriage is applied to the liturgical acts of the marriage ceremony. As indicated before, the portrayed unequal and hierarchical understanding is exemplified in the repeated and exclusive use of the phrase “the man and his wife” in reference to the relationship or bond between the marriage partners (APB, 1989:458-459). By using the term ‘exclusive,’ the indication is that the term is not used in reverse, such as ‘the woman and her husband.’ It can be concluded that the term is an indication of an understanding of the man as having a superior position of ownership over “his” woman who has to assume a subjective role.

The application of this understanding is found in the liturgical acts of the giving and receiving of the woman. As part of the ceremony, the priest may ask: “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” The answer to this question is “I do,” accompanied by the rubric: “The priest receives the woman from the hand of her father (or other relative or friend)” (APB, 1989:463). In this act, the expectation from the church is that the woman is “given” in marriage by preferably her father.

In a patriarchal society, the family is under the rule of the father. The relationship within the family entails the domination of men and the subjugation of women (Thatcher, 2011:26). The father is regarded as the head of the family, and has every right to conduct his family affairs the way he deems fit (Maluleke and Nadar, 2002:9). As indicated earlier, Rakoczy (2000:13) puts it that “patriarchy as a belief allows a man to regard a woman as his property.” A woman is thus under the ownership, control, authority, and custody of her father until he gives her away in marriage. Although no bride price is paid, a strong parallel can be drawn between the giving of a bride and the payment of lobola.<sup>40</sup> Both these practices of giving and paying can be interpreted as an indication of ownership. According to Phiri (2002:24), the belief in the African culture is that a man owns the woman in a marriage relationship.

When the church asks who is giving the woman in marriage, it lends support to the understanding that the woman is “property” to be given by her father to be married to a man. By receiving the woman, the priest shares in the treating of the woman as a possession to be given and received. The woman comes from the ownership and control of her father to be given into a new patriarchal family, where she will be under the authority of her husband. Through this liturgical act the church condones the understanding of a man having an independent privileged position of power and authority in his household.

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<sup>40</sup> The Xhosa term for the practice of offering a bride price.

#### **4.3.1.2 *The pledging of obedience***

Leading on from the liturgical act of the woman being “received” and the implied ownership, a pledge to obedience is included in the marriage liturgy, reading as following: “and in all things lawful to obey” (APB, 1998:464). This pledge forms part of the marriage vows that the woman makes to the man. Although it is not compulsory for the woman to make the pledge, it has not been removed from the liturgy, thus allowing the option for it to be included in the ceremony. By its inclusion, the church ultimately gives its approval for the usage thereof. Apart from stating “in all things lawful,” an overall obedience from the woman towards the man is implied. A direct implication of “obedience” is subordination of the woman and dominance of the man, giving a clear indication of an unequal relationship. Once “obedience” is mentioned, it becomes obvious that disobedience will have consequences. The consequences may include the culturally accepted norm of disciplining a disobedient woman through acts of violence.

The perceived idea of the right of a man to discipline his spouse, in the case of what was viewed as disobedience, was previously mentioned as a contributing factor to intimate partner violence. Davies and Dreyer (2014:3) cite Wood et al. (2008:47), who conducted a survey amongst Xhosa youth in 2008, in saying that: “from a cultural point of view it is expected that a man should be the one in control of the household, making decisions and protecting women. This ‘protection’ and ‘discipline’ can include acts of violence, either provoked by the woman’s ‘insubordination’, or with the aim to resolve conflict.” According to Davies and Dreyer (2014:3) the survey also found that “in Xhosa families it was expected of the wife to be quiet and submissive to the point of helplessness” (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:3). Disobedience to this cultural norm could result in the violent disciplining of the woman.

Worship, and therefore the liturgy of worship, shapes our relationships (Pillay, 2015:565). The understanding of and behavior in those relationships will be influenced. The relationship between not only the marriage partners, but also those present is shaped. It may be perceived that men are entitled to act in a

disciplining way, while women learn that they will be subjected to 'disciplining' by males and that it "is simply the way things are" (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:3).

It therefore appears that ACSA is condoning patriarchal cultural practices through institutionalized discrimination as expressed in the pledge to obedience that is included in the liturgy.

#### **4.3.1.3 The giving and receiving of a ring**

The giving of a ring is an integral part of the marriage liturgy. According to the APB (1989:457), in reference to the marriage partners, "the giving of the ring is a profound symbol of their commitment to an unending love within the love of God." The ring is placed on the "fourth finger of the bride's left hand," with the general interpretation that the ring indicates being married (APB, 1998:465). The receiving of a ring by the woman is a compulsory part of the liturgy, while it is optional for the man to receive a ring, thus indicating that it is optional for the man to show commitment and being married. This liturgical act is in line with the patriarchal practice of the woman being given and received in marriage, as well as the pledge to obedience. These acts all indicate a dominant superior position of the man and the subjective inferior position of the woman. In doing so, the liturgy continues to provide a patriarchal structure of gender relations.

#### **4.3.2 The nuptial blessing**

The literature shows that the theological understanding of marriage is reflected in the nuptial blessing. It reads as follows: "God our maker, you have consecrated marriage as a wonderful mystery, a sign of the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: look in mercy on these your servants that *N* may love his wife as Christ loved his bride the Church and also that *N* may love her husband as the Church is called to love her Lord" (APB, 1998:468).

Through the blessing the relationship between wife and husband is purported to be that of Christ and Church. The relationship between Christ and the church is clearly not an equal one, since "the church-bride is totally dependent on and subject to her head or bridegroom," as stated by Schussler-Fiorenza

(cited by Rakoczy, 2004:33). A relationship of dependency and subjection between the wife and husband is evident. This relationship is indicated in the understanding and description of marriage in the APB 1989, which refers to the image of the church as portrayed in Scripture as the bride of Christ. In reference to this image, it is stated: “The inseparable bond between a man and his wife thus mirrors the relationship between Jesus and his bride the Church. Jesus gave himself completely for the Church in a sacrificial love that the bridegroom is to imitate. As the Church responds to Christ’s self-giving love in wonder and awe that he should love her so much, so according to this pattern, the bride is to love her husband” (APB, 1989:457-458). Acknowledging the sacrificial nature of the love that is expected from the husband, this understanding of marriage places the woman in position of response, taking the lead from the husband whilst being denied the ability of leadership in the relationship. This is in line with the social construction of the role of men as independent leaders and authority figures, while women are expected to be dependents and obedient followers (Rakoczy, 2000:5, 22). The expectation that the woman should be “in wonder and awe that he should love her so much,” brings a sense of unworthiness and undeservedness, placing the woman in a position whereby she is expected to be unduly thankful for what should be an equal relationship of reciprocal love.

If the church continues to equate marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church, it perpetuates the social construction of an unequal relationship between husband and wife. “This theological paradigm reinforces the cultural patriarchal pattern of subordination” (Rakoczy, 2004:33).

This blessing is based on the biblical text of Ephesians 5:21-33. Accordingly, verse 25 reads: “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave His life for her” (APB, 1989:457; The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version). The appropriate use of this text and the blessing based on it in our current context are questionable and will be investigated in the following section.

### **4.3.3 Suggested Scripture readings for the marriage service**

Specific Scriptures are prescribed to be used during the marriage service (APB, 1998:460). An example of such a text is Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 21 to 33, which will be investigated to determine its appropriateness and whether its inclusion in the prescribed reading list may serve to legitimize patriarchy and the resultant position of marital submission for women.

Various authors agree that many biblical texts legitimize patriarchy and the oppression of women. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:176) state: "The Bible has and continues to be used in an absolute way to reinforce the socio-structural oppression of women. There are many Biblical sources substantiating and suggesting male dominance in marriage as ordained by God and morally right. These texts assert the dependence, subordination, and in most cases, the inferiority of women." Cornelius agrees that although there are texts such as 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, verses 32 to 35, which provide the view that both parties in marriage have equal responsibilities, the New Testament generally urges women to accept the authority of their husbands (Cornelius, 2013:186). The text in question may provide an example.

The author of Ephesians addresses the relationship between husband and wife in a patriarchal marriage in a Greco-Roman society. Wives are instructed to submit to their husbands as to the Lord, and as the church submits itself to Christ. It states that a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church, and that a wife must respect her husband. The author introduces the idea that the husband must love his wife as Christ loves the church. As stated earlier, this relationship between husband and wife, if based on the relationship between Christ and the church, is clearly not one of equality. Culture and theology is "intertwined to justify the subordination of the wife" (Rakoczy, 2004:33).

As liturgy impacts the construction of relationships, the reading of this text has the capacity to continue to shape marital relationships as unequal. According to Rakoczy (2004:33), the patriarchal household codes revealed through this text have led to incredible suffering down the ages. As a result of the notion of

the headship of the husband and wifely submission, “a woman may feel obliged by biblical authority to tolerate or return to an abusive husband” (Nash, 2013:205). Some authors argue, as does Nash (2013:207), that this Scripture “implies that a husband has authority to control or punish his wife if she is perceived insubordinate.”

According to Furlan (2009:240), this text in particular, “served to subsequent generations as a basis for stereotypes on the ‘natural’ subordination and submission of the wife to her husband.” The continued uncritical usage of this text serves to perpetuate this stereotype. Despite the subordination of women, and the headship of men being justified by the literal reading of this text, there is no indication found in the synodical documentation that ACSA has issued a reinterpretation or exegetical explanation for the use of this text, or has addressed the matter in any other way. The reading and literal interpretation of this text thus remains an option at marriage services. It can be said that the suggested text in this ecclesiastical setting may still function “to legitimise private, submissive and restrictive positions for women” (Mouton, 2012:584).

It is also interesting to note that a more inclusive text such as 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 is not included in the list of prescribed readings. The New Testament reveals two views or traditions in complete contradiction with regard to gender, the patriarchal view and that of gender equality (Furlan, 2009:239, 242). The work attributed to the Apostle Paul on the one hand, “affirms Christian equality and freedom,” and on the other hand, reflects and conforms to the “patriarchal values and consequently woman’s subordination and inferiority, characteristic of the society of the time in which Paul lived,” especially presenting in the subordination of women in marriage and in worship (Furlan, 2009:239, 241, 242). “The issue of gender hierarchy depends on the Biblical passages we choose” (Furlan, 2009:245). If the choice of readings listed for the marriage service does not outright favor patriarchal hierarchy, it at least observes the duality of the biblical tradition.

In conclusion, the text in question can be interpreted as legitimizing patriarchy and the resultant position of marital submission, thus making it inappropriate for use in an establishment that seeks to proclaim gender equality.

#### **4.3.4 The use of gender exclusive language**

The use of the word “man” in reference to both women and men is an example of gender exclusive language in the liturgy of the marriage service and throughout the Anglican Prayer Book. The following sentence is included in the liturgy: “Those whom God has joined together, let not man put asunder” (APB, 1998:466).

According to Klopper (2002:423), it is taken for granted that “man” includes “woman” and “mankind” includes “womankind.” Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:175) however, refer to the concern of post-modern thinkers with regard to language, which can be understood as “a means by which individuals come to know their world.” “Knowing” the world and the understanding thereof is socially constructed. Through language, meaning and experience can be accumulated, deposited, preserved, and transmitted. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007) therefore believe that patriarchy had been preserved by language to serve the interest of the patriarch or man. From this reasoning, it becomes clear that language has power.

Language has the power to embody or portray justice and injustice (Landman, 2006:284). Through the use of the word “man” in the marriage service, an injustice is portrayed towards women through the employment of gender exclusive language. According to Landman (2006:284), language also shows how women and men are perceived. It is thus communicated that women are perceived as being subject to men, only having meaning as part of “man.” The perception of women as a subjective reality, rather than an objective reality is portrayed through the exclusive use of the term “man” in the declaration of marriage in the liturgy. This perception of women as a subjective reality and men as an objective reality will impact on marriage, as the marriage partners will come to know their world through the language that is employed.

Landman (2006:287) is in agreement with Van den Berg and Pudule (2007) that social construction takes place through language, and that accordingly language constitutes people. The being, thinking and doing of people are influenced and controlled by the social discourses that they are exposed to. If language constitutes people, it can be said that “language indeed creates us. Language makes us what we are” (Landman, 2006:285). Through the exclusive use of the word “man” in the liturgy of the marriage service and conveying the perception of the woman as a subjective reality, language can “make” submissive wives and dominant husbands. The social discourse exhibited in the liturgy will influence the “doing” of people. Van Arkel (2000:250) confirms that belonging to a certain religion, in this case Christianity as practiced in ACSA, the “way of speaking” in that religion becomes “an interpretive schema that structures one’s understanding of oneself and one’s world.” Klopper (2002:426) puts it that language evokes the attitudes and values of the society in which it is used. The exclusive male language that is used within the marriage liturgy thus evokes the attitude of ACSA towards the relationships between females and males, indicating an attitude of unequal relationships that is biased towards men.

With social construction taking place through language, the damaging influence that the gender exclusive language of the liturgy has on the perception of marriage and marital relationships becomes obvious. Pillay (2011) concurs that the continuous use of androcentric<sup>41</sup> language used by ACSA is an indication of the failure of the church to recognize women as children of God. In the same vein, Klopper (2002:422) states that “the tyranny of patriarchal language” justifies the subordination of women. The use of gender exclusive language is a clear indication that ACSA still functions within a patriarchal framework.

#### **4.3.5 The image of God**

The image of God as presented in the liturgy of the marriage service is being investigated in attempting to find whether ACSA is maintaining patriarchal

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<sup>41</sup> Androcentric language refers to male dominant language and “means that reality (very often ‘truth’) is constructed through the eyes of men (Pillay 2011:1).

practices such as male dominance though its theological framework and whether it will be impacting on intimate partner violence. According to Klopper (2002:421), the male-image of God justifies the subordination of women in church and society. The only image that is used in reference to God in the liturgy of the marriage service is that of the Trinitarian God expressed as “God the Father God the Son God the Holy Spirit” (APB, 1998:466). The reference of God as “Father” is repeatedly and mainly used, with the term “Lord” less frequently used. The image of God presented in the liturgy is an exclusively male one.

#### ***4.3.5.1 The origin of the male image of God***

The male image of God has its origin in the ancient Near East, and is a natural reflection of the patriarchal culture of the time. According to the Old Testament, God is portrayed as a male God, imaged as father, king, master, judge, shepherd, ruler, warrior, and other male images of the time. These images of God “culturally relate to the time and space in which they were conceived” (Klopper, 2002:421). Klopper further reasons that the images of God relate to the value attributed to these images. She argues: “Human beings, when speaking of God, quite naturally choose language which will project onto the divinity the highest value that they hold. In a patriarchal society such as Old Testament Israel, therefore the image of God would be cast in male language, males being from the powerful male ruling groups of society, more highly valued than women” (Klopper, 2002:422).

#### ***4.3.5.2 The metaphorical use of images***

Claassens (2008:50) emphasizes the importance of being reminded that any language for God is metaphorical. It is representational of an understanding rather than reality. The danger is that the male metaphors used for God has become so commonplace that they are “erroneously taken literally as a description of God’s essence instead of an attempt to speak the unspeakable.” Klopper (2002:426) agrees that if metaphorical images are rigidly retained in church language and liturgy, “their metaphorical character is lost and they are understood in a literal way as describing God’s being.”

When the perceived essence of God as male is contained in restrictive images in line with superiority, power and authority—king, master, judge, ruler, warrior—support is given to the construction of these characteristics as exclusively male. Claassens (2008:49) quotes the classic declaration of Mary Daly, which expresses this point, saying: “If God is male, then males are God.” Klopper (2002:426) confirms the point that ultimately male language for God implies that men are more like God or closer to God’s image.

#### ***4.3.5.3 Maintaining patriarchal culture through the use of exclusively male images for God***

The continued use of exclusive male imagery for God in especially the marriage liturgy is an indication that ACSA is maintaining or at least not disputing the patriarchal culture of ancient Israel, whereby men are more highly valued than women and closer to the image of God. It also offers support to the understanding of Rakoczy (2004:31) that “patriarchy is interwoven in the Christian tradition in distinct and pervasive ways. The image of God in scripture and liturgical prayer are overwhelmingly male: Lord, King, Father.”

The use of male images of God cannot be seen in isolation. It has previously been stated that social construction takes place through language, and that accordingly language constitutes people. In this regard, Claassens (2008:49) quotes Elizabeth Johnson, who notes that the images that we use for God are not “peripheral or dispensable to theological speech” or to “ecclesial and social praxis.” Klopper (2002:422) states that religious images are immensely powerful. They construct understanding and influence relations with God as well as interpersonal relationships. They give expression to already existing constructions, and also contribute to current societal constructions.

#### ***4.3.5.4 The impact of using exclusively male images for God***

An exclusive male image of God will thus contribute to the social construction of male superiority, thereby constituting and supporting patriarchal practice. This social construction, based on the perceived maleness of God, will also influence social practices. Claassens (2008:49) agrees that a primary image

of God as a patriarch or male ruler will contribute to a culture in which male rulership is seen “at the least, as normative, and at the worst, as divinely sanctioned.” With the male being presented as normal and the female as marginal, this position is internalized by many women (Klopper, 2002:424) Landman (2006:287) argues that a male image of God supports “an unhealthy hierarchy of men over women.”

When this position is portrayed in the marriage liturgy, women are bound to accept the role of being submissive and dependent, while men are bound to accept the dominant position of superiority due to being “more like God,” aligning themselves with the images of superiority, power, and authority. According to Rakoczy (2004:31), the oppression of women through patriarchal social structures increases in the religious context since the ‘maleness’ of God and the male identity of Jesus are used to justify women’s subordination.” Klopper (2002:423) refers to Schussler-Fiorenza, who is convinced that wife battering can directly be related to patriarchal religion and power-oriented language for God. The male image of God in the marriage liturgy will shape the understanding of marriage, contributing to the construction of patriarchal marriages, which will inevitably bear negatively on pastoral care being exercised in the case of intimate partner violence.

It is clear that the image of God as presented in the liturgy of the marriage service serves to maintain patriarchal practices and that it has the potential to influence the understanding of marriage as patriarchal. It will therefore produce an unequal marital relationship, which may result intimate partner violence. The projected patriarchal understanding of marriage will also impact on pastoral care provided in the case of intimate partner violence.

#### **4.4 Polity**

Polity can generally be described as “a form of church governance adopted by an ecclesiastical body,” organized in “definitive, prescribed patterns.” “Church polity is thus the manner in which a church or denomination practices organization and governance. Because these two areas permeate all areas of

church life, polity has profound implications for understanding the nature of the church and its various functions and ministries” (Brand & Norman, 2004:2, 4, 5). The polity of a church will therefore give insight into whether it is patriarchal in nature or contributing to patriarchy and male dominance. It also provides a governance framework wherein pastoral care is given to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. It is therefore important to investigate the polity of ACSA to determine these matters. This result will also give insight into whether the polity of the church is conducive to or detracting from pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence within marriage.

The church governance structure of ACSA is hierarchical, meaning that it is organized according to a system of persons ranked one above the other. Zahl (2004:221) states: “The polity of Anglicanism is directly connected with the historical circumstances.” The church assumed numerous pre-modern customs in the process of its institutionalization, such as the English monarchic rule, which is based on hierarchy with ultimate power and authority vested in the monarch (Furlan, 2009:236). ACSA, originating from The Church of England, has inherited a hierarchical governance structure, which is maintained as a current practice.

With the establishment of the Anglican Church, the governance system was both Episcopalian and Erastian. As an Erastian system, “It was a church under the authority of the monarch,” with the king as head of the church. (Brand & Norman, 2004:19). Zahl describes Episcopacy as “the institution by which bishops (or *episkopois*) govern the visible church” (Zahl, 2004:225). As an Episcopal system, the Anglican Church had an elaborate system of bishops, who were required to take real authority over their own territories. “The bishop ruled the church, but the monarch ruled the bishop” (Brand and Norman, 2004:19).

ACSA today remains Episcopalian, which provides the context for a hierarchical governance structure. “The institution of Episcopacy assumes three orders, or levels, of ordination. Ordination is the word for ‘setting apart’ or ordering individuals for leadership within the Christian family, the church”

(Zahl, 2004:225). The episcopacy of ACSA is structured according to bishops, priests, deacons and laity.<sup>42</sup> Racokzi (2004:33) refers to this structure as the gradation of office ranks from highest to lowest, with bishops being the highest and the lay persons the lowest. She further states that with this model of governance, “leadership, authority and power increase ‘up the ladder’” and terms it an “ecclesiology of domination and subordination.” According to Zahl (2004:231), the church order has to contribute to the well-being of the church, but Landsman (2012:2) cites various authors in agreement that religion is harmful if it is authoritarian in nature.

Brand and Norman (2004:5, 10) are of the opinion that “a particular view of polity shapes one’s understanding of the offices” and that “polity does have profound implications for our understanding and purpose of the church, clergy, laity function and relationships, and the ministry within and without the church.” The role, understanding and relationship of the clergy and laity will therefore provide particular insight into the nature of the church.

Zahl defines the role of the bishop as “overseer” according to the meaning of the Greek word for bishop (Zahl, 2004:228). Within ACSA a bishop is given authority, oversight and discipline over a Diocese,<sup>43</sup> in addition to being named as chief priest, amongst other ministries,<sup>44</sup> and promises to “govern my Diocese.”<sup>45</sup> Brand and Norman (2004:6, 9) term this as the bishop having the right to exert rulership over the other offices and the laity, and to exercise disciplinary action over the same. This is expressed in the bishops having the sole right to ordain priests and deacons. At ordination, the candidate is asked: “Will you accept the discipline of this church, and reverently obey your Bishop and other ministers set over you?”<sup>46</sup> (APB, 1989:589). Once such clergy are licensed to a ministry they have to take an oath of canonical obedience to the bishop.<sup>47</sup> The authority, rulership and exercising of discipline of the bishop

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<sup>42</sup> Named as the ministers of the church in the APB (1989:433).

<sup>43</sup> The service of ordination and consecration of a bishop in the APB (1989:599).

<sup>44</sup> According to the ministry of a bishop in the APB (1989:433).

<sup>45</sup> Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (2007:51). The governance of the diocese is said to be in conformity with the laws and canons of the church.

<sup>46</sup> The service of “The ordination of deacons and priests.”

<sup>47</sup> “The Oath” in “Services for Parish Use 1993,” according to Canon 16.2b.

can also be seen in the application that has to be made to the bishop for remarriage after divorce, as discussed previously. To further show authority, the bishop of a Diocese has “the right to Veto upon all Acts and Resolutions of the Synod of his Diocese.”<sup>48</sup> These practices are an indication of the power vested in the bishop in hierarchical governance. With this power, Zahl suggests that the danger inherent in episcopacy is “prelacy,” which he describes as the authoritarian “personal rule of one man” (Zahl, 2004:231).

The ministry of a priest is given as, amongst other things, “to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church” (APB, 1989:433). Priests are “invested with an ecclesiastical authority that they can exercise over the churches under their oversight” (Brand & Norman, 2004:6). Zahl (2004:226) locates the origin of the word “priest” in two Greek words, namely, “*presbyteros*” and “*hiereus*,” both from the Old Testament. While “*presbyteros*” refers to an elder or leader in the local congregation, “*hiereus*” refers to a sacred ruler. The intended rulership of clergy is inherent in its origin. Deacons have “a special ministry of humble service” (APB, 1989:583). They too have to promise to reverently obey the bishop, and take an oath of canonical obedience to the bishop. The oath of obedience together with hierarchical subordination may prevent clergy from being agents of change. For fear of being disciplined, clergy could be unable to challenge oppressive structures, thereby condoning the status quo.

The role and understanding of the clergy, i.e., bishops, priests and deacons, and laity gives insight into the hierarchical nature of the church. The clear ordering or ranking of offices is an indication that the hierarchical governance structure has connotations of power, rulership, and authority, as suggested earlier by Racokzi (2004:33) who speaks of the “gradation of office ranks” concurrent with the increase of power and authority “up the ladder,” terming it an “ecclesiology of domination and subordination.”

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<sup>48</sup> Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

There appears to be a strong correlation between hierarchy and patriarchy. Rakoczy (2004:31, 33) terms patriarchy as “an ideology and structure of domination” and hierarchy as an “ecclesiology of domination and subordination.” As discussed previously, the meaning of patriarchy can be derived from the Latin terms “*arche*,” meaning “rule,” and “*pateres*,” meaning “fathers.” It can thus be directly translated as “the rule of the fathers.” Likewise, the meaning of hierarchy can be derived from its original terms “*arche*” meaning “rule” and “*hierous*” meaning “priest.” Both patriarchy and hierarchy are based on rulership, headship, power, domination and subordination. With priests traditionally being men in ACSA, Anderson (2016:38) is correct in arguing that hierarchy has been connected to the exercise of male power. Pillay (2015:565) in fact mentions patriarchy as a hierarchy of power and that powerlessness is “sustained and perpetuated by the hierarchies of patriarchal power, embedded in culture and religion.” It can thus be concluded that hierarchical governance gives credibility to patriarchy and condones hierarchical relational power, thereby sustaining and perpetuating powerlessness.

Ecclesiastical organization and governance ideally brings symmetry, harmony and discipline within the membership of the church (Brand & Norman, 2004:4). The consequence of this outcome will be organizational conformity, which will contribute to the construction of relationships according to the prescribed patterns of the form of governance, in the case of ACSA being hierarchical. Gender relations in particular are socially constructed as a gender hierarchy with men as the dominant class and the primary beneficiaries (Poling, 2003:17; Whitehead & Barrett 2001:12). Furlan (2009:234) refers to gender relations as a “precedence-orientated hierarchy,” resulting in an uneven distribution of power, which in the case of gender relations will be in favor of the supremacy of men. Racokzi (2000:15) cites Ackerman in reference to the theological understanding that “everyone has her or his allotted place, acceptance of which is pleasing to God,” thereby justifying hierarchical relationships and practices. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:171) state that this is often defended as being God’s intent, while Pillay (2011:4) says it is regarded by men and women as “the natural order of

things.” Furlan (2009:235) comes to the conclusion that “Christian theology has definitely contributed to the preservation of gender hierarchy in individual Christian Churches,” due in part to “its hierarchic systems.” Rakoczy (2000:15) endorses the conclusion of Furlan that hierarchy is sanctioned by the practices of the church. With hierarchy being central to the societal construction of gender arrangement, it can be concluded that due to conformity, the hierarchical governance practices of ACSA gives credibility to the construction of unequal gender relations.

With the conclusion that hierarchical ecclesial governance gives credibility to patriarchy, hierarchical relational power, and the resultant unequal gender relations, it may also be perceived as giving credence to a hierarchical family code within marriage.

With both patriarchy and hierarchy based on rulership, headship, power, domination and subordination, the governance practice of ACSA gives validity to male headship in marriage. Through conformity to the prescribed patterns of the hierarchical form of governance, the understanding of the right of the assumed head to rule, discipline and expected obedience may be perpetuated. As indicated previously, hierarchical governance is susceptible to authoritarianism. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:176) are of the opinion that authoritarian governance present power dynamics in marriage relationships, posing a challenge to pastoral therapy. This influence on the marriage calls for “a fresh response to the patriarchal forms of authority and dominance.” Egalitarian governance will impact on the challenge from women for an egalitarian type of marriage in which women and men will be partners (Van den Berg & Pudule, 2007:176). The challenge to pastoral therapy that Van den Berg and Pudule (2007) refer to may include the response to intimate partner violence. The expectation of obedience in marriage and the right of the assumed head to discipline is a strong cause of intimate partner violence. This right is reflected in the episcopal system of ACSA. Pillay (2011:4) makes the point that discrimination, dominion, and gender-based violence emanates not only from patriarchy, but also from hierarchy. Her suggestion is that ACSA has to address hierarchies of power theologically

(Pillay, 2015:565). The church cannot rightfully respond to intimate partner violence while perpetuating governance practices that condone hierarchical relationships at the root of the violence.

Hierarchy is also connected with the exclusion of women from leadership. ACSA currently has thirty-one bishops, of whom two are women. As indicated in the previous chapter, gender transformation in ACSA is often viewed as the numerical inclusion of women in the leadership of the church. Judged by the number of women in episcopal leadership, very little transformation has happened since the ordination of women by ACSA in 1992. Although this is an inadequate view of transformation, the inclusion of women in leadership roles is of utmost importance due to the impact of the historical exclusion of women. The relative exclusion of women from the leadership of the church confirms the social construction of men as leaders and women as subordinates in need of leadership. Pillay responds that the perceptions men and boy children have about gender roles and power has been influenced by them being privileged by the “hierarchy of patriarchy in the church.” She further responds that women have always taken their role in the church seriously, but have not always been part of the decision-making bodies of the church (Pillay, 2011:1).

As previously mentioned, language and the image of God are inherently powerful (Klopper, 2002:423). The all-male image of God as father, king and master is deeply embedded within the power structures, especially in church governance. The influence of a “male” god who is all-powerful is traceable to the hierarchical polity of ACSA. This image of God “legitimizes the exclusion of women from the roles of leadership by which the religious tradition maintains itself” (Klopper, 2002:423). “God is seen as the creator of the church order and those in power are representatives and agents of God” (Klopper, 2002:423). With the implication of male language for God being that men are more like God, i.e. powerful, master, ruler and king, women are perceived to be less like God. It thus becomes acceptable that men are more suitable representatives and agents of God. This reasoning feeds into the social construction that men are natural leaders while women should be

followers. Despite the first ordination of women in 1992, the general form of address for clergy is still the traditional male title of “Father.” Form of address for female clergy is inconclusive and certainly no inclusive form of address for both female and male members of clergy have been officially adopted. In my experience, women are generally addressed in official communication as “Reverend,” while men continue to be addressed as and addressing themselves and one another as “Father.”<sup>49</sup> There appears to be reluctance on the part of male clergy to forgo any titles or to use an inclusive term for male and female clergy, and thereby forfeit the male title of “Father.” It could be interpreted that male priests who prefer to maintain this title are reluctant to forfeit the power, headship, and authority that is associated with fatherhood in a patriarchal system. It may also be an indication of the fear of being regarded as the same as women, while holding on to the image of man being more like God and therefore more powerful. Letting go of the title would imply letting go of the image of power, strength and authority. Thatcher (2011:31) refers to the fear of slipping down “the gender gradient” from masculinity to femininity. By the continuous use of a male title for male clergy, without any attempt to change it to afford inclusivity, the ACSA maintains, perpetuates and gives legitimacy to a hierarchical gender order of male dominance, privileging men as superior and women as inferior.

From the investigation of the polity of ACSA, it can be concluded that its hierarchical governance system is rooted in patriarchy, and is thereby contributing to maintaining the status quo of male dominance. The characteristics of power, authority, rulership, headship and discipline give credibility to hierarchical family relationships, which contribute to intimate partner violence. The polity of ACSA is thus detracting from pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence.

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<sup>49</sup> The official communication from the Diocese of Saldanha Bay under the subject heading “Diocesan News, Pastoral care and Prayer,” dated 29 July 2016, contains references to a female priest as “Revd” (short for Reverend) and to a male priest as “Fr” (short for Father). Other communications contain the same titles.

#### 4.5 Anglican commemorations

In the Anglican tradition, saints, religious leaders, and scholars from all centuries are commemorated throughout the year. Their teachings, may, however, be controversial and problematic in the sense that it may support or contribute to patriarchal practices. These, therefore, require further investigation to establish whether they contain hidden patriarchal distortions such as power relations, which will affect the believing communities.

According to Rakoczy (2004:31), the use of Greek philosophy, with its dualism of matter and spirit, had a negative impact on the Christian tradition during the first centuries of Christianity, especially with regard to the humanity and dignity of women as truly created in the image of God. The philosophical understanding that the male was identified with mind and spirit and the female with matter and the body was incorporated into the Christian tradition through the teachings of religious scholars.

Two such examples of religious scholars, who are still revered, commemorated and celebrated by ACSA, are Augustine of Hippo (d430) and Thomas Aquinas (d1274). Augustine taught that a woman does not reflect the full image of God, and only does so together with her husband: "... the woman with her husband is the image of God in such a way that the whole of that substance is one image, but when she is assigned her function of being an assistant, which is her concern alone, she is not the image of God; whereas in what concerns the man alone he is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman is joined to him in one whole" (cited by Rakoczy, 2004:32). On the feast day of Augustine, celebrated on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August every year, the following prayer is prayed throughout all churches in ACSA: "Merciful Lord, You turned Augustine from his sins to be a faithful bishop and teacher: grant that we may follow him in penitence and discipline till our restless hearts find their rest in You; through Jesus Christ our Lord" (APB, 1989:307).

The teaching of Aquinas holds that men are superior to women, and that a woman was only created to help with procreation. He argues that man "... has natural superiority because his soul is ordered to intellectual activity, while woman, although she has rational soul, was created to help him in the work of procreation" (cited by Rakoczy, 2004:32). On the feast day commemorating him as a teacher of the faith, the following prayer is prayed throughout all churches in ACSA: "God our Father, You enlightened the Church by the teaching of Your servant, Thomas Aquinas: enrich it with Your heavenly grace..." (APB, 1989:320).

The church has not denounced or repented of the patriarchal teachings of these religious leaders, but rather uphold and honor them uncritically as they continue to be incorporated into the worship practices of the church. The prayer commemorating Augustine holds out encouragement to follow his teaching with discipline, while the prayer for Aquinas shows that the church is still enlightened by his teaching. Religious practices such as these maintain and reinforce gender inequality in the life of the church, and continue to shape attitudes towards women today.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In its response to gender-based violence, ACSA fails to acknowledge the role of male dominance as a causal factor, as well as to acknowledge possible institutional patriarchy or the address thereof. Against this background, this chapter sought to investigate and critique the practices that provide a framework wherein pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence takes place within the context of ACSA. This was done to determine possible institutional patriarchy or the condoning of patriarchy and societal cultural practices giving men power over women, exploiting and subjecting women, both in the home and in public life. Possible institutionalized patriarchy would legitimize beliefs and practices that ensure the upholding of unequal gender arrangement. This possibility would limit the ability of ACSA to offer responsible pastoral care and to pastorally address intimate partner violence within marriage.

In the investigation and critique of the relevant practices, it was found that the theological framework of pastoral care within ACSA is patriarchal in nature. In its understanding of marriage, expressed in the liturgy of the marriage service, ACSA condones and legitimizes patriarchal cultural practices, male superiority and dominance, as well as female submission. This is demonstrated by ACSA through liturgical acts and prayers, gender exclusive language, an exclusive male image of God, as well as its polity and commemorations. Mouton (2012:584) speaks of gender inequality as a deeply entrenched cultural and religious phenomenon. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:175) cite Aduyoye in reiterating that “instead of providing a new style of life appropriate to people who are living with God, the church is sometimes guilty of reinforcing norms of traditional religion and culture. The investigated practices prove this to be true of ACSA.

This finding will inevitably have an impact on marriage relationships. De Lange writes that religion is deeply anchored in society and that the teachings of the church influence patterns of behavior. While the critical question is whether it stimulates human flourishing, it sometimes threatens public health by consolidating the inequity of women (De Lange, 2006:830). As indicated earlier, the maintaining of patriarchal practices by ACSA has the potential to influence the understanding of marriage as patriarchal and hierarchical, thereby producing unequal marital relationships, which may result in intimate partner violence. Cornelius (2013:181) confirms that the degree of patriarchy is correlating with intimate partner violence when she states: “The more patriarchal the norms, the higher the level of wife beating.” By condoning patriarchal norms, the church becomes culpable in the manifestation and rate of intimate partner violence. Apart from this impact, the experience of victims is also influenced. An integral part of the identity of women is informed and defined by their religious tradition (Van den Berg & Pudule, 2007:174). The experience of marriage conflict or abuse is shaped by “the ideas, beliefs and practices” of their patriarchal Christian culture. This faith experience functions as “a framework for meaning making” that engenders a sense of shame, guilt and blaming when not adhering to the patriarchal discourse, resulting in intimate partner abuse. Patriarchal religious practices may not only provide a

context for the occurrence of intimate partner violence, but also serves to minimize and deny the abuse (Van den Berg & Pudule, 2007:174, 175).

The institutional patriarchy and practices, such as the understanding of marriage, will also impact on pastoral care provided in the case of intimate partner violence. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:178) cites Morgan, who states that problems only survive and thrive when they are supported and backed up by particular ideas. It will be irresponsible to condemn intimate partner violence while at the same time maintaining patriarchal practices. With ACSA continuing to embrace and uphold patriarchal practices and with there being remnants of such in its theology, the theological framework guiding its pastoral practices will no doubt be patriarchal in nature. The ability to offer pastoral care and to pastorally address the problem of intimate partner violence within marriage with integrity, as well as effectively and responsibly will therefore be limited.

ACSAs response to gender-based violence thus far has been condemnation, awareness raising, speaking out, and questioning. There is a complete absence of the recognition of the root cause of gender-based violence and possible contributions to it by the inherent patriarchal nature of the church. There has been no hermeneutical engagement with its practices, theology and theory, which would lead to internal change necessary to address the matter with integrity and responsibility, ensuring that the care offered to victims and perpetrators is not limited. The refusal of the ACSA, perhaps unwittingly, to induce internal change by revisiting and engaging with their theology and practices, has resulted in a response that amounts to moralizing the issue of gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence. It can therefore be concluded that an alternative pastoral approach to intimate partner violence is indeed needed. Recommendations for such an approach will be made in chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE FEMINIST PASTORAL APPROACH**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This research thesis attempts to investigate how a feminist pastoral approach can assist the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to develop a responsible strategy for pastoral care that will enhance its ability to care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. It has been found that, in its official response to gender-based violence, ACSA does not acknowledge the causal, sustaining and legitimizing role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse, and therefore fails to address and respond to the root cause of intimate partner violence. A subsequent finding is that the theological framework guiding its pastoral practice is patriarchal in nature. The correlation between the root cause of intimate partner violence and the patriarchal theological framework of ACSA compromises its ability to exercise pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence. The resultant effect is that the ability to offer pastoral care and to pastorally address the problem of intimate partner violence within marriage with integrity, as well as effectively and responsibly, is therefore limited.

Against this background, there is a need for an alternative approach that will be able to offer recommendations to assist ACSA in becoming more responsible in its pastoral response and approach to intimate partner violence within marriage. In this chapter, therefore, a feminist pastoral approach will be investigated and offered as the preferred source from which recommendations will be obtained. These recommendations will be offered to assist ACSA in the said manner.

A feminist analysis, which was used as methodology for this research study, included the dynamics of diagnosis, critique, and reconstruction (Graham, 2012:201). This chapter resides under the dynamic of reconstruction, in that a

feminist approach will suggest theoretical recommendations that can be presented to ACSA to assist in the reconstruction of its theological framework that will impact and enhance its pastoral practice.

This research chapter will include: firstly the impact of the patriarchal theological framework of the pastoral practices of ACSA on pastoral care; secondly an investigation into a feminist pastoral approach; and thirdly recommendations to ACSA based on a feminist pastoral approach.

## **5.2 The impact of the patriarchal theological framework of the pastoral practices of ACSA on pastoral care**

With this study being located within the discipline of practical theology, and the sub-discipline of pastoral care in particular, it is necessary to affirm the detrimental impact that the patriarchal theological framework guiding the pastoral practices of ACSA has on its pastoral care of victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. This impact will substantiate the need for an alternative approach, which will be able to offer recommendations that will assist ACSA to become more responsible in its pastoral response and approach to intimate partner violence within marriage.

In order to affirm this impact, it is advisable to be reminded of the understanding of pastoral care. It can be broadly defined as the overall ministry of the church. Rather than being a specific set of discrete practices, pastoral care takes place in all intentional practices of faith referred to as pastoral practices in the religious community (McClure, 2012:269; Bennet Moore, 2002:1).

It is motivated by the devotion to the well-being of people, and is done from a theological perspective. McClure (2012:269) states that it “denotes a form of religious engagement aimed at integrating theory, theology and practice within the context of a faith community” for the purpose of healing. Other than healing, it includes guiding, sustaining, reconciling, resisting, empowering,

nurturing, and liberating (Van Arkel, 2000:148). These modes of pastoral care all contribute to bringing about health.

Pastoral care in terms of the purpose of health has a strong relational focus. According to Louw, pastoral care should be directed to the quality of human life. This quality of life is expressed as “health,” which he describes as human relationships with God, one another, and the environment being at peace, which is much more than the absence of infirmity. Health, as understood here, should be “experienced in a very special way within the family system” (Louw, 2008:426, 430). In the same vein, Van Arkel (2000:144) identifies the creating of relational health, especially in marriage, as an “urgent task” of pastoral care. Davies and Dreyer (2014:1) agree with this understanding, stating that the aim of pastoral care should therefore be to “guide the individual out of darkness into a right relationship with him- or herself, the world and God.”

Following on from this understanding of health as the focus of pastoral care, Louw states that “healing is more or less equivalent to freedom,” (Louw, 2008:437). To obtain health, Louw suggests a theological approach of liberation, which “attempts to free human beings from oppressive systems that violate basic human rights” and focuses on “the ideology behind social systems in order to free human beings from destructive institutions and patterns of thinking.” Such an approach should be “a reaction to a very specific social evil, defect or injustice” (Louw, 2008:437). In the context of reacting to intimate partner violence within marriage, such an oppressive social system can be interpreted as the occurrence of patriarchy, which is the ideology behind the social construction of unequal gender relations. Louw suggests that liberation from such an oppressive social system takes place through the reconstructing of the system, which will determine the well-being of the people (Louw, 2008:437). It is only when human beings are freed from the ideology of patriarchy and the resultant destructive patterns of thinking that marital partners involved in intimate partner violence will be able to live in peaceful and right relationships with themselves, one another, and God.

Louw's understanding of pastoral care and health has serious implications for the ability of ACSA to provide pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence with credibility and responsibility. ACSA has failed to bring liberation from the oppressive social system of the ideology of patriarchy that violates basic human rights. Rather than freeing human beings from destructive patterns of thinking with regard to gender and power, it is maintaining these patterns through its practices which uphold patriarchy. The understanding of Louw (2008:437) is that "social healing and reconstruction go hand in hand."

According to this understanding of health and healing, it can be concluded that the ability of ACSA to provide credible, responsible, and effective pastoral care to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage is limited due to the patriarchal theological framework of its pastoral practices. It will be unable to create "relational health, especially in marriage," which Van Arkel (2000:114) describes as an "urgent task" of pastoral care.

Given this limiting impact of the patriarchal theological framework of the pastoral practices of ACSA, there is clearly a need for an alternative approach that will assist ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy that will enhance its ability to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. In seeking an alternative approach that will assist in this manner, it has been discovered that the theological approach of liberation in relation to health and healing, as suggested by Louw, has been given pre-eminence in a feminist pastoral perspective developed by feminist pastoral theologians. Bennet Moore (2002:16) acknowledges the definition and conventional modes of pastoral care as "healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling," while adding that feminist pastoral theologians have expanded these to include "resisting, empowering, nurturing and liberating." Miller-McLemore (1999:80) states that although these additional elements may have operated alongside the conventional modes, they were highlighted, defined, and given prominence by feminist pastoral theologians. On the grounds of the specific element of liberation, amongst others, being central to a feminist pastoral approach, it is advisable that this approach will be investigated and used to formulate and offer recommendations for ACSA to become more

responsible in its pastoral approach to intimate partner violence within marriage.

### **5.3 Investigating a feminist pastoral approach**

A feminist pastoral approach is rooted in feminism and has developed from feminist insights, theory, and theology. It is therefore important to investigate feminism and feminist theology first in order to understand and apply a feminist pastoral approach.

#### **5.3.1 Feminism**

Back in 1993, Ackermann (1993:24) already described feminism as “the commitment to the praxis of liberation of women from all that oppresses us.” Various feminist theologians have echoed this understanding ever since. Miller-McLemore (1999:79) defines it as “a struggle to end sexist oppression,” while Jones (2000:3) adds the dimension of the empowerment of women. Van den Berg and Pudule (2007:172) state that “the core intention of feminism is to promote gender equality.” This is in line with Ackermann (1993:24) and Miller-McLemore’s (1999:79) understanding that feminism does not promote privilege for women over men. Although feminism focuses on the liberation of women from oppression due to the urgency of harm being done to women as a result of oppressive traditions and cultures, according to Jones (2000:6), feminist concern is for the liberation of “all people.” It is however, the “flourishing of women” that is the subject of feminist analysis.

Feminism calls for a “different consciousness” and questioning of “social, cultural, political and religious traditions” (Ackermann, 1993:24). This consciousness will bring about an acknowledgment and acceptance of the patriarchal nature of the structures of society, including the church, which is required by feminism. Feminism further seeks to bring about change in all these spheres to facilitate the attaining of gender equality and the resulting flourishing of all people, and especially to free women from oppression (Bennet Moore, 2002:4, 29). Jones (2000:9) states: “Feminism has always been sustained by the belief that things can get better.” This belief brings

hope that is reflected in the theory and theology that has sprung from the feminist movement.

### **5.3.2 Feminist theology**

The change that feminism seeks from within a religious context is brought about by employing feminist theology, which has the primary goal of “creating theological, social and ecclesiastical change” (Neuger, 1996:44). Feminist theology emerged as a critical theology of liberation in response to the patriarchal androcentrism of Christianity (Furlan, 2009:237). Liberation theology is done from the standpoint of victims of oppression (Ackermann, 2003:33). With feminist theology being a strand of liberation theology, it is done from the standpoint of women as the oppressed. According to Jones (2000:13), its emergence presented a grassroots response, challenging traditional views of women’s roles in religion and society. It also “challenges the harmful effect of the hierarchical models in religion” (Van den Berg & Pudule, 2007:173). It is marked by the inclusion of power and gender analysis, and in so doing, has “exposed the misogyny embedded in traditions and institutions” and “interrogated the very categories and customs that define religion” (Miller-McLemore, 1999:78). This is done by engaging critically with existing traditional approaches to theology in order to point out weaknesses and limitations with regard to gender and to provide alternative hermeneutical lenses of interpretation and meaning making. One of the weaknesses it has pointed out is how the premises of various theories in theology overlooked issues of gender and relationships of power (Van den Berg & Pudule 2007:173). It therefore takes special interest in the lives of women, making it central to the Christian message and faith, and taking all women’s experiences of oppression and discrimination very seriously (Phiri & Nadar, 2006:225, 226).

According to Ackermann, to “do” feminist theology involves being critical and constructive. Doing feminist theology means to be “critical of male dominance in Christian tradition and practices.” This means that practices, doctrines, and teachings that uphold male dominance supported by patriarchy have to be analyzed and exposed. Being critical also means that women’s history and

stories must be recovered and brought into the mainstream of theology. Once this critical analysis and recovery has taken place, feminist theologians seek to reconstruct theology with new insights and materials. The aim is to reshape the teachings of the church, and what the church should be, from the standpoint of women. This means that feminist theology should be “challenging, and infusing all theology with new perspectives,” bringing about change that will facilitate the attaining of gender equality and the resulting flourishing of all people, and especially to free women from oppression (Ackerman, 2003:34, 35).

### **5.3.3 A feminist pastoral care approach**

A feminist pastoral care approach is based on and committed to the application of a feminist perspective. It is undergirded by feminist pastoral theology, which is the application of feminist theology in the context of pastoral care. In line with a feminist perspective, it is committed to ending sexist oppression and endeavors to promote gender equality. Through this commitment, it seeks to create a pastoral context that is conducive to responsible and effective pastoral care that can be done with integrity. Such a context will allow for the purposes of pastoral care, i.e. healing, liberating, guiding, sustaining, transforming, reconciling, and nurturing, to be adequately achieved.

The conventional purposes or modes of pastoral care will be briefly described. Healing, according to Louw’s understanding of health, can be interpreted as the restoration of right and peaceful relationships with self, God, and others (Louw, 2008:426). Guiding focuses on “helping individuals in their thinking, attitudes, emotions and behaviour in the context of the presented problem, in order to help them to find a way out of darkness into a right relationship with him-or herself, the world and God” (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:1). Sustaining refers to providing the necessary support while the person is in a situation of suffering and bondage. Reconciliation is understood as the purpose and result of liberation, and is accomplished when people are brought together and “given new and joyful life in relation to one another and to God” (Gorsuch, 2001:128).

The purposes or modes of pastoral care that were highlighted, defined, and given importance by feminist pastoral theologians will be described here in more detail.

In addition to the concise description provided by Louw earlier in this chapter, feminist theologians further elaborate on the theology of liberation. It can be described as a process in response to human suffering, oppression, and bondage, seeking to bring freedom from these afflictions (Gorsuch, 2001:128). It is based on the work of the Triune God, displayed in Jesus Christ, who sought to bring freedom and flourishing to all human beings, and therefore seeks to bring new life and wholeness to the suffering as created, redeemed, and beloved people of God (Bennet Moore, 2002:118; Miller-McLemore, 1999:80). Whereas Louw speaks of liberation as an attempt to free human beings from oppressive systems that violate basic human rights while focussing on the ideology behind social systems, Gorsuch (2001:32) specifically speaks of liberation from embedded distortions of power in patriarchal societies, particularly power misused as dominance and the suffering that results from it. It is done by finding ways and identifying values that can transform society and end oppression (Gorsuch, 2001:42). One such way is “to shape theology and the practice of ministry in response to the concrete realities of human suffering and oppression” (Neuger, 1996:41).

Resistance emerges from liberation theology, and is a way of making justice (Gorsuch, 2001:31). It requires exposing, confronting, challenging and standing up against “all that damages and brings shame” (Bennet Moore, 2002:118). In the context of feminist pastoral care, the resistance is specifically against the use of power as domination, sanctioned by patriarchy, which causes suffering and oppression. Resistance involves agency, which is understood as “using power, influence or ability to act” (Gorsuch, 2001:3, 108). Agency entails determining how alternative societal practices and norms may be created (Gorsuch, 2001:44). This calls for an awareness of the “internalized nature of relations of power” (Gorsuch, 2001:48). In response to this awareness, a response of forging new ways of being church and “new styles of care, liturgy, or spiritual formation” are required (Graham, 2012:198).

Nurturing involves valuing, tending to, and caring for all human beings. It emphasises the importance of struggling for that which will contribute to the flourishing of all humanity. Bennet Moore (2002:17) warns of the danger of perceiving nurturing as confining women to a private world where they are either ascribed the role of carers or where they must be cared for. Miller-McLemore (1999:80) makes it clear that “nurturance is not a sympathetic kindness or quiescent support but fierce, dedicated proclamation of love that makes a space for difficult changes and fosters solidarity with the vulnerable.”

Empowering starts with an understanding of power relations and the various ways—which are often hidden—in which groups and individuals are disempowered in social relationships (Bennet Moore, 2002:16-17). Disempowerment causes the failure of women to achieve their full potential as rational beings. Graham (2012:195) quotes Simone de Beauvoir, stating that women are “silenced by the expectations of a male-dominated world that renders her dependant on the will of others, incapable of being or becoming a free agent.” In response to this understanding of power relations and disempowerment, empowering involves the intentional process of restoring lost power in relationships. This process may include various strategies, which Graham broadly describes as “anything which makes visible the realities of women’s lives in a patriarchal church and society, and which strengthens the awareness of women’s creativity” (Graham, 2012:200). In being more specific about a strategy of empowerment, she refers to Bons–Storm, who “regards the task of feminist pastoral care as one of enabling women to learn the necessary vocabulary of self-esteem by which they can articulate the complexities and realities of their lives free from external expectation,” thus giving women a voice (Graham, 2012:197). Women’s experiences should also be taken seriously in pastoral practice, rather than constructing them as having less value and power in society. Simultaneously, dominant narratives that inscribe male experiences and reasoning should be reduced (Bennet Moore, 2002:17, 41).

Miller-McLemore poignantly states that these modes of pastoral care “all entail deconstruction of limited definitions of reality and a reconstruction of

new views of the world and one's valued place within it. Pastoral care in these modalities is not particularly 'pastoral' or 'nice' in the truncated ways in which it has been perceived. Pastoral care disturbs as well as comforts, provokes as well as guides" (Miller-McLemore, 1999:80).

The creation of a conducive pastoral context that will allow for these purposes of pastoral care to be achieved will be accomplished by using a feminist pastoral theology. According to Bennet Moore (2002:4), "The aim of feminist pastoral theology is to renew and to transform belief and practice." This is achieved by being critical and constructive, which is inherent to doing feminist theology.

Feminist pastoral care has brought an awareness of the social, political, and religious context of care (Van Arkel, 2000:147). Feminist pastoral theology will involve a critique of Christian beliefs and doctrines as presented in the pastoral practices of the religious context of care (Bennet Moore, 2002:4). This critique will enable pastoral caregivers to consider their actions and practices in relation to their theology. With pastoral care being informed by a theological perspective, theological critique and reflection will indicate the ability to respond and the adequacy or inadequacy of the caring response based on the theological finding (Gorsuch, 2001:4).

The critical approach adopted in feminist theology serves the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of ministry (Gursoch, 2001:6). Once the weakness and inadequacies are pointed out, i.e. patriarchy, and overlooking gender relationships and power, the need to transform the undergirding theology becomes apparent.

It is only when this transformation takes place that the ministry will be enhanced. A feminist pastoral approach will seek to reconstruct the theology with new insights and material in order to bring about the transformation that is needed. This will be done from the standpoint of the oppression of women, thereby providing an alternative hermeneutical lens of interpretation and meaning making. This process of critique and reconstruction will fulfill the task

of feminist practical theology, under which feminist pastoral care resorts. Graham (2012:194) describes this task as “reconstructing tradition and practice” in pursuit of “the transformation of church and society.” This transformation of church and society will create a pastoral context that is conducive to responsible and effective pastoral care that can be done with integrity.

Rooted in feminism and doing feminist theology, feminist pastoral care thus has a contribution to make to “the practices of Christian communities” (Bennet Moore, 2002:8). It contributes to the building of congregations where healing and transformation can take place (Van Arkel, 2000:146). This research thesis seeks to answer the question of how a feminist pastoral approach can assist ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance the pastoral care of victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. In attempting to answer this question, a feminist analysis has been used as the methodology. This methodology is in line with a feminist pastoral approach. As indicated, both a feminist analysis methodology and a feminist pastoral approach include the processes and dynamics of critique and reconstruction. This critique is focused on the Christian beliefs and doctrines as presented in the pastoral practices of the religious context of care.

As part of the research methodology and process, a critique of the pastoral practices of ACSA in relation to marriage was carried out in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Here, it was established that the theological framework guiding the pastoral practices of ACSA are patriarchal in nature. As indicated previously, the correlation between the root cause of intimate partner violence and the patriarchal theological framework of ACSA compromises its ability to exercise pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence. The resultant effect is that the ability to offer pastoral care and to pastorally address the problem of intimate partner violence within marriage with integrity, responsibly and effectively is limited. In conjunction to the above, what was discovered is the crisis management and reactionary approach of the ACSA.

Integral to both a feminist analysis methodology and a feminist pastoral approach is the process and dynamic of reconstruction. As part of this reconstruction, recommendations will be offered to ACSA from a feminist pastoral approach. These recommendations will be drawn from what Neuger (1996:47) describes as a long agenda for theological change, which includes a profound rethinking of “all the language, images and metaphors central to Christian theology.” Ackermann (2003:34) mentions theological issues such as God, Christology, humanity, sin and ecclesiology—amongst others—as part of the agenda for theological change. Also central to feminist pastoral care are the themes of resistance, liberation, empowerment, and nurturing. Some of these theological issues and themes will be used to offer suggestions and recommendations to ACSA for the reconstruction of its theological framework that influences its pastoral practice with regard to intimate partner violence within marriage.

#### **5.4 Recommendations from a feminist pastoral approach**

The following recommendations from a pastoral care approach will assist ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance its pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.

##### **5.4.1 Agency**

Agency is rooted in the theory of resistance, which is a central theme of feminist pastoral care. Agency is therefore a requirement of a feminist pastoral approach, and is offered as a strong recommendation to ACSA, given the findings of this research thesis.

Gursoch (2001:3), writing from a feminist pastoral approach, suggests that a feminist perspective has made it possible to “encourage effective use of influence and agency” to recognize and “resist the destructive force of power as domination.” There is a strong correlation between resistance and agency. Resistance can be described as the work of challenging, exposing and standing up against structural evil such as patriarchy (Gursoch, 2001:129; Bennet Moore, 2002:16). This work involves agency, which is understood as

“using power, influence or ability to act” (Gorsuch, 2001:108). In the context of a feminist pastoral approach, using agency is essential to bring about societal, cultural, and religious change that will lead to the elimination of the oppression of women and the promotion of gender equality. Agency, from this perspective, not only contributes to effective and responsible pastoral care, but becomes a form of pastoral care as it is used to remove the cause of suffering for women, especially in the context of intimate partner violence. In arguing in support of agency, Gorsuch (2001:37) refers to Lettie Russel’s description of God as a “humanist” in the sense that God is “prohuman,” contradicting suffering and injustice in order for humanity to be re-created. This requests pastoral caregivers to be “prohuman,” thereby becoming partners with God in the re-creation of humanity. This partnership includes becoming agents of change.

The possibility that the church holds for agency with regard to intimate partner violence in marriage should not be undermined. This is due to the fact that “the identifying community and context for Christians is the church” (Bennet Moore, 2002:5). Cornelius (2013:176) states that “the Church is the most influential non-governmental organization in South Africa.” The church therefore has a substantial role to play as an agent of change when it comes to intimate partner violence. It is this possibility of agency that was recognized by the then deputy president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, when he asked churches to play a more active role in preventing intimate partner violence by addressing patriarchy.<sup>50</sup>

This possibility of agency with regard to intimate partner violence within marriage holds true for ACSA, as it extends over about one thousand parishes that are spread across six African countries.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the Rhema Bible Church in Johannesburg on 30 July 2017. He acknowledged that unchallenged patriarchy is the root cause of violence against women, that it is a social construction and that it can be deconstructed. He thus asked the church to play a more active role in addressing patriarchy and preventing violence against women. Viewed from: [www.news24.com](http://www.news24.com). [Date accessed: 21 August 2017]

<sup>51</sup> These countries include South Africa, Angola, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Namibia, representing about 1 000 parishes.

In this thesis the pastoral response of ACSA to intimate partner violence within marriage was investigated in Chapter 3. Research and surveys conducted in 1995 and 2015 showed that the church is perceived to be silent with regard to gender-based violence in general. At the provincial synod of 1995 the church was called upon to break the silence by preaching that all forms of violence are contrary to the gospel of love, but not to preach against patriarchy. Resolutions passed by various synods have called for the development of training programs for the clergy and resources for education. Church leaders acknowledged that they do not know how to address gender-based violence in their congregations due to a lack of training (Lotvonen, 2015:8). In its official responses to gender-based violence, the church does not officially acknowledge the role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse. The church also fails to recognize the causal, sustaining and legitimizing role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse. Also absent from the provincial synod resolutions is the need for theological reform with regard to gender and patriarchy. In Chapter 4 of this study it was found that the theological framework guiding the pastoral practices within ACSA is indeed patriarchal in nature. In the words of Lotvonen (2015:8): “Currently the church is not active enough, not vocal enough and has little if any impact in changing the statistics of gender-based violence in the communities that it serves.”

The response of condemning, but not using its influence to change the harmful societal structure of patriarchy, amounts to grandstanding and moralizing the issue of intimate partner violence. There is therefore no transformation of church and society to become gender inclusive. In this context there can be no responsible and effective pastoral care towards victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. ACSA should therefore take heed of the feminist pastoral approach of including agency in its pastoral strategy. It is only if this is done that it will fulfill the pastoral care objective of resistance.

With pastoral care devoted to the well-being of people, and done from a theological perspective, agency should start within the church. ACSA should develop what Ackermann (1993:24) calls “a different consciousness,” which

brings about acknowledgment of the patriarchal nature of the church, leading to the reconstruction of the system that determines the well-being of the people.

For Pillay (2015:566), speaking from within the context of ACSA, this change should start with intentional repentance of the patriarchy entrenched in its doctrine. A way for this to be done is for the church “to rethink and challenge its own culpability and complicity in justifying and sanctifying patriarchal hierarchies through the interpretation of scripture and androcentrism in worship- and leadership style that serve to sustain and perpetuate the inferior status assigned to women and children in the family, the church and society” (Pillay, 2015:567). True to a feminist pastoral approach, the aim of such rethinking and challenging should be “to transform perceptions, attitudes, and actions of Christian men and women in the various relational and institutional contexts in which they find themselves” (Pillay, 2011:3). To change the male dominant behavior rooted in patriarchy, which is the root cause of intimate partner violence within marriage, the church has the responsibility to change the thinking behind the behavior. This transformation will achieve the primary goal of feminist theology: creating theological, social, and ecclesiastical change, which will facilitate gender equality and the flourishing of all people.

By including agency in its pastoral care strategy, ACSA will use its ability to act, and its power and influence to change its limiting theological framework to one that is open to gender equality and the elimination of the oppression of women. In doing so it will transform perceptions and expectations of marital relationships to include egalitarianism, thereby enabling itself to develop a pastoral care strategy that will enhance the care of victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.

#### **5.4.2 Liturgy**

Liturgy is one of the pastoral practices that feminist pastoral theology aims to renew and transform through being critical and constructive approach (Bennet Moore, 2002:4). This is done to identify and remove the impact of any inherent patriarchy and the resultant gender inequality on those who partake

in liturgy. Feminist pastoral theology includes an understanding of worship and liturgy, and how this relates to the interest of women (Bennet Moore, 2002:113). It has also challenged the invisibility of women in worship and liturgy (Graham, 2012:197),

As was indicated in Chapter 3, liturgy as the rite of worship contributes to the formation of the worshippers who partake in the liturgy. According to Pillay (2015:565), collective identity is shaped during worship services. The liturgy of worship will contribute to the construction of the world, self, and other. If liturgy is patriarchal and male dominant in nature, the collective identity of the worshippers will be shaped accordingly. Pillay (2015:565) also highlights that the liturgy of worship shapes the relationships of the worshippers with God and amongst themselves. Pastoral care seeks to bring health in the form of peaceful right relationships with themselves, one another, and God. With liturgy shaping relationships, it can be perceived as a pastoral practice offering pastoral care. This will only be possible if the liturgy contributes to right relationships that are egalitarian in nature.

A feminist approach seeks to bring hope for change through critique and reconstruction. Pillay (2015:565) notes that Christian worship may provide creative opportunities to change the hearts and minds of Christians. In the investigation and critique of the liturgy of the marriage service of ACSA in Chapter 3, it was found that ACSA condones and legitimizes patriarchal cultural practices, male superiority, and dominance, as well as female submission. This is demonstrated by ACSA through liturgical acts and prayers, gender exclusive language, and an exclusive male image of God. It was thus concluded that ACSA, because it legitimizes the root cause of intimate partner violence, fails to be able to do responsible and effective pastoral care to victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence, especially through the liturgy of the marriage service. A feminist pastoral approach calls for the reconstruction of the liturgy of the marriage service. If ACSA should answer this call, it will be a way of fulfilling the pastoral purpose of resistance, which entails new ways of being church and new styles of liturgy that will make for change in response to an awareness of its

internalized nature of unequal relations of power (Gorsuch, 2001:48). Recommendations for the reconstruction of the liturgy will be offered with regard to gender inclusive language and the reinterpretation and usage of Scripture.

#### **5.4.2.1 Gender inclusive language**

The issue of language is central to a feminist approach, with language having been a hallmark of the feminist movement for a long time (Neuger 1996:94). Feminist pastoral theology recognizes the significance of language in worship (Bennet Moore, 2002:113). If the language of the faith practice does not indicate the experience of women, the faith practice will not operate in the best interest of women (Neuger, 1996:95).

According to a social constructionist view, language constitutes people and social discourses control their thinking. Their thinking and doing are controlled by social discourses. The language used in worship will contribute to the formation of those who partake in it, shaping their collective identity (Pillay, 2015:565). With male dominant language used in the liturgy of marriage, male dominant marriages will be part of the identity of the worshipping community. Landman (2006:278) concludes that “sexist language constructs women who are powerless in the face of social injustices such as domestic violence.”

In the critique of the liturgy of the marriage service of the ACSA in Chapter four, it was found that gender exclusive language is used. The androcentrism of the liturgy is indicated through the exclusive use of the word “man” in reference to both women and men. The perception of women as subject to men is portrayed, exemplifying the patriarchal nature of the liturgy. This subjection of women to men, especially in marriage, is further indicated by the repeat of the phrase “the man and his wife” in reference to the relationship between marriage partners (APB, 1998:458-459). Furthermore, it was observed that the order of service favored men in that it put men before women in the liturgical acts. It can be concluded that ACSA consents to unequal relationships in marriage, which is biased towards men. With language in the liturgy of the marriage service being exclusive, the liturgy will

fail to be effective as a pastoral practice in the context of intimate partner violence in marriage.

In a feminist pastoral approach, critique and reconstruction always go hand in hand. Feminist theology suggests the development of new patterns of practices of ministry such as religious language that has been exclusive of women (Graham, 2012:198). Liturgical language that embodies justice towards women is needed (Landman, 2006:285).

To shape a different consciousness with regard to marital relationships, it is recommended that ASCA must transform the language used in the liturgy of the marriage service in order to communicate egalitarian relationships in marriage. This should be done by including reference to both women and men, by reviewing the order of the service, as well as revisiting the terminology used for the marriage partners, i.e. “the man and his wife.” Rakoczy (2003:43) proposes the use of inclusive language as a practical suggestion to prevent violence against women. If ACSA wants to be responsible about pastoral care towards victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage, it has to reconstruct the language of the liturgy of the marriage service to be more gender inclusive. Only then can the liturgy be used as an effective pastoral practice.

#### **5.4.2.2 Scripture**

Feminist theology seriously questioned unfavorable gender biased interpretations of biblical texts, especially those related to women. Consequently, the patriarchal tone of Scriptural texts has been increasingly noticed and highlighted (Furlan, 2009:238).

A feminist approach seeks to deal with texts that are often used to justify the subordination of women, such as the text from Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 21 to 33, which is prescribed for use during the marriage service of ACSA (APB, 1989:460).

Watson (2002:10) suggests that one way of dealing with such texts is to avoid reading them, regarding them as non-canonical. In contrast to this possibility, she states that Christianity “challenges its participants to a constant and dynamic engagement with all its aspects,” resulting in a feminist hermeneutical process of critical and constructive reading of Scripture. This process involves reading the text with an awareness of its context and interpreting it in the light of women’s experiences (Watson, 2002:10, 5).

Bennet Moore (2002:65) speaks specifically about the use of language in biblical translations. It is her understanding that what can be done to change the linguistic sexism in biblical translations is limited. Although the use of gender inclusive language in biblical translations is an extremely necessary action, it will serve to “clean up” the Bible, but “the patriarchal nature of the social and religious reality” of the Bible will show through. She therefore questions the appropriateness of reading a sexist text in church as a “life-shaping sacred text.” She recommends the feminist approach of using preaching as a way of building up the community by “asking the hard questions of texts and addressing them.” A feminist approach calls for a hermeneutical reading of Scripture that advocates the full humanity of women as full members of the Christian church (Watson, 2002:5).

A necessary challenge that the church faces is to engage with, deconstruct, and re-interpret Scriptures that may serve to perpetuate and justify the oppression of women through violent abuse. Cornelius (2013:189) argues that “the average member of a church community is not in a position to engage in a dialogue with the Bible, taking such a critical stance. It is the responsibility of the Church to open up for discussion issues such as these for members of the congregation.” “It is through this process of critique and reconstruction that alternative theologies will emerge” (Nadar, 2005:20).

An investigation of the liturgy for the marriage service of ACSA has confirmed the use of the text from Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 21 to 33, which is prescribed for use during the marriage service in ACSA (APB, 1989:460). In this text wives are instructed to submit to their husbands as to the Lord, and

as the church submits itself to Christ. It states that a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church, and that a wife must respect her husband. The uncritical reading of this text has the capacity to continue to shape marital relationships as unequal.

A strong recommendation to ACSA, based on a feminist pastoral approach, is that the church has to engage with, deconstruct, and re-interpret Scriptures that confirm the patriarchal nature of the culture from which it emerged. These texts continue to condone male dominance unless re-interpreted in the light of the culture from which it emerged and the experiences of women. In research done by Petersen aimed at exploring challenges experienced by clergy within the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town when dealing with domestic violence, it was found that these challenges primarily related to “the lack of training in dealing with the issue, the lack of theological guidelines offered by the church to address patriarchal societal practices, and the lack of guidance on contextual interpretation of scripture” (Petersen, 2009:451). With clergy feeling ill-equipped to preach about these matters, the church will not be able to be active in processes of gender transformation. A subsequent recommendation is that ACSA should embark on equipping its theological leaders, such as clerics, to enable them to critically engage with texts that appear to justify the subordination of women. It is only then that preaching will be a responsible pastoral practice in the context of intimate partner violence within marriage. In this manner, preaching will fulfil the pastoral purposes of liberation, resistance, and empowering.

### **5.4.3 The concept of God**

#### ***5.4.3.1 Feminist pastoral care and the image and understanding of God***

A feminist pastoral approach makes a strong connection between the understanding of God and pastoral care. Gursoch (2001:35) states that “for purposes of pastoral care, the critical perspective of feminist thought calls for considering images of God and the consequences of describing relationships with and response to God.” Bennet Moore (2002:69) agrees that it is of utmost

importance for a feminist critique not to overlook the “God dimension” in the context of pastoral care.

This consideration of the image of God is important for pastoral care because of the theological understanding that humanity is made in the image of God. The image of God that is held will determine the image that individuals have of themselves and others. Bennet Moore (2002:4) writes: “It is impossible to disentangle the images we have of God from the way we think of ourselves as made in God’s image.” The image of God that is upheld in a community will therefore also have a social impact, as it will influence the value attributed to human beings and human practices (Bennet Moore, 2002:74). Given the impact of the understanding of God on the individual and community, it will also impact on the pastoral problems and needs that are presented within a specific social and cultural context. This understanding will influence the possible pastoral approach and the change required to address the problem. Caregivers, in the context of pastoral care, make connections between the contextual and presented understanding of God and what God may be doing, and the situation of need (Gursoch, 2001:2).

The question of being made in the “image of God” is therefore central to a feminist pastoral theology, leading feminists to experiment with different and diverse words for imaging God. This is done to provide care that more fully reflects God’s justice and care, not only to individuals, but also in the context of damaging social systems and structures such as patriarchy.

#### ***5.4.3.2 Androcentric imagery for God***

The biblical image of God is mainly presented according to the construction of male attributes, due to the patriarchal culture of its ancient Near East origin. In the Old Testament, God is mainly imaged in androcentric terms such as father, king, judge, shepherd, ruler, warrior, and other male images of God. With these images attributed to God, they indicate the value that is attached to them. In the investigation of the liturgy of the marriage service of ACSA carried out in Chapter four, it was determined that ACSA continues to refer to God essentially in male terms.

In light of these findings, it is important to refer to the impact that the ascribed maleness of God will have on gendered relationships, especially within marriage. This consideration of the image of God is important for pastoral care because of the theological understanding that humanity is made in the image of God.

Feminist theologians are of the opinion that this imagery sustains imbalanced gender relationships that are biased towards men, supporting an unhealthy hierarchy of men over women. This springs from the understanding that humanity is made in the image of God, impacting on how individuals see themselves, as well as the value attributed to them. Klopper (2002:426) confirms that ultimately male language for God implies that men are more like God or closer to God's image. With the images used being closely connected to superiority, power and authority, support is given to the construction of these characteristics as exclusively male. It is male dominance over a woman that is the root cause of intimate partner violence within marriage. The male image of God in the marriage liturgy will shape the understanding of marriage as patriarchal, contributing to the construction of patriarchal marriages, which will inevitably bear negatively on pastoral care being exercised in the case of intimate partner violence. The pastoral caregiver will not be in a position to address the root cause of intimate partner violence, while at the same time maintaining it.

Feminist theology has asserted the humanity and dignity of women as truly created in the image of God (Rakoczi, 2004:31). From this assertion, various recommendations can be made for a feminist pastoral approach with regard to the relevancy of being made in the image of God.

A strong recommendation for ACSA is that female and gender-neutral images are used along with male images. In line with a feminist pastoral approach, Watson (2002:29-30) suggests a critical analysis of the imagery used for God, and the subsequent development of images that take into account female names for God. To accomplish this, the Scriptures and Christian tradition should be examined to uncover alternative ways of speaking about God. As

mentioned previously, Claassens (2008:53&55) offers the image of God as a mother in Isaiah, chapter 42, verses 13 to 14, which is juxtaposed with God as a warrior.

The aim of this critique and reconstruction is not to define God's essence, but rather to reclaim the metaphorical nature of the language that is used for God, which has been wrongly understood and literally ascribed to God's essence. It is also done to reclaim the full humanity of women as made in the image of God. It gives the opportunity for all people to have a broader experience and perception of God, impacting on how they perceive themselves and others, female and male, as being made in the image of God.

Klopper warns against ascribing gender stereotyped characteristics to God. The description of God as a safe, warm, and gentle Mother, as opposed to a tough and demanding Father, would amount to perpetuating stereotypical gender constructions. These characteristics are not gender exclusive. More than that, new and various images are needed that transcend gender stereotypes (Klopper, 2002:432, 434).

For Watson (2002:29), it is important that the reconstruction of gender inclusive imaging of God reflects an understanding of values such as "equality, mutuality, and affirming love, that are important to feminist theologians." Landman (2006:287) speaks of the value of the power of God, and how to see God's power as different from domination. Rather than being a patriarchal lord, God should be seen as "power in relation." "As power in relation, God empowers both men and women to make justice; as power-in-relation God empowers both men and women with sensitivity, compassion, empathy, affiliation and bonding. God as power-in-relation, then, should be reflected in the images used for God."

In linguistic terms and not those of imagery, Landman (2006) goes further in suggesting that references to "the maleness" of God should be excluded. She makes a practical suggestion that pronouns that make God male should be replaced by the repetition of "God." However, Klopper (2002:434) differs with

this suggestion stating that it would be “grammatically incorrect.” Nevertheless, Landman (2006:286) justifies the repeated use of the word ‘God’ by saying that “Although this may appear clumsy at first sight, it reflects a sound theology of interconnectedness.” This interconnectedness assists in moving away from essentialist characterizing of God as “she” or “he.”

In broadening the scope of the imagery used for God to include both male and female metaphorical imagery, ACSA will be able to enhance its pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. It will be able to reconstruct a community and society with the understanding of egalitarian relationships, especially within marriage. If everyone is believed to be made equally in the image of God, the patriarchal hierarchical model of marriage will be challenged and eliminated. By doing this, ACSA will be a true agent of change, bringing liberation to those who have been suffering in male dominant relationships by affirming the full humanity of all people as made in the image of God.

#### ***5.4.3.3 The image of God and masculinity***

A feminist pastoral care approach emphasizes the importance of engaging with the image of God due to the theological understanding that humanity is made in the image of God. The image of God that is held will determine the image that individuals have of themselves and others. With the impact that the construction of masculinity—as the image of men—has on marriage, it is relevant to consider masculinity in relation to the image of God for the purposes of more responsible and effective pastoral care. This is done to assist men to discover their full humanity according to the image of God.

Despite the contextual nature of the masculine construct, central to all masculinities are the dynamics of power, domination, and control. This power is mostly exercised over women, given the hierarchical gender construct of the superiority of men as opposed to the inferiority of women. When the power of men is challenged within the context of marriage, either by external threats such as unemployment, or by the non-compliance of a marriage

partner, it often results in intimate partner violence as an attempt to assert male dominance and power.

The construction of masculinity is largely based on the image of God as male. The images of God as king, judge, ruler, and warrior, all portray the concept of superiority, power, domination, and control. The mostly exclusive male images ascribed to God implies that men are more like God or closer to God's image (Klopper, 2002:426). With this implication comes not only the construction of these characteristics as exclusively male, but also the expectation of these characteristics as central to masculinity.

This research has shown, through the investigation of the pastoral practices of ACSA that was done in Chapter 4, that ACSA upholds these characteristics and expectations of the construction of masculinity. Marriage is portrayed as hierarchical, unequal, and biased towards the dominance, superiority, and control of the man in the marital relationship. This is demonstrated through the understanding of marriage as based on the relationship between Christ and the church. It is also evident in the liturgical acts such as the inclusion of the option of the pledge of obedience by the woman, the woman being received from preferably her father, the optional giving of a ring to the man, as well as in the gender exclusive language that is employed.

It is strongly recommended in this study that ACSA engage the concept of masculinity in order to bring about egalitarian marriage relationships. This engagement with masculinity should be done in relation to the image of God.

In the patriarchal images ascribed to God from the cultural context of the Bible, God is portrayed as all-powerful, authoritarian, dominant, and in control. It is these perceived characteristics that men ascribe to in their quest for masculinity, to be like God, and to maintain their superiority. Vulnerability is seen as a weakness, falling into the realm of what it means to be a woman (Rakoczy, 2000:15). What is most important and expected from society is to give the impression of strength (Anderson, 2016:40).

To counter these perceptions, the notion of vulnerability in relation to God should be investigated. Anderson (2016:41) argues that the belief is often insisted upon that God is exclusively powerful. The concept of God as being vulnerable and “susceptible to being wounded” is described by Anderson as “too much divine weakness for some believers.” This concept of an all-powerful God “allows men to preserve their presumption of power and privilege and circumvent the world’s suffering or their personal vulnerability.”

Anderson (2016:41) refers to Dorothea Soelle’s observation that the manly ideal of dominance is “overcome by the crucified Christ.” The reality is that God’s vulnerability is revealed in Christ. This is confirmed by Louw (2012:159) who states that “the cross is the symbol of the woundedness and vulnerability of God.” Louw (2008:432) contends that the notion of a suffering God must be introduced in a pastoral hermeneutics when he says: “In this regard we need to deal with the vulnerability of a crucified God.” He further explains, that in the suffering of Jesus in the crucifixion, God identified with the suffering of humanity, thereby revealing the weakness and vulnerability of God (Louw, 2008:432). With humanity being created in the image of God, it holds true that humanity entails vulnerability. Du Plessis (2015:6) states: “Humanity implies vulnerability.” The construction of maleness as being all-powerful and dominant is in contrast and exclusive of the vulnerability of God. The notion of a vulnerable God has to be supplemented by the notion of a powerful and abled God as revealed in the resurrection of Christ (Louw, 2008:432).

Anderson (2016:41) holds power and vulnerability in tension forming a paradox, and does not view them as mutually exclusive concepts. God reveals both characteristics, which do not split in human imaging. This understanding is in contrast with binary thinking of men as being strong and powerful, and women as being weak and followers. This concept will strongly impact marriage where women and men should be encouraged to “embody the paradoxical connection between power and vulnerability” (Anderson, 2016:41). The understanding of the vulnerability of God assists in helping to understand the unrealistic pressure and expectation on men of always having to be in control. Women would be able to enter into an egalitarian marital

relationship as partners, instead of being submissive (Van den Berg, 2007:176).

ACSA has to engage with the paradoxical notion of the power and vulnerability of God. It should assist women and men to discover their humanity according to the reconstructed image of God, rather than a traditional patriarchal image of God. More than that, it should reconsider and transform its understanding of marriage, which is presented as hierarchical, to be based on egalitarianism as confirmed in the image and understanding of God. It should then strive to transform its liturgical practices to reflect this egalitarian notion of marriage. Its ability to provide responsible care in the form of healing, liberating, guiding, and transforming, not only to victims but also to perpetrators, will be enhanced. It is in doing this that it will embark on a process of gaining credibility in addressing intimate partner violence within marriage.

#### **5.4.4 Christology**

A further recommendation to ACSA is to engage with Christology. The issue of Christology is central to feminist theology and therefore a pastoral care approach. The significance of the maleness of Jesus has made this a particular point of interest in feminist theology (Watson 2002:33). Feminist pastoral theologians engage with the question of whether women can find a way of salvation in the identity of Jesus with all humanity, given his male human form (Bennet Moore, 2002:81).

Watson (2002:34) refers to Elizabeth A. Johnson, who is of the opinion that the maleness of Christ has been abused for the oppression of women in traditional Christianity. This is manifest in the maleness of Jesus being viewed as an essential characteristic of His divine nature, and therefore of God. Because of this view, it is understood that men bear a closer resemblance to God. Feminist theologians do not deny the maleness of Jesus, but criticize “the ideological abuse of one particular aspect of the humanity of Jesus as theologically determinative of his identity or normative for the identity of the Christian community.” Johnson argues that there is a diversity of ways of

being human, which “provides a starting point for a Christology that is no longer focused on the maleness of Jesus in an ideologically distorted way.”

One of the diverse ways in which Jesus’ humanity is displayed, is in His work as liberator. Liberation theology provides the answer to the question of whether women can find a way of salvation in the identity of Jesus with all humanity, given his male human form (Watson, 2002:35). According to the feminist view presented by Bennet Moore (2002:84), Jesus “proclaimed the love of God for the least and renounced systems of domination,” including women in this vision as “they are amongst the least in this world.” Watson agrees with this as she refers to the view of Rosemary Radford Reuther that Jesus can be seen as the liberator of women if Christology is understood as a “theological discourse that challenges structural changes in church and society.” This diverse way of perceiving the humanity of Jesus in terms of love and liberation makes the reality of his maleness less relevant.

Furlan (2009:242, 243) quotes Arbuckle, who states that Jesus could be seen as a “revolutionary of equality” of his time. In his interactions and words, “Jesus strived to recall women’s dignity and revive respect for them in people’s minds,” which they possessed according to God’s love and plan. It is in this love and plan of God that the structure of marriage should be found, not in the patriarchal social context of the time, nor in the maleness of Jesus. It is in Jesus’ action of liberation and proclamation of equality that the origin of the equality of marriage partners can be found. Christianity, and ACSA per se, have chosen, however, to ignore these aspects of Jesus’ humanity and ministry in favor of the patriarchal norms of the time, which benefit male dominance. This is evident in the pastoral acts of the marriage liturgy and the understanding of marriage as per the findings of the investigation carried out in Chapter 4. A feminist pastoral approach encourages the ACSA to revisit the attitude of Jesus towards women, taking particular cognizance of his interaction with them and his attempts to establish the dignity and equality of women. This hermeneutical engagement with the biblical text will uncover the “original Christian doctrine,” based on the attitude of Jesus, which “not only preaches and protects gender equality or life in equal respect and solidarity,

but sets it as an imperative and the core of all interpersonal relationships” (Furlan, 2009:245).

If the essence of Jesus’ attitude towards women is reclaimed and deliberately incorporated into the beliefs and practices of ACSA, it will assist to transform the patriarchal understanding of marriage as expressed in its liturgy, to a more egalitarian one. If Jesus as the liberator of all humanity is proclaimed through the liturgy of the marriage service, rather than a one dimensional view as head of the church, women will be able to feel included in the salvation that is offered. This transformation will enhance the ability of ACSA to exercise responsible care to those involved in intimate partner relationships. By embracing a feminist view of Christology, it will be able to address the issue of intimate partner violence with the understanding of liberating all people from destructive structures such as patriarchy. It will also be enabled to resist the oppression of women through intimate partner violence by becoming an agent of change.

#### **5.4.5 The theology of suffering**

The theology of suffering is integral to feminist theology, and therefore, to feminist pastoral care. Van Arkel (2000:146) states that “the attentiveness of feminists and womanists to the dynamic of suffering caused by the hierarchical ordering of relationships” has made “an enormous impact on pastoral theology.”

The notion of suffering is central to the experience of victims of violence in intimate partner relationships. This suffering is often presented for pastoral care, as clergy are likely to be initially contacted after a violent episode. Women, however, report that the pastoral response is often for them to stay to endure suffering as a sign of obedience to God. This leaves the victim with feelings of helplessness and resignation. This pastoral response, together with the understanding of suffering, causes victims to remain silent about their abuse (Cornelius, 2013:187). These experiences by women indicate the need for the development of a responsible pastoral care approach. It also indicates that ACSA should be critically engaging with the theology of suffering, as well

as its insistence on the preference of the permanency and preservation of marriage. Feminist theory should be applied to the doctrine of suffering to assist ACSA to make sense of it in the context of intimate partner violence within marriage (Jones, 2000:10).

The church should stay aware of “the fact that theology affects lives” and should therefore interpret the notion of suffering for the victim (Ford, 2007:2).

The teachings of the headship of the husband, submission of the wife and the permanency of marriage perhaps conveyed through the understanding of marriage, the liturgy of marriage, canons pertaining to marriage, as well as the polity and commemorations of ACSA, as researched in Chapter 4, influence victims of intimate partner violence to tolerate and stay in abusive marriages. This teaching leads to the understanding that by staying in the marriage, the victim displays a willingness to “suffer for Christ” in obedience to God and the church as a committed Christian (Ford, 2007:2). This understanding ties in with the notion of virtuous suffering, whereby tolerating the abuse is praiseworthy (Louw, 2008:431). Nadar (2005:20) links it with the “theology of the cross,” which presents the argument that Jesus suffered without retaliation. The victim of abuse is therefore expected to suffer in order to be Christ-like. Within the given religious context, victims may be burdened with guilt for wanting to leave, fearing being labeled as a failure towards God and the church, whilst losing sight of the guilt and failure of the abuser. It is the responsibility of the church to interpret suffering in order to enable the victim to exit the marriage without guilt and fear of offending God, as well as without fear of being burdened by the religious community.

In response to the challenge of fear and guilt, Nash et al. (2013:215) suggest that a victim’s distress in this regard should be recast in the context of “a husband’s offense against his wife’s mind and body.” Suffering that is “freely chosen for the greater good” should be distinguished from “involuntary suffering that comes from another’s misconduct against one’s self.” The suffering experienced from intimate partner violence is unwanted and involuntary, and a direct result of the offence of another. It is in no way

beneficial to the victim, who should thus not have to bear any guilt for choosing to leave the relationship (Nash et al., 2013:215).

Ford's (2007:2) response to virtuous suffering is that suffering is not the core of Christianity, which can be viewed as a "Christ-like life." In living a Christ-like life in the context of suffering, Ford (2007:2) argues the following: "We must ask the question if Jesus suffered always, or if he had some boundaries of his own, for when, for what cause, and how much he would suffer. A review of the Gospels will review many situations in which Jesus did not suffer silently, did not allow abusive behavior to go unchallenged, and gave his followers instruction to move away from rejection."

Following these arguments made by feminist theologians, it cannot be reasonably expected from a victim to remain in an abusive marriage to maintain the permanency of marriage. It is the pastoral responsibility to guide women who are victims of intimate partner violence to make choices that will lead to their liberation and that will enable them to flourish again (Du Plessis, 2015:5). It is recommended that ACSA should engage with the theology of suffering in order to formulate an appropriate pastoral response. ACSA should also deliberately and clearly reframe the permanency of marriage in the context of suffering in a marriage marked by violent or any other kind of abuse.

#### **5.4.6 The theology of sin**

The theology of sin is important for a feminist pastoral approach and should be investigated and applied in the context of intimate partner violence within marriage. Feminist theology exposed the doctrine of sin "that offers religious sanction for the subordination of women" (Graham, 2012:196).

Sin is described in the APB (1989:426) as "the seeking of our own will instead of the will of God, thus distorting our relationship with God, with other people, and all of creation." As mentioned in Chapter 4, when a divorced person wants to get married, it is part of the canon law of ACSA that the person should acknowledge a share in the sin that led to the breakdown of the former

marriage, and be repentant of the failure to keep the vows made in the marriage. This expectation of acknowledgment of sin has dire consequences for victims of intimate partner violence within marriage. It communicates that they have contributed to the abuse or caused the abuse, and therefore, should be repentant. It also communicates that leaving the marriage is seeking their own will instead of the will of God. This law of expectation of “a share in the sin” and due repentance, may cause victims to stay in the abusive situation. This understanding and application of sin does not contribute to the goal of liberation for those who are suffering. Instead, it keeps them trapped in the abuse. It is this application of the interpretation of sin that can be regarded as offering “religious sanction for the subordination of women” (Graham, 2012:196).

Graham (2012:199) quotes Bennet in highlighting “the importance of attending to real women in the real world, to a realistic assessment of sin and salvation, of evil and goodness as they are made manifest in women’s actual lives.” A feminist pastoral approach does not only understand the meaning of sin in terms of individual factors, but also social factors (Bennet Moore, 2002:95). Given the shift to include social factors in the concept of sin, “feminist theology understands sin in terms of the distortions of power in patriarchal society, particularly power misused as dominance and the suffering that results, and liberation from these distortions is the vision of the good. The pragmatic focus on the consequences of the church’s proclamation and practice is also a major contribution” (Gorsuch, 2001:32). The use of the language of sin and guilt in relation to abused women highlights the issue of structural sin rooted in social factors. To consider the liberation of oppressed woman in relation to the binding patriarchal power arrangements of society as sin seems questionable. Divorce, as liberation from a destructive abuse of physical power and the resultant suffering, should be seen as “the vision of the good” (Gorsuch, 2001:32).

A recommendation to ACSA from a feminist pastoral approach is that it should engage with and reconstruct the practice that expects women to confess their perceived ‘sin’ of divorce, while having been subjected to the evil of intimate

partner violence. ACSA should also reconsider its understanding of sin with regard to divorce in the context of intimate partner violence. This recommendation will assist in the fulfillment of the pastoral purpose of nurturing, which can be described as “fierce, dedicated proclamation of love that makes a space for difficult changes and fosters solidarity with the vulnerable” (Miller-McLemore, 1999:80).

#### **5.4.7 Additional recommendations**

Apart from the recommendations already offered, the following matters are stated briefly as they should be considered by ACSA in relation to intimate partner violence within marriage, and bringing about gender equality:

- Investigate the theology of forgiveness
- Further investigate the theology of sin with regard to gender
- Revisit the permanency of marriage in the context of intimate partner violence
- Review the process of marriage after divorce
- Review polity and the impact that it has
- Carefully consider the veneration of saints
- Consider the impact of the exclusive form address of “Father” for male clerics, and investigate and implement an inclusive form of address for female and male clergy

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the impact of the patriarchal theological framework guiding the pastoral practices of pastoral care within ACSA was researched. It was confirmed that this framework has a limiting impact on pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. Patriarchy gives structural support to male dominance, which is the root cause of intimate partner violence. Whilst upholding patriarchy, ACSA will not be able to create “relational health, especially in marriage,” which Van Arkel (2000:114) describes as an “urgent task” of pastoral care.

Against this background, it is evident that there is a need for an alternative approach, offering recommendations to assist ACSA in becoming more responsible in its pastoral response to intimate partner violence within marriage. In this chapter, therefore, a feminist pastoral approach was investigated and offered as a source from which recommendations were derived. This was done with the understanding that the aim of feminist pastoral care is to renew and transform beliefs and practices.

Various recommendations were offered based on themes central to feminist theology, such as God, Christology, humanity, sin, and suffering. These were brought into relation with the practices of liturgy and marriage, as well as the discussed pastoral purposes integral to feminist pastoral care. These suggestions were offered to assist ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance the care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage. It is only when ACSA changes its patriarchal theology undergirding its pastoral practices, as well as the practices that indicate this patriarchal theology, that it will gain credibility to exercise responsible and effective pastoral care.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

This study sought to address the possible inability of ACSA to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage due to the patriarchal nature of its theological framework.

It has been established that the root cause of intimate partner violence is male dominance, which is structurally supported by patriarchy. The purpose of intimate partner violence is to maintain or exert male dominance and female submission, expressed in the power and control of men over women. This dominance is embedded in the unequal gender construction of what it means to be male and female.

It has also discovered that in its official response to gender-based violence, ACSA does not address the root cause of intimate partner violence. It fails to acknowledge the causal, sustaining and legitimising role of patriarchy in gender-based abuse. Also absent from this response is the acknowledgment of institutional patriarchy or a need for theological reform with regard to gender. There is no suggestion for engagement with theological issues that facilitate the oppression, violation, and abuse of women. This response in relation to the root cause of intimate partner violence creates a problem in that it diminishes its ability to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators if there should be institutional patriarchy within ACSA.

The critique of certain selected pastoral practices—especially, but not exclusively, with regard to marriage—indicated that the theological framework guiding the pastoral practices of ACSA is indeed patriarchal in nature. The correlation between the root causes of intimate partner violence and the patriarchal theological framework of ACSA limits its ability to exercise

responsible pastoral care in the context of intimate partner violence within marriage.

Against this background, a feminist pastoral approach has been investigated to determine how it can assist ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy that will enhance its ability to care for those in this specific context. Recommendations to assist ACSA in this regard have been formulated based on the core theological themes and modes of feminist pastoral care.

A responsible strategy will include engaging its own theology and practices, as well as acknowledging the pre-existent patriarchy and reconstructing the theology undergirding its pastoral care and practice in an attempt to eliminate patriarchy from its theological framework. This will be accomplished by applying the recommendations that were made based on a feminist pastoral care approach.

## **6.2 The research problem and question**

The research problem that was presented is: The possible inability of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence within marriage due to the patriarchal nature of the theological framework guiding its pastoral practice.

The findings of this research did indeed confirm the problem that was presented. The patriarchal nature of the theological framework of ACSA causes it to fail in its ability to pastorally care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence in a responsible and effective manner.

The research question that was posed reads as follows: “If the ability of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to pastorally address gender-based violence within marriage is limited, how can a feminist pastoral approach assist the church to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage?”

The research question guiding this study was answered through the application of a feminist pastoral care approach, which was investigated to offer recommendations for more responsible and effective pastoral care. These recommendations were based on the core theological themes and modes of feminist pastoral care. It is strongly believed that implementation thereof will enable the ACSA to develop a more responsible pastoral care strategy in dealing with victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.

### 6.3 Research goals

By means of this research, the following goals were met:

- To offer recommendations that can be presented to the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to enable responsible pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence within marriage.
- To provide these recommendations as a networking and lobbying tool for ACSA.
- To promote agency in ACSA with regard to intimate partner violence.

### 6.4 Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations that were formulated in Chapter 5 to be offered to ACSA:

- **Agency:** ACSA should use its power, influence and ability to act to bring about societal, cultural and religious change that will lead to the elimination of the oppression of women and the promotion of gender equality. Agency should start from within by engaging its own theology, acknowledging institutional patriarchy, recognizing the injustice thereof, and challenging its own culpability and complicity in maintaining patriarchal hierarchies. ACSA has to transform the thinking and theological reasoning behind the male dominant and female submissive behaviour, bringing about ecclesiastical and

societal change, which will provide for gender equality and the flourishing of all people.

- **Liturgy:** ACSA should reconstruct the liturgy of the marriage service to shape a collective identity where egalitarian marriage relationships become the norm. To shape a different consciousness with regard to marital relationships, it is recommended that ASCA must transform the androcentric language used in the liturgy of the marriage service to indicate gender inclusivity. Liturgical language, order, and terminology that embody justice towards women, are needed. ACSA should also engage with, deconstruct, and re-interpret scriptures that confirm the patriarchal nature of the culture from which it emerged, as these may serve to perpetuate and justify the oppression of women through violent abuse.

- **The concept of God:** ACSA has to take the responsibility to instil the theological understanding that all humanity is made equally in the image of God. Furthermore, it has to critically engage with and analyse the images that are used for God. It is recommended that female and gender-neutral images be used along with male images to negate the understanding that men are closer to the image of God. It is important to do this in order to reclaim the metaphorical nature of the language that is used for God, which has been wrongly understood and literally used to describe God's essence.

It is strongly recommended that ACSA engage with the concept of masculinity in relation to the image of God. The paradoxical notion of power and vulnerability in God must be presented to assist women and men to discover their humanity according to a reconstructed image of God. This reconstructed image should present qualities such as affirming love, mutuality, equality and sensitivity, rather than a traditional patriarchal image of God that portrays power, domination and control.

Furthermore, the ACSA should reconsider and transform its understanding of marriage which is presented as hierarchical, to be based on egalitarianism as confirmed in the image and understanding of God. It should then strive to

transform its liturgical practices accordingly to reflect this egalitarian notion of marriage.

- **Christology:** Engaging with Christology is another recommendation that was made to ACSA. If the essence of Jesus' attitude towards women is re-claimed and deliberately incorporated into the belief and practice of ACSA, it will assist to transform the patriarchal understanding of marriage as expressed in its liturgy to a more egalitarian one. Should Jesus as liberator of all humanity be proclaimed through the liturgy of the marriage service, rather than a one dimensional view as head of the church, women will be able to feel included in the salvation that is offered.
  
- **The theology of suffering:** It is recommended that ACSA should engage with the theology of suffering in order to formulate an appropriate pastoral response. ACSA should also deliberately and clearly consider and reframe the permanency of marriage in the context of suffering in a marriage marked by violence or any other kind of abuse.
  
- **The theology of sin:** ACSA should reconsider its understanding of sin with regard to divorce in the context of intimate partner violence. A further recommendation to ACSA is that it should review the practice of the expectation of women to confess their perceived 'sin' of divorce, while having been subjected to the evil of intimate partner violence.
  
- **Additional recommendations:** Apart from the recommendations already made so far, the following few points are included for further consideration:
  - Investigate the theology of forgiveness,
  - Investigate the theology of sin with regard to gender,
  - Review the permanency of marriage in the context of intimate partner violence,
  - Review the process of marriage after divorce,
  - Review polity and the impact that it has,

- Carefully consider the veneration of saints, and
- Consider the impact of the exclusive form of address of “Father” for male clerics, and investigate and implement an inclusive form of address for female and male clergy.

## **6.5 Further research themes**

It is suggested that further research is necessary in the following areas:

- The theological understanding of marriage should be further investigated.
- The canons, which are the laws of the ACSA, should be investigated to determine whether they uphold patriarchy.
- Research should be done on whether ACSA holds the belief of the theological legitimacy of patriarchy.

## **6.6 General conclusion**

Intimate partner violence within marriage remains prevalent in the South African context, and should continue to be a strong research, ministerial, and pastoral focus of religious communities. Due to the vast expansiveness of ACSA, it is suitably placed to exercise its influence over numerous communities. Should ACSA embrace and implement the recommendations which have been formulated from within a feminist pastoral approach, it will not only effect internal transformation, but also largely contribute to the transformation of society in its understanding of gender relationships. It will gain credibility with regard to its response to intimate partner violence within marriage and gender-based violence in general, as it will perhaps in an increasingly lesser degree endorse male dominance as per the societal and ecclesiastical gender construct. The suggestions and recommendations offered are by no means exhaustive, but they at least offer a starting point for the confrontation of patriarchy and its elimination from the theological framework guiding the practices of ACSA. These recommendations will

enable ACSA to develop a responsible pastoral care strategy to enhance pastoral care for victims and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. The implementation thereof will fulfil the hope held by feminist theology that things will get better and that all people shall flourish.

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