

**THESIS TITLE:**

**A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF MEN, WHO LOOSE  
ECONOMIC POWER IN THE FAMILY, A CHALLENGE TO  
PASTORAL CARE**

**By**

**REV WHITE MAKABE RAKUBA**

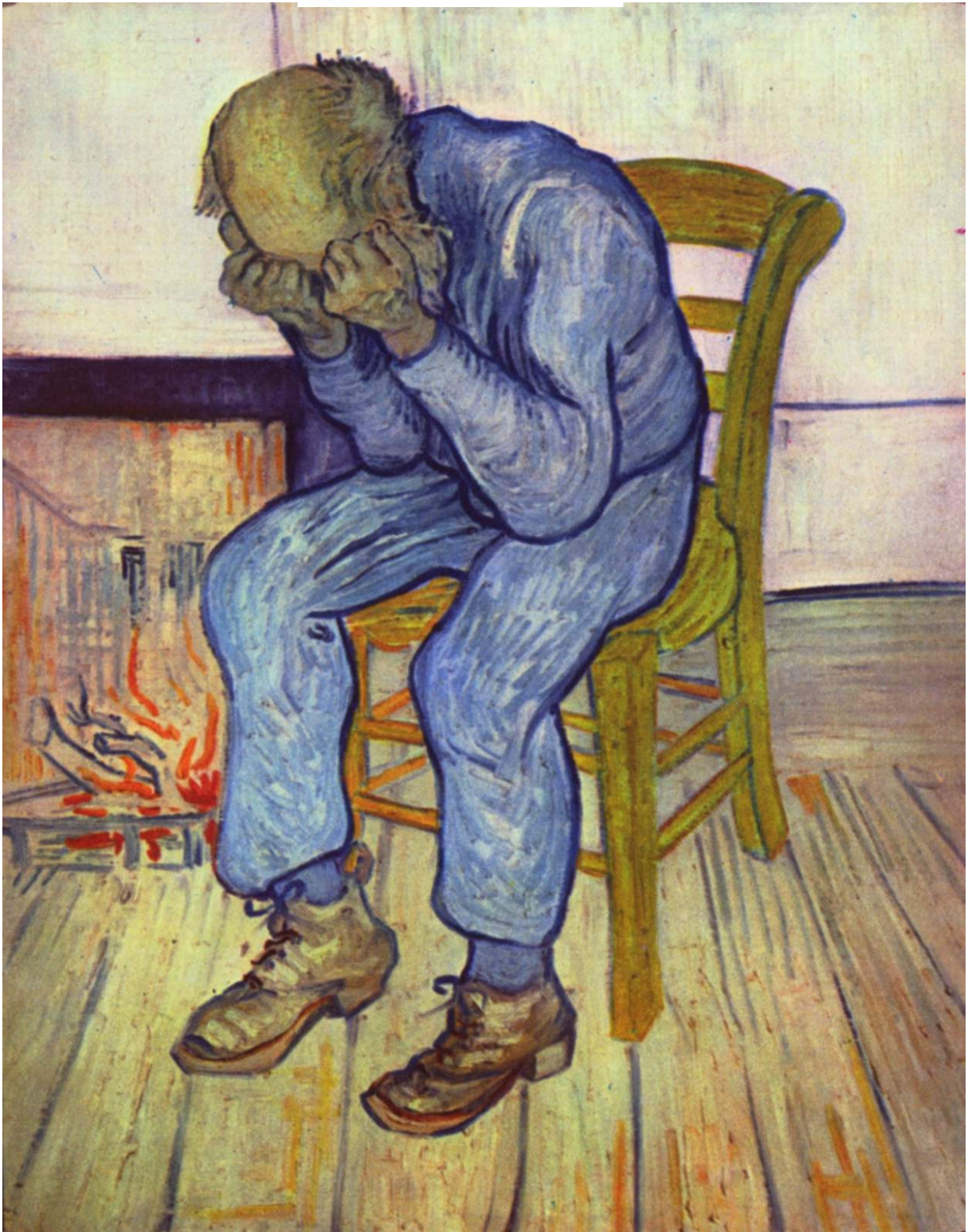
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**SUPERVISOR: PROF M.S.J. MASANGO**



**A TRAUMATISED AND DEPRESSED MAN (PAINTING BY  
VINCENT VAN GOGH, HE HIMSELF WAS DEPRESSED  
AND COMMITTED SUICIDE)**

**JUNE 2008**

**DECLARATION**

I, White Makabe Rakuba (Rev) hereby declare that the dissertation which I submit for the Degree of MA (Practical Theology) at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me at this or any other University

Signature:.....

WM RAKUBA (Rev)

Date:.....

## **I) DEDICATION:**

This thesis is dedicated to my aunt, Deborah, (my mother's younger sister) who laid the foundation for my future. When I was stranded at home after passing standard six with no hope of getting anywhere with Education, despite my good primary school record, my aunt rescued me by offering to pay for my Secondary education. She then journeyed with me through my Theological training. Though the Church paid for the whole course, she met the other needs. Tribute also goes to my sisters who joined hands with her to help me through the five years I spent at the Theological Seminary, at the foot of mountains just above Rustenburg. I want to say to her, my aunt, "little did you know that your efforts and hard earned money as a domestic worker would bring me so far." There are times when I think of the past that I shed tears. It has been a long way to this point and I can only say, it happened through the Grace of the Almighty. The road ahead is becoming shorter and I believe that, if I survived the turbulence of the life I went through, the road ahead will be easy.

## II) **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

To my wife, Renkie and my kids, Jacob, Evah, Samantha and Donald, if it were not of your support, I could have never managed. Though we always had arguments that I thought I was the best, this degree should serve as challenge to all of you to go beyond my destination. At my age and background, to have come thus far should be a major challenge to you.

To Prof Masango, who, when I returned from Switzerland, after a bitter experience, counselled and encouraged me to study. This has been the best therapeutic exercise that helped me to recover from anger and deep hurt. I had never had this idea that I would make it to this end.

To a friend, Titus Mobbie, and to our late friend Adam, God made us to meet at the time when things were difficult in my life. You picked me up and embraced me into your fellowship....the fellowship that grew into deep personal relationship. If there is anything good that we agreed to do together in life, was to decide to further our education. We have walked this path together and we are starting to reap the fruits of our sweat.

To the Almighty God, you carried me as I toiled through this thesis and I need to pause and say, Ebenezer, thus far the Lord had brought me. (2 Samuel 7:12.) The road thus far has

been rugged and I cannot imagine having reached this destination without your mighty hand.



### **III) SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH:**

For decades, men in South Africa and many African countries have enjoyed the role of being the main providers and protectors of the family. The concept, “**head of the family**” implied a lot in terms of playing a leading role in the family. A man literally became the main provider of the family while the woman was the family maker, i.e. looked after the family.

Since the new dispensation in South Africa, the economic situation of women has improved tremendously. The campaign for the equality through the Gender Equality process and the Feminine Theology has seen many women coming out of the oppression of economy and climbing the ladders of prosperity and better live. On the hand, the policy of gender equality seems to have negative effects on the lives of men who had the privilege of having better salaries and enjoying the economic authority and being the major breadwinners in the family. Before this, many women's salaries were just an augmentation of the husband's salary and most of the financial transactions in the family were done in the name of the husband. Women could not buy on credit without the authorization of the husbands. With the new dispensation, all those barriers have been removed and women have been empowered to participate in the financial transactions without getting authorizations of their spouses.

Once men lose their jobs or discover that their wives are earning far more than they do, they get depressed and their lives

deteriorate hopelessly. They become alcoholics and sometimes take their own lives or decide to wipe out the whole family.

This situation does not only confine itself to married couples, but to single men as well, especially the young ones. Many young women have the opportunity of going through tertiary education and are therefore earning better salaries and can afford to buy houses and cars independently from male counterparts. They do not need the security and comfort of men and can live on their own.

It is because of the escalation of the phenomenon of traumatised men that the researcher was challenged to want to study it further, to see how prevalent it is and work with men to make them aware of it and to find ways of accepting it as a reality. The researcher further worked on a strategy to develop a counselling model or strategies for the Church to help the affected men and to prepare those who have not yet been involved to be ready.



#### **IV) ACRONYMS:**

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
SACC	South African Council of Churches
CCN	Council of Churches of Namibia
CSC	Council of Swaziland Churches
CCZ	Christian Council of Zambia
CCL	Christian Council of Lesotho
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
CCAWT	Circle of Concerned African Women in Theology
WCC	World Council of Churches
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
CEC	Council of European Churches
EJN	Ecumenical Justice Network
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
AZAPO:	Azanian Peoples Organization
ANC:	African National Congress
PAC:	Pan Africanists Congress

## **V) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

### **Chapter 1**

Chapter one introduced us to the subject of research. It dealt with the situation of men who lose the economic power in the family. The loss of this sacred and powerful position has been seen to cause men to be traumatised as they cannot cope with the new challenges. As culture had played an important role in deciding on the roles of members of the family, men found it difficult to adjust when the situation changed. They are not only worried about themselves but what the public's attitude will be towards them. In the eyes of society, a man who cannot be seen to be in control or have authority over his family is taken to be a failure. Not only women but other men will start calling such a man with derogative names. The men's challenge is what the world is saying about them and not so much how they themselves feel about their own condition.

A typical African family was built around a father figure. A man's wealth was determined by the number of women, children and cattle he had. They owned cattle and were allocated land in which production of food was carried out. The more a man could provide for the family the more respect he would command in the village.

Men's situation does not only traumatise them alone. The whole family is forced to go through traumatic experiences because of the husband's or father's behaviour. It is very common to hear of fathers who wipe out the whole family before taking their own lives.

The study looked at three case studies; the first one deals with the situation in which the wife tries to support the traumatised husband, the second one deals with the husband who was doing fine in family life until he was retrenched and life changed in the family and the third deals with the situation of a woman who divorced her husband because of a lower salary.

The final issue dealt in this chapter was the Problem statement of the research.

## **Chapter 2:**

The researcher used two books written by Ed Wimberly as basis texts to develop a methodology for this research, “Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity and Moving from Shame to Self-Worth,

A qualitative and quantitative research approach was developed to collect data. It was intended to collect data through questionnaires and through personal interviews. For this purpose a semi-structured questionnaire was developed in which questions dealing with four categories of people were developed. The researcher then conducted a research gap to determine how many researches have been done earlier on this subject and to find what gaps the research could fill.

While the original research areas were the urban areas in the former West Rand townships and towns, (Now part of the Johannesburg metropolitan.) the researcher found it imperative to

extend some researches to the rural areas from which most of the people in the areas under review came from. This was important as it helped the researcher to gauge the level of discussions between people who now live in the urban areas and those who are still in the rural areas. It also helped to also gauge the level of thinking of those who were born in the urban areas and never lived in the rural areas. The research revealed that most of the researches done so far were related to women abuse or oppression through the patriarchy system. It was further discovered that most of the researches done on men relating to traumatic experiences were related to unemployment and retrenchments that were not related to the current study.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter looked at the definition of terms trauma and depression and how they affect their victims. A human body has been built in such a way that it can cope with certain conditions. When these conditions become too much for it, the human body cannot cope anymore. The changes that came about because of the new dispensation in the country have left many men traumatised. It has been very important for us to study trauma and depression as society does not understand the effects of these conditions on men.

The reason why men get traumatised when they lose economic power is that culture has expectations on men and if they do not fulfil these they are regarded as failures. A man is expected to be strong and therefore if a man breaks down society gets alarmed.

Therefore it has been important for us to study this situation so that society could find a better way to deal with the situation of traumatised men.

## **Chapter 4**

This chapter dealt with a number of themes that can be linked to the traumatic experience of men.

Men have been socialised by culture that they are the heads of families. Culture had clearly assigned roles for men and women and men become traumatized by the changes that are occurring at the moment. They feel they can no longer exercise their culture given roles as women are now doing them.

It is very clear from this study that the economy of South Africa post the 1994 dispensation failed to fulfil the high expectations of the majority of the South African citizens. As a result, high unemployment remains a major problem to men who have families and are expected to provide for them. A number of factors have also not helped the economy to correct the imbalances of the past; the collapse of the international economy that has left fuel and food prices beyond the reach of ordinary people. The influx of highly skilled economic migrants from the war-torn, economically and politically mismanaged African countries, the repeal of a lot of apartheid legislation including the gender equality, did not give South Africa a chance to address the situation at home. The results of this can now be seen with the rising negative attitudes towards

foreigners or xenophobia to be exact.

Negative international and domestic influences have hampered economic growth in the country. The new government attempted to correct this situation by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the GEAR and now lately BEE but the increase of crude oil and the soaring interest rates have not helped these efforts. Therefore the number of unemployed people and those who lose jobs is on the increase.

The high expectation of economic boom that was anticipated with the 1994 dispensation did not take place and unemployment situation has not improved either. The government's efforts to try to address the imbalances of the past and create new jobs have not been successful. This state of affairs has put pressure on unemployment, particularly among men. The following conclusions as drawn from the results of the survey, will perhaps clarify the traumatic situation found among men in the country.

The corrections of the past imbalances by enacting laws that protect women from the patriarchal abuse have seen men being challenged. Even in the Church circles, women started to challenge the Holy Scriptures that seem to support the male domination. Women organised themselves in different spheres of life and therefore challenged the status quo. Women are now able to do jobs that were originally meant for men. They can get better pay and are financially independent of men.

While the western civilization brought good things to the African continent, there a number of things that were not good. African culture was summarily regarded as barbaric and outdated and therefore good things thrown away by the missionaries. This left the African culture stripped of its core values and norms. It left vacuum and people started adopting foreign values which destroyed their culture. Among these were institutions of marriage and family life.

## **Chapter 5**

This chapter dealt with the last part of the research; the summary of the findings, i.e. it summaries the answers from the respondents, make findings and conclusions. Then the chapter ends with the proposed therapeutic models to the Churches on how to deal with the depressed men.



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION:**

At the end of the All Africa Conference of Churches' Assembly in Harare in 1992, an old man took to the stage and grabbed a microphone and said: "We have listened to women expressing their anger about the oppression of men, bashing men and talking about their rights and women power, but we have not heard a single word from anybody in this conference saying anything about the rights and powers of men. When is the Church going to start thinking about the concerns of men and start organising and supporting them, how long will it take for anybody to start understanding the problems men are facing, men have lost power starting from the family to Church and society?" Already then that was a cry from a man who deeply felt that the AACCC was abandoning men and labelling them monsters. Though this sounded like a lone voice in the wilderness, many men who were at the conference clapped their hands in support to indicate that issues affecting men were not taken seriously and that the whole continent was seen to be organising itself to support women against men.

Men, especially in the African tradition, have been socialized, by culture, into leadership role and as main providers for their families. This concept gave them recognition of being protectors and main providers for their dependents or families. When this power is lost, men find it difficult to cope

with life and many commit suicide or get traumatized as a result. Since the 1994 dispensation in South Africa, the role of men has been challenged by a number of issues such as unemployment, retrenchments and the empowerment of women. These new changes have severely challenged the old concept that men are the heads and main providers in the families. This kind of change makes men resort to violence in some cases.

## **1.2. THE MISSION STATEMENT:**

The phenomenon of family murder, in some critical cases, the murdering of the entire family, suicides and divorce, excessive use of alcohol which lead to alcoholism, have become problems that the South African society is confronted with. This situation can be traced to the trauma and stress caused by the deterioration of economic status of many families.

Recently, in one of the cities in the North West Province of the Republic of South Africa, a City Mayor was deposed and left penniless, and he decided to commit suicide rather than to face the reality of unemployment. (Citypress of May 7th, 2006.) But, there is a new emerging problem that men are facing, the issue of reversal of economic power in the families. While some men remain employed and economically stable, they face a stiff competition from their spouses who earn far more than they do.

While this may be a blessing in many families, it has been found to be a source of family discords and strained relationships. The researcher wants to explore this issue further in order to find how prevalent this problem is, and how men can be helped in order to cope with the situation. The challenge is not only facing men, but the Church as well. As a family and community of believers, any member who gets affected by any situation, the whole congregation is affected. How will the Church counsel and respond to the situation of such men?

The current trend in South Africa today is that more women are entering the higher job market and are getting better paying jobs. They are developing faster than their male counterparts. This situation unsettles many men. The situation, in which the husbands were the only persons owning the car in the family, is no longer the case, and women are able to drive themselves around. They go to any place they wish at any time they want, and therefore enjoy a degree of freedom and this brings about strained relationships with their husbands and the rest of the family. In African culture, a woman belongs to the whole family (clan).

There is evidence of family murders that are so common these days. Many men cannot cope with the reality of prosperous women. Once they lose their jobs or discover that their wives are now earning far more than they do, they get depressed and their lives deteriorate hopelessly. Some become

alcoholics and sometimes take their own lives or decide to wipe out (murder) the whole family. The reader will find it interesting to read the findings of the research done by a colleague in the researcher's team, Mr Willemse, who is doing a research on the traumatic experience of family murders, surely his findings will support this statement.

It is worth noting that this situation does not only confine itself to married couples, but to single men and women as well, especially the younger ones. Many young women had the opportunity of going through tertiary education and are therefore earning better salaries and can afford to buy houses (townhouses with better security which are popular with unmarried young women), and cars. They do not need the security and comfort of men and can live on their own. The reality of the past is that women in this country used to attach themselves to men for social security. They would even go to an extent of falling pregnant deliberately in order to keep the man. This practice is slowly fading away as women can now support themselves. The phenomenon of single parenting is very popular these days; some women only need men to help them have children and it ends there. They do not need anymore commitment with the man.

For decades, men in South Africa and in many African countries have enjoyed the role of being the main providers and protectors of the families. The concept, **“head of the family”** implied a lot in terms of playing a leading role in the

family. A man literarily became the main provider of the family while the woman played an important role of mothering the family, i.e. ensuring that both the children and the husband were looked after.

### **1.3. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH:**

Over the last three decades, South Africa was dominated by the struggle against the apartheid system but this struggle was not only confined to this. Along side this struggle, a number of struggles were born. The emergence of the liberation theology as well as the feminine theology saw a number of women emerging to raise their voices against the oppressive patriarchal system. During this period, a number of struggles came into being against the structures that were seen to be part of the oppression to mankind.

The rise of liberation movements developed along side strong voices against other oppressions. South African struggle against oppression was led by political movements such as the ANC, AZAPO and the PAC but the ecumenical movement, championed by the Women's Movements, the South African Council of Churches and a number of other organizations such as the Black Sash put the agenda of human rights that included the oppression against women and children on the table.



The vocal and sustained lobbying by women's organizations during this period, coupled with a strong public commitment to end women's oppression, ensured that gender equality was high on the priority list of the democratically elected government which came into being in 1994. This was not only the case with black women, but the white folks benefited a lot. Even though white women seemed to be enjoying a degree of economic freedom during the period prior to new dispensation, they remained inferior to their men's folk in terms of the apartheid legislation. A woman could not own property independently of her husband.

The consolidation of the new Democracy attained after the CODESA negotiations that saw the release, in 1990 of Nelson Mandela and the political prisoners and culminating with the historic elections of 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1994 was enacted in the constitution of the new Republic of South Africa. The constitution seeks to uphold values of human dignity, equality, freedom and social justice in a united, non-racial and non-sexist society. The Bill of Rights, as found in Chapter 2 Section 9 of the constitution seeks to eradicate the social and economic inequalities, especially those that were systematic in nature, and were generated in our history by colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy.

The Bill of rights as entrenched in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa includes four sets of values upon which the democratic state of South Africa is founded. These

are: Non-racism, non-sexism, equality, human rights and freedom. The equality clause in the Bill of Rights states: “*The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.*” (The constitution of the Republic of South, 1996)

In order to enforce the Bill of Rights, the Human Rights Act was legislated. (Human Rights Act 4 of 2004, Chapter 2 section 8) The Act prohibits any form of discrimination against any person on the following grounds:

- Gender-based violence
- Female genital mutilation
- The system of women from inheriting property
- Any practice, including, traditional, customary, or religious practice which impairs the dignity of women and undermines equality between women and men, including the undermining of the dignity and well-being of the girl child
- Any policy or conduct that unfairly limits access of women to land rights, finance and other resources.

- Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy,
- Limiting women's access to social services or benefits, such as health, education and social security.
- The denial of access to opportunities, including access to services or contractual opportunities for rendering services for consideration, or failing to take steps reasonably accommodate the needs of such persons
- Systematic inequality of access to opportunities by women as a result of sexual division of labour.

Added to the two instruments mentioned above, the state put into place a special commission to ensure that issues of gender were taken care of; **the Commission on Gender Equality**. The word Gender is generally associated with women but in actual fact it covers issues affecting both men and women. Unfortunately at the time of its inception, issues of women and gender imbalance were on the tables of almost all the sectors of society and there were some misinterpretations of the role of the commission by some people. It was mistakenly seen to be an organ of the state to deal with issues of women only. Yes, one needs to concede that at time, the gender imbalance was a major problem and there was a need to correct this. Therefore the priority of this commission was to ensure that the status of women was

addressed. For some people this might have brought about the thinking that this was for women only.

The Commission's role is to advance gender equality in all spheres of society and make recommendations on any legislation affecting the status of both men and women.

The Commission aims to transform society by exposing gender discrimination in laws, policies and practices; advocating changes in sexist attitudes and gender stereotypes; and instilling respect for women's rights as human rights.

Although the Commission acts in the interests of women generally, it pays particular attention to the most disadvantaged women – those living in rural and peri-urban areas, on farms, in domestic work etc.

The Commission's functions are to:

- Monitor all organs of society to ensure that gender equality is safeguarded and promoted.
- Assess all legislation from a gender perspective.
- Commission research and make recommendations to Parliament and other authorities on issues of gender.
- Educate and inform the public about the gender issues.
- Investigate complaints on gender-related issues.
- Monitor South Africa's progress towards gender equality in relation to international norms.

This transformation became a moment of significant challenge to men. The apartheid structures that did not only oppress black people, but also encouraged and enacted oppressive laws against women were rocked to the bottom. The adoption of the new constitution, which was influenced by public discourses against the apartheid system, had brought the crisis of relations between men and women into sharp focus. Underpinning this is the conclusion that men's traditional dominant role, that was guaranteed through patriarchal system and reinforced by the apartheid system, was also dealt a major blow.

Through legislation, the state started to address the subordinate position of women in most of the public sectors, including the parliament. Although there is still a long way to arrive at real equality, women's representation in the parliament is just above 30% at the moment.

Other tougher measures were put into place to ensure that women's rights and dignity were protected. Marital rape is now a recognised offence with a severe sentence the domestic violence, which is subject to new and tougher sentencing. People who defy child maintenance court orders are liable to prosecution and employers are obliged to carry out garnish orders against male employees to pay maintenance for their children. Children born out of wedlock are protected and can have access to their fathers' pension benefits. Women have to be paid the same salary as their

male counter parts for the same job, and the interest of the girl child is being taken seriously.

It is evident that these social, political and economic challenges brought about by these major changes have put men under tremendous pressure. Men's crisis situation can be traced through a number of health and criminal trends. Men's health has become a public concern as many men are suffering from heart diseases, hypertension, stress, eating disorders, suicide, aggression, and the growing men's mortality rate.

Men's angry reaction to this change can also be reflected on the growing abuse of women and children as reported in the *"Daily Sun"* recently. *A man from Witbank in Mpumalanga Province, who decided to avenge his anger on his step child as a punishment to his wife. After quarrelling with his wife over the control of money in the house, the man felt he lost the battle and decided to hurt his wife. He invited his step daughter, who was sixteen years old to accompany him to Johannesburg to do shopping. As he did it before, the girl did not suspect anything and willingly accompanied him.*

*After finishing shopping, the man deliberately ensured that taxis left them and suggested that they return the following morning. In pretext that there was no more enough cash left, he suggested that they book one room and sleep on two separate twin beds. At night he left his bed and raped the girl throughout*

*the night and then took her home the following day. When the girl reported to her mother, the man said it was a punishment to her.”* **The Daily Sun, August, the 21<sup>st</sup> edition.**

This thesis, as indicated in the Methodology, used two books by the Wimberley’s as basis texts to study the behaviour of men: “Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity” by Ed Wimberley and “Moving from Shame to Self-Worth” by EP Wimberley.

Ed Wimberley, in this book, deals with a number of themes which the researcher will use to deal with this subject. The issues of “Conversations”, and “meaning making.” He says human beings are constantly struggling with the issue of meaning making”. He deals extensively with the issue of “worth and value” where he tries to understand the question, “what does it mean to be a person of worth and value? The theme of “privileging”, the “Caring community” and the externalization process.

As the Church and pastoral Care Givers, we are confronted with the reality of depression and trauma, which affects not only men, but women as well. While women become victims of this situation, they also have to cope up with men who have lost the sense of leadership in the family.

The following case studies will shed light into the problem the researcher is analysing:



#### **1.4. Case Study 1**

*The case study looks at the situation in which the wife earned far more than the husband, but attempted to, positively help improve the situation in the family in order to relieve her husband from the burden he carried all the years he was looking after the family.*

One afternoon a middle aged man, Mr Montshosi Molefe, (not his real name), walked into the office of the researcher and apologized for not having made an appointment. He insisted on discussing his problem with the researcher. He could not wait for an appointment as he was so traumatised and needed help before he could take his own life. The man looked so depressed and very humble. One could sense that the problem he was about to relate had really brought him down to earth. He was desperately trying to resuscitate his ailing and deteriorating marriage. Not being a regular Church goer himself, though baptised, confirmed and married in the same Church, he knew if he came to see the Pastor, his situation would be addressed.

The man related how he met his wife when she was still a student at one of the local High Schools, and how he helped her through schooling until they decided to get married. He further helped her to do tertiary education while he was working for a Hardware Store. The wife got a well paying job which gave her status and respect in the community while the man remained a floor worker in the same Hardware store.

This situation was made clearer to the researcher when the wife arrived at the requested of the husband that she be called to discuss the whole problem with her. She came driving a state of the art Audi while the husband came driving an old Toyota Corolla. The wife related how their marriage deteriorated after she started working. The wife indicated that all along, life in the family was normal and they respected each other.

The problem started when the husband realised that the wife no longer depended on his meagre salary. Unbeknown to her, the wife tried to relief the man from financial obligations of the family as a way of saying thank you, but the husband did not understand it that way. He felt that the wife did not want his money because it was so little and therefore felt that he was no longer important in the family. He became depressed and traumatised to a level where he started drinking heavily.

The wife related that she obtained a restraining order from the Magistrate Court as the man had attempted to take her life. She showed the researcher a gashing wound just below the heart and in the neck. She had to be hospitalised for three months. But, in the midst of this, the wife felt guilty that she was responsible for the condition of her husband and felt she owed him. She regretted having studied further which

improved her educational status that further improved her earning capacity at work.

In South Africa, particularly among the black communities, the economic set-up has always been that men were the major providers and protectors of the families. Though it might differ slightly from tribe to tribe, men's major role, during the agrarian period, was to ensure that the family was provided with enough livelihood. Men's role was to rear cattle, and with this they would till the land, provide milk and meat for the family. In addition they would also go hunting to bring meat home while women would hoe the fields and ensure that the harvest was done.

This cultural distribution of labour in the family started to be eroded by the economic change and the industrial development. In South Africa, the apartheid policy of separate development ensured that men left homes to go and work in the mines and manufacturing places (Factories), where they were confined to hostels and allowed to go home once in a while, sometimes once a year in order to renew their working contracts (permits) and women remained in the rural areas, looking after children and livestock.

The rural areas by then, after the consolidation of the Homelands System, were barren and arid land where agrarian activities were not possible. People were moved from fertile land and dumped in the lifeless homelands. A good example is the former Lebowa homeland. The area

stretching from Lebowakgomo near Polokwane to the east towards Burgersfort, including the Sekhukhune area, is not fit for human habitation but a game reserve. The area is rocky, arid with the lowest rainfall yet all the valleys along the big rivers in the same areas, including the platinum and the Iron Ore belts were all declared white South Africa. Because of this, men were contracted to work in the farms and mines outside homelands while their families remained in the homelands. This working system endorsed the role of men as sole breadwinners. In the case of this man, the major problem he was facing was that he was no longer a man. Society declares one a man if one is able to provide for one's family. What made this man not to hear his wives sympathetic approach to his problems were the conversations that he heard and still continues to hear from the society in which he grew. Conversations that say, being a man is to have economic and leadership power. i.e. You should earn more money than your wife; you have to provide for the family and should not depend on your wife.

The dilemma the man was facing was that he could no longer face other men as equals. In these circumstances, many such men choose to avoid other people and prefer to remain alone, start deteriorating and in many cases become alcoholics. They become *dismembered* from being members of society or members of peer groups.

## **1.5. Case Study 2**

*This case study looks at the situation of a man who, at the beginning of his adult life, was successful and respectable, but was arrested for fraud and dismissed from his job.*

Mr A Madumetsa, (not his real name,) was a successful Bank teller who managed to climb the ladder of promotion in one of the Big Four<sup>1</sup> banks in the country. He was working at the local branch and managed to improve himself from the teller to the branch assistant manager. Unfortunately, he was involved in fraud which led him arrested and convicted after trial. The bank did not want him to be sent to jail for a long time, but gave him an option of surrendering all his savings and pensions in return for freedom. Because of this conviction, he could not get any job as his references always worked against him.

With what he was left with after the bank had taken what they wanted from him, the family decided to embark on a business that was also funded from the wives savings. Life became normal during the good days of the business but things changed when the business started to experience some problems. Eventually the business closed down and there was no more income generated by the husband.

By that time, their two children had grown up and were independent and the husband and wife were only two in the

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<sup>1</sup> ABSA, First National Bank, Nedbank and Standard Bank

house. For some time the husband depended wholly on the income from his wife and gradually the relationship soured. The wife started to complain about almost everything in the house and stopped washing and cooking for the husband. She would come from work, stop at her friends and return home very late and drunk. When she was in the good mood, she would bring him some take-away food otherwise he had to fend for himself. Children also lost respect to their father. Whenever they came by to visit, they would speak only to their mother, if they made tea they would not make for the father.

Two years ago, the man got involved in the street committee of the local Community Police Forum and was eventually taken to do community counselling services at the local Police station. Though he was not remunerated for this job, he was given an allowance of R3 000 per month which gave him some income to survive. This amount fell far short of what a man could call a salary and does not match that of his wife. To rub the salt into the wounds, the wife decided that his allowance would be used as petty cash in the house for bread and other minor household goods.

The woman would demand that the man withdraw his entire allowance and have it as petty cash in the house, while hers remained in the bank to allow for the debit orders to pay for the house and the car. Even then the wife had absolute control

over the petty cash. If the man wanted some cash he had to motivate it thoroughly.

This situation damaged his health. He started to suffer from hypertension and depression and could not afford the medical expenses to control this situation as he did not have medical aid scheme. The wife had deliberately terminated her membership of the medical aid scheme from her work in order to ensure that the man suffered. At the end of the month she would demand the whole R3 000.

At least now he could get food and some clean clothes but the relationship still remained sour. If he wanted something he would be reminded that his money was enough to buy bread and salt and nothing else. The situation deteriorated to the extent that the husband suffered depression and hypertension. His appetite went down, so was his libido and this gave rise to new form of tension and conflict. The wife started to accuse him of infidelity. She would time and again call him names and pass remarks that she was having another woman in the house. Sadly, Madumetsa suffered stroke and eventually died as he was not receiving any proper treatment.

### **1.6. Case Study 3:**

*A case of a young woman who divorced her husband on the grounds that the parity between her salary and that of her husband was just too big, to her favour*

One Saturday morning, there was an unveiling a tombstone at the local church when the researcher bumped into one of the distant relatives who immediately broke the news that she would be proceeding to a wedding of her sister's child the same afternoon. The researcher, having known about the earlier marriage, wanted to know why this new one. And it came out that, Kedibone, not her real name, decided to divorce her husband on the grounds that his salary was far too little.

The researcher lamented the fact that, despite him being a relative to Kedibone, the news only came to him at that stage. The researcher then took the opportunity to discuss the matter with her after the marriage to try to understand why this. Kedibone was at pains to make the researcher understand her decision to divorce her husband. Her main argument was that the difference between the salaries created problems for their relationship.

They had been married for some time and enjoyed a happy marriage until she got promotions at work because of her hard work. Her promotion gave her the opportunity to advance to higher levels and even relocate but she could not do it as her husband could not get any other job because of his low qualification.



As this matter was a concern to the researcher, the researcher found the opportunity to have audience with the divorced man to understand his side of the story.

The traumatic issue about this is that Kedibone reached the stage where she was because the husband had been supportive through her advancement. Though the husband worked as a labourer in the factories, he supported her during the time she was studying and to be divorced at that stage became extremely painful. The divorced husband admitted that Kedibone's status caused a lot of problems to him as she made it very clear, through actions and words that they were no longer equals. She would invite friends, including male friends to their home and make him feel he does not belong to their status. She would send him to go and do shopping when her friends were around to ensure that he was not present.

#### **1.7. PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

As the number of men who suffer from depression and trauma is increasing, many questions are asked as to what the causes are. The current economic situation, particularly in developing countries in general, and in South Africa in particular, is a major challenge to many families and men are on the receiving end. As mentioned, in item 1.1. Paragraph no 6 above the situation does not only affect married men, young prospective husbands, as well as bachelors experience the same problem. The main question to ask is: "Why are men not

able to cope with the paradigm shift that raises women to higher levels and turn them into bread winners?”

The researcher will try to go further into the issues that lead men to be traumatised, and try to understand “Why men get depressed when they loose their economic power and subsequently lose their status as heads of families?” It is for this reason that the researcher chose to explore further into the following Key Research questions/topics:

- a) The influence of culture
- b) The economic set up of the country
- c) The family and roles of men and women
- d) Gender Equality
- e) The influence of Feminine theology
- a) Unemployment/Retrenchments
- e) Trauma
- f) Power

## 1.8 **PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION:**

Chapter one introduced us to the subject of research. It dealt with the situation of men who lose the economic power in the family. The loss of this sacred and powerful position has been seen to cause men to be traumatised as they cannot cope with the new challenges. As culture plays an important role in deciding on the roles of members of the family, men found it difficult to adjust when the situation changed. They are not only worried about themselves but what the public’s attitude

will be towards them. In the eyes of society, a man who cannot be seen to be in control or have authority over his family is a failure. Not only women but other men will start calling such a man with derogative names. The men's challenge is what the world is saying about them and not so much how they themselves feel about their own condition.

A typical African family was built around a father figure. A man's wealth was determined by the number of women, children and cattle he had. They owned cattle and were allocated land in which production of food was done. The more a man could provide for the family the more respect he would command in the village.

Men's situation does not only traumatise them alone. The whole family is forced to go through traumatic experiences because of the husband's or father's behaviour. It is very common to hear of fathers who wipe out the whole family before taking their own lives. The study looked at three case studies; the first one deals with the situation in which the wife tries to support the traumatised husband, the second one deals with the husband who was doing fine in family life until he was retrenched and life changed in the family and the third case study deals with the situation of woman who divorced her husband because of a lower salary.

The final issue dealt in this chapter was the Problem statement of the research. In order to answer the problem statement, a

methodology had to be developed to deal with the situation of men. The following chapter helps to develop the objectives, the research methodology, and the research instruments (the questionnaires and data collection method, the language to be used in this research – to check if similar research has not been done before, and if so what gaps will the researcher want to fill.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **2.1. AIMS/OBJECTIVES:**

The most important objective of this research was to:

- a) Explore further the reasons that lead men into this traumatic situation when they lose economic power in the family.
- b) To help to develop a counselling model for Churches that would help them to deal with this situation.

The researcher wanted to explore the following three areas:

- i) Men to understand the changing developments and to accept the reality that they need to develop coping mechanisms. To help them to regain their self-worth, their ego and dignity and to know that they could still play an important role as husbands in the same situation.
- ii) While the central theme of this research was to deal with men's situation, it would have been difficult to leave women out. The research results should be able to help women to be aware of this situation, and help them to understand the causes of this behaviour so that they could learn to live with their men who have been reduced to play minor roles in the family. Understand their frustration, their fear and anxiety.

- iii) The Church (Care Givers) to be assisted to develop a counselling model that would counsel such families and help men start learning to cope with this situation and understand that it was possible to live a normal life even if the roles had changed.

## **2.2. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The researcher used both the Qualitative and Quantitative methods to gather the necessary information needed so as to come to the conclusion of the study. In this way, both person to person and questionnaires were applied to get as much information as possible.

Ed Wimberley's book, "Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity" and EP Wimberley's book, "Moving from Shame to Self-Worth" were used as the basis texts to deal with the traumatic situation of men and then applied Gerkin's Shepherding model to develop a therapeutic strategy for the Church to apply to counsel the affected men.

In order to get as much credible information as possible, the researcher approached this data collection by using the two most commonly used and acceptable techniques, namely,

- Personal interviews that were used where qualitative data was required. This is the method employed when interviewing key role-players such as community representatives etc.

- Surveys were used where a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data was needed. This method is employed when one determines the trends and the extent of the problem in given parameters.

### **2.3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT:**

It is essential that credible information is collected in order to come to the right findings at the end of the research. In order to do so, the need to develop a research instrument is important . The instrument that would enable comparable data to be captured from different categories of people. In this case the best tool to be used is to develop semi-structured questionnaires, according to the type of the respondents and these were translated into several languages catering for the different nationalities.

It was felt essential that questionnaires be structured in such a way that they would guide and leave minimal gaps in the data collection process. Central to this was that, as much diversity of people in society as possible were interviewed. It was interesting to see how the old and the new generation reacted to such questionnaires. The list included men, the victims themselves; older men from the old generation, women (also young and old) and people who interact with victims of this subject such as clergy, police men etc.

See. Appendix A1 to A4 of the interview questionnaire attached).

Four separate types of questionnaires generated with reference to the specific target respondents were used.

These were:

- A questionnaire specifically aimed at collecting data from the victims, men themselves. (One tried to cover as many men as possible, including those who were not yet victims. The initial stage of the interviews, especially on one to one interview, were not an easy as a lot of men shied from to this type of questions, but it proved to be much easier in a situation where one picked a group and instead of giving them a questionnaire to respond to, an open discussion was held. A lot of them felt comfortable to discuss it collectively.
- A questionnaire specifically aimed at collecting data from women
- A questionnaire aimed at the collection of data from the pastors and elders who interact with both the sexes during their work in the parishes.
- A questionnaire aimed at the collection of data from local police members, including police fora

At the end of the interviews, the data was analyzed by the researcher together with friends and some pastors and this helped to get the clearer picture and interpretation of the traumatic experience men are going through.



#### **2.4. LANGUAGE USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRES:**

The area in which this research was conducted is multilingual and the researcher used several languages. English has been found to be a common language among the people in the urban areas though, Setswana, and Sotho's (Northern and Southern) dominated the researched area. The purpose of using several languages was intended to help gather as much information as possible using the language easily understood by the people. Sharing these experiences with the people concerned might help in planning towards the therapeutic solution.

#### **2.5. THE RESEARCH GAP:**

The researcher visited the library of the University, consulted with the Librarians and even visited several Municipality libraries in Johannesburg, in particular the Johannesburg and the Sandton City Libraries and came to a conclusion that little had been researched on the topic under discussion, but that a lot of emphasis had been put on the plight of women. It was clear from this snap visit to the main libraries that a number of researches have been done on the abuse of women by men.

From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century aggressive campaigns for women's rights and their liberation from the yoke of oppression by men, saw the whole world becoming sympathetic to women and very little attention given to the abuse or problems affecting men. In fact men have been seen

as major abusers and perpetrators of traumatic stress on women.

Though the society is starting to realise that men are also victims of abuse, very little efforts have been made to address this situation. While the researcher cannot claim to have exhausted the database, most of the books or researches consulted have been found to deal with traumatic stress of men due to loss of economic power as a result of unemployment or retrenchments. Most of them concentrate on the traumatic experience brought about by job loss, retrenchments and unemployment. Here are some of the examples below:

- a) Minnaar HJD, 2006, a study on the experience of the woman whose husband has experienced job loss.
- b) Mlomo VC, 1997. Psychological correlates of unemployment, low esteem and depression,
- c) Gericke C, 1996. Pastoral care of the family in crisis after loss of a job.
- d) Nemalili, NP, 2006, an investigation of unemployment at Tshineni Village.

It will also be very interesting to analyze the Rev Molefi Samuel Tau's dissertation, entitled: "A Broken Family Relationship, a challenge to Pastoral Care". The Research

touches on some of the issues that bring about trauma in the family looking at both partners in the family.

It is clear from some of the texts mentioned above that the emphasis has been on issues relating to traumatic experiences of men who get traumatised by losing economic power due to unemployment and retrenchments. Since the time of the bitter struggle against apartheid, a number of international firms de-invested from South Africa and left the country. This situation left many men unemployed and retrenched.

In the urban areas, more and more young women are becoming independent and therefore no longer need a man's support. The phenomenon of single parenting is becoming a common issue among young people and it is no more important to have a support of a man.

## **2.6. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION:**

The researcher used the two books written by Ed Wimberly as basis texts to develop a methodology for this research, "Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity and Moving from Shame to Self-Worth,

A qualitative and quantitative research approach was developed to collect data. It was intended to collect data through questionnaires and through personal interviews. For this purpose a structured question was developed in which a

four questions to four categories of people. The researcher then conducted a research gap to determine how many researches have been done earlier on this subject and to find what gaps the research could fill.

While the original research area was the urban areas in the former West Rand townships and towns, (Now part of the Johannesburg metropolitan.) the researcher found it imperative to extend some researches to the rural areas from which most of the people in the area under review came from. This was important as it helped the researcher to gauge the level of discussions between people who now live in the urban areas and those who are still in the rural areas. It also helped to also gauge the level of thinking of those who were born in the urban areas and never lived in the rural areas. The research revealed that most of the researches done so far were related to women abuse or oppression though the patriarchy system. It was further discovered that most of the researches done on men's relating to traumatic experiences were related to unemployment and retrenchments that were not related.

Before embarking on data collection from the respondents, it became important for us to study the technical terms involved in the research. "Trauma" and related terms i.e. "Depression" and "Stress".

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **TRAUMA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TRAUMATISED MEN:**

#### **3.1. THE AFRICAN MAN:**

Because of the demand of culture on men, the African man is not expected to be broken down by any situation, especially if a woman is involved. A man who openly sobs or grieves is not regarded as a man in the African culture. This can be demonstrated when a man's wife passes away through death. The man is expected to sit with other men in the Kgotla<sup>2</sup>, outside the house, while in the case of a woman she is expected to stay in doors and publicly mourn the death of her husband. During the time after death and before burial, the widow is expected to be on a mattress until her husband is buried. She can only go out when she goes to the bathroom, in the case of rural setting or when she has to go to the bank or mortuary. For the arrangement of the funeral the husband spends most of the time with other men outside the house and is not expected to cry or even show visible signs of emotions. The family members will ask him not to show emotions because this would affect children.

This cultural practice leaves many men with deep scars and wounds that fail to heal because men have not been allowed to grief, to let the pain that is in their hearts to go out. The researcher knows a friend of a priest who lost his wife three years ago. Before

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<sup>2</sup> Kgotla: An African traditional kraal made specifically for men to hold meetings and to discuss issues relating to community

this tragedy, the priest was such a vivacious young man who had the courage to do so many things at a time. He was innovative, and could work long hours and do work normally done by more than one person. A year after the burial of his wife his work rate started to slow down. He preferred to spend time alone and tended to sleep more than it was the case before. He became forgetful and generally neglected his own body. He gained so much weight that he started to suffer from hypertension, sugar diabetes and many other ailments such as depression.

His behaviour generally changed and he became a different person. Looking closer to his problem, it has become very clear that at the time of his bereavement, he was not given chance to go through the mourning process. The other issue was that, as a pastor, people around him did not know how to deal with him. Unfortunately even the Church did not give itself time to counsel him.

According to Herman and Miller, survivors of prolonged trauma must first create a safe place. Herman considers the remaining steps to be remembrance and mourning and reconnecting with the world, accepting the changes that the trauma has made in a person's life. Remembrance and mourning involves grieving both actualities and potentials that were lost; reconnection is a time of "I know I have myself" - a time for seeing the positive changes brought by the traumas, celebrating the survivor self, and reconnecting/deepening intimacy with others in ways that were not possible before.

Miller sees recovery in three stages, too: the outer, middle, and inner circles. The outer circle is a time for building safety and rapport and gathering basic information. Middle circle work involves focusing on current symptoms and how to handle them. Inner circle work, when trust is in its deepest, it involves the sharing of shameful secrets and resolving the issues behind the trauma.

The other example on how men are left with deep scars and wounds is in the case where a female spouse abuses a man. The African culture does not expect a man to be abused by a woman. If this happens, it is generally taken that the man is not a man. The man will never go out and report that his spouse is abusing him. If he does, he will be laughed at by other men. The police stations are the cruellest places where abused men are afraid to go to. When a man comes with such a case, he becomes the joke of the moment. All the police officers will come together and start asking him questions to tease him.

Even though the law and Gender Commission in South Africa are fighting to correct this, the situation of humiliation still continues. Generally a man should be strong and if he shows signs of weakness, he is not regarded as a man. We should also admit that in some cases, when women realise that their spouses tend to break down, they put more pressure on them teasing them that they are women inside men's trousers. However, it should also be noted that some men are not abused but get traumatized by the fear of being seen as weak, especially when they are married to

successful and economically powerful partners. In the following paragraphs, we shall define trauma and depression and try to explain how these affect men. It is not easy to separate the two conditions as they almost have the same effects.

### **3.2. DEFINITION OF TRAUMA:**

The psychiatric definition of "trauma" is "an event outside normal human experience." It is a Greek word meaning "wound" It affects you physically and psychologically, i.e. it involves bodily and psychological, emotional and spiritual injury. Trauma generally leaves you feeling powerless, helpless, paralyzed. It tends to be sudden and overwhelming; it "owns" you. You cannot think clearly during and after a severe trauma; at the same time, you are forced to focus your consciousness in an attempt to deal with the situation that had just struck you. Trauma can also be defined as "any sudden and potentially life-threatening event."

Trauma can be a one-time traumatic event or prolonged and repeated by events outside your control.

a) Some instances of one-time trauma.

- Natural disasters (earthquake, flood, hurricane, etc)
- Rape
- Assault
- Muggings
- Robbery
- Accidents (automobile, airplane, train, etc)



- Fires
- b) Some instances of prolonged trauma.
- Physical or sexual abuse as a child or spouse
  - War
  - Life in a prison camp
  - Life as a refugee
  - Hostage situations
  - Life in a concentration camp
  - life in some religious cults

The following issues can be regarded as the immediate effects of one time trauma which lead to emotional imbalance:

- a) **Emotional**
- Shock, including numbed emotions, questioning of perceptions, memory disturbances
  - Denial, which helps reduce terror, helplessness, and fear of dying or being abandoned to manageable levels
  - Confusion and disorientation
  - Numbness
  - Panic
  - Weeping
  - Extreme anxiety and insecurity
  - Inflexibility
  - Dissociation, feelings of unreality

**b) Cognitive:**

- Disbelief, another protective device
- Disorientation and confusion
- Difficulty thinking and concentrating
- Unwanted thoughts - traumatic memories may intrude on everyday living and in dreams, leaving you feeling out of control.
- Perceptual problems
- The world may seem unsafe, unsteady, unpredictable, and unfair
- Traumatic memories - intense, clear, vivid images
- Forgetfulness

**c) Hyper arousal**

- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Heightened vigilance
- Easily startling
- Being wary
- Sudden tears or anger or panic
- Increased alertness and anxiety

**d) Body**

- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Headaches
- Allergy symptoms
- Menstrual problems

Trauma survivors spend a lot of time thinking about what they could have done differently. The truth is that they couldn't have done it differently, and the body takes over. And the important thing is not what you did it's the result is that you have survived the traumatic event.

### **What are the effects of the long-term or prolonged, repeated trauma?**

The immediate effects of prolonged trauma are the same as for one-time trauma, only they recur with each new wave of traumatic experience. The long-term effects include Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Complex Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and a variety of mental and physical illnesses.

### **What is the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, normally abbreviated as (PTSD) is the name given to a cluster of symptoms often seen in trauma survivors. The more severe the trauma, the longer these symptoms will persist. In cases of major and or repeated trauma, strong reactions may continue for years.

Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can include the following issues:

- Hyper vigilance and scanning
- Elevated startle response
- Blunted affect, psychic numbing

- Aggressive, controlling behaviour (a high degree of insistence on getting your way)
- Interruption of memory and concentration
- Depression
- Generalized anxiety
- Violent eruptions of rage
- Substance abuse
- Intrusive recall -- different from normal memory in that it brings with it stress and anxiety
- Dissociative experiences, including dissociative flashbacks
- Insomnia
- Suicidal ideation
- Survivor guilt

### **What causes PTSD to develop?**

The simple answer, of course, is trauma. But it's more complicated than that. During a traumatic experience, you adapt and choose new approaches that are survival-oriented for the situation you're in. The problem comes after the trauma, when those approaches and response are no longer functional. Recovery involves recognizing what responses are and aren't functional and getting rid of the ones that hurt you. In effect, trauma can re-programme your reactions very quickly; recovery is a kind of process of deprogramming.

Some medical experts believe that trauma causes changes in brain chemistry, changes that are helpful in the short term by reducing

the level of emotion to something bearable, but that are harmful in the long term because they reinforce the PTSD symptoms.

### **3.3. DEFINITION OF DEPRESSION:**

According to the Wikipedia encyclopaedia, definition, in psychology depression is defined as a mood or emotional state that is marked by sadness, inactivity, and a reduced ability to enjoy life. A person who is depressed usually experiences one or more of the following symptoms: feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or pessimism; lowered self-esteem and heightened self-depreciation; a decrease or loss of ability to enjoy daily life; reduced energy and vitality; slowness of thought or action; loss of appetite; and disturbed sleep or insomnia.

Depression differs from simple grief, bereavement, or mourning, which are appropriate emotional responses to the loss of loved persons or objects. Where there are clear grounds for a person's unhappiness, depression is considered to be present if the depressed mood is disproportionately long or severe vis-à-vis the precipitating event. When a person experiences alternating states of depression and mania (extreme elation of mood), he/she is said to suffer from a manic-depressive psychosis.

Depression is probably the most common psychiatric complaint and has been described by physicians from at least the time of Hippocrates, who called it melancholia. The course of the disorder is extremely variable from person to person; it may be fleeting or permanent, mild or severe, acute or chronic. Depression is more common in women than in men. The rates of incidence of the

disorder increase with age in men, while the peak for women is between the ages of 35 and 45.

Depression can have many causes. The loss of one's parents or other childhood traumas and privations can increase a person's vulnerability to depression later in life. Stressful life events in general are potent precipitating causes of the illness, but it seems that both psychosocial and biochemical mechanisms can be important causes. The chief biochemical cause seems to be the defective regulation of the release of one or more naturally occurring monoamines in the brain, particularly norepinephrine and serotonin. Reduced quantities or reduced activity of these chemicals in the brain is thought to cause the depressed mood in some sufferers.

There are three main treatments for depression. The two most important ones are psychotherapy and drug therapy.

Psychotherapy aims to resolve any underlying psychic conflicts that may be causing the depressed state, while also giving emotional support to the patient. Antidepressant drugs, by contrast, directly affect the chemistry of the brain, and presumably achieve their therapeutic effects by correcting the chemical imbalance that is causing the depression. The tricyclic antidepressant drugs are thought to work by inhibiting the body's physiological inactivation of the monoamine neurotransmitters. This results in the build up or accumulation of these neurotransmitters in the brain and allows them to remain in contact with nerve cell receptors there longer, thus helping to elevate the patient's mood. By contrast, the antidepressant drugs known as monoamine oxidase inhibitors

interfere with the activity of monoamine oxidase, an enzyme that is known to be involved in the breakdown of norepinephrine and serotonin. In cases of severe depression in which therapeutic results are needed quickly, electroconvulsive therapy has proven helpful. In this procedure, a convulsion is produced by passing an electric current through the person's brain. In many cases of treatment, the best therapeutic results are obtained by using a combination of psychotherapy with drug therapy or with electroshock treatment.

### **TYPES OF DEPRESSIONS:**

Causes of depression can be classified under two categories:

Physiological and Sociological

Physiological causes:

- Genetic predisposition
- Neurological
- Medical condition
- Dietary
- Sleep quality
- Seasonal affective disorder
- Postpartum depression

Sociological causes:

- Psychological factors
- Early experiences
- Life experiences

### **SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION:**

- Self-loathing
- A decrease in self-self-esteem

- Inattention to personal hygiene, in men, hair and beards are the visible signs
- Sensitivity to noise
- Physical aches and pains, and the belief these may be signs of serious illness
- Fear of going mad
- Change in perception of time
- Periods of sobbing
- Possible behavioural changes, such as aggression and/or irritability
- Avoiding social situations or being late often
- Feeling that you will never get better
- Excessive procrastination (What's the point?)
- Loss of appetite and sometimes marked gain or loss of weight
- Sleep disorders, such as insomnia (loss of sleep) with recurring nightmares or hypersomnia (excessive sleep)
- Intense feelings of guilt, nervousness, helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness, isolation and loneliness, anxiety and withdrawal from society.
- Recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying,) desire to just "lie down and die" or "stop breathing", recurrent suicidal ideas without specific plan, or suicide attempts or a specific plan to commit suicide

Having studied these definitions, I do believe that the readers of this thesis will have a better understanding of the situation of men and that the community will also look at them sympathetically.



### **3.4. THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA DEPRESSION ON MEN:**

One of the most painful discoveries made through interviews during this research is that society does not understand the damage trauma and depression cause to men. There is still a strong believe among South Africans that trauma and depression among men are self induced conditions of cowards. Men who cannot stand up as men in the African context and perform their role as “men” i.e. strong and mature people who can face any difficulty if they find they are regarded as weak and no good men,

It is important to note that cultural expectation still plays an important part in putting pressure on men. It is therefore regarded as shame if the man cannot be seen to be on top of issues in his own home. As indicated in the introduction earlier, conversations that people have internalized put more pressure on men. Even if women are sympathetic, these conversations keep on coming back into their ears and they start thinking about what the society will say about them. As a result, African men have to pretend that they are in control. The following case study will help us to understand the world in which men operate.

### **3.5. Case Study 4**

*The case study looks at a man who lost his job through retrenchments and succumbed to depression.*

Abel, not his real name, lost his job some years back due to the disinvestment and sanctions imposed on the apartheid government by the international community. He had a job at one of the printing press companies where he spent almost his growing years and was looking forward to retire in this company. The retrenchments left him without a job but his wife was a financial manager at one of the progressive NGO's. All their children were grown up and independent. Abel took his entire retrenchment package in order to pay off the mortgage bond on their house and this relieved them of the major debts. Therefore his joblessness would not have created any problem.

His wife was sympathetic but Abel had pressure from his peers. What traumatized Abel was his dependence on his wife. Every time he had to go and ask for money from his wife. It reduced his status as a person who should provide. While he was working and independent, he became a member of social club of men who met regularly and had drinks together. Abel could no longer contribute freely as his wife would give money for any other thing except for alcohol consumption. He slowly deteriorated and started stealing money to go and join his friends. One day his wife was shocked when the local police brought him home almost unconscious and reported that they picked him up from the street. This was the beginning of major problems between the two. Abel did not only have alcohol problem but complications of hypertension and sugar diabetes. The worst was that he could no longer function in bed and his wife became upset with him.

When Abel's wife was offered a job overseas, she gladly accepted it because she knew she would take her husband along, away from his friends. Abel could not get a job in the new country due to labour and immigration policies but managed to get some piece jobs at one of the NGO's. This helped him to get extra cash. Abel soon went back to the situation he was, back home.

Abel's case is one of the many cases many families are faced with. The loss of economic power by men is a major sociological problem. When a man gets traumatised and depressed, his health also gets affected and the symptoms as described in paragraph 3.3 above, take place. The earliest symptoms are psychological and then followed by medical conditions. The worst thing is the loss of libido. Society cannot tolerate a man who cannot perform in bed and he will be regarded as a woman.

Interviews with men over this topic have invoked heated and lively debates. The average man in South Africa is feeling betrayed by the new government and its over ambitious programmes to correct "so-called" patriarchal injustices created by culture. Most of the men the researcher interviewed feel they do not have platforms to voice their concerns hence the escalating violence against women. The majority do not condone this though.

Men are generally bitter and feel that the government did not give them time to heal from the apartheid oppression and immediately imposed a new type of oppression on them through gender equality laws. Men generally believe that four out of six jobs

advertised these days will be given to a woman. They feel they are endangered species.

The question that may be asked is, are men afraid of change? Ed Wimberly, 1999 points to the Freudian model in looking at the situation of men who are in a similar situation like men in South Africa.

The model suggests that the functions of the psychic apparatus of the mind ego, is to defend against change or innovation until the person is emotionally ready to accept change. South African men are traumatized because they are not ready to accept the positive democratic changes that are occurring in the country.

- Freudian model continues to indicate that if the ego has a premonition that change will be uncomfortable and difficult; it will attempt to sabotage the efforts to change. Men in South Africa feel that change has been extremely quick and untimely. It happened at the time when men were just preparing to get out of oppression and has disadvantaged them seriously. Therefore the escalating violence against women and children is a direct reaction of the ego in men. For them these changes threaten their very existence and power and therefore unconsciously find themselves resorting to violence.
- There is a general feeling that the current government will never listen to the concerns of men as women are important for their survival. Women are in majority and when it comes

to voting their vote is important. They question the wisdom of the current president of the Republic of South Africa to start appointing women to senior positions in government structures when his term of office is about to expire, why did he wait ten years to realize women's potential?

- The other gripe of men, especially family men, is that the champions of women's rights are either divorced or those who had failed relationships and their involvement in the campaigns against men is a vendetta. They can count a number of them. They believe their wives are becoming monsters because of the education from these women.
- The Freudian model suggests that it is important to work with the person's resistance until the person is emotionally ready to make a change. The researcher tends to agree with this suggestion. The fierce struggle against male domination that was accompanied by the fight against the apartheid oppression was merciless towards men. Even those who attempt to accept change and protect the rights of women are sometimes drowned by the onslaught on the patriarchy. The message that comes out sometimes suggests that all men are guilty of the sin.

The second model applied by Ed Wimberly is the Family Systems Theory. Wimberly (1995)

- This theory emphasizes that there is a constant feedback from the environment to which the individual and family must respond. The family needs to face this feedback with its internal mechanism operating and incorporate new information in ways that enable each family member to grow and develop, especially when the new information challenges the existing patterns.
- Healthy families function on positive feedback in that they process it in ways that enhance the growth of all of its members.
- Unhealthy families, however, view feedback negatively and resist taking in new information, particularly if new information challenges existing family patterns.
- Dysfunctional families conspire with individual family members to resist change and hold on to current patterns interaction. Not knowing the future, such families prefer the present. Therefore the difficulty South African men are facing is resistance to change. To them Egypt is better than the unknown Canaan.

The researcher also interviewed a medical practitioner in Roodepoort area, to find out how the current developments in the country are affecting the men folk. He confirmed that more than 60% of men who come to his surgery every day suffer from one of

the following disorders; hypertension, ulcers, depression, cardiovascular disorders, and sugar diabetes. He further indicated that these disorders have escalated since the increase of petrol, food and other commodities, including the power shedding. Men are pressed hard and cannot afford the current escalating prices.

### **3.6. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION:**

This chapter looked at the definition of terms trauma and depression and how they affect their victims. A human body has been built in such a way that it can cope with certain conditions. When these conditions become too strong, the human body cannot cope anymore. The changes that came about because of the new dispensation in the country have left many men traumatised. It has been very important for us to study trauma and depression as society does not understand the effects of these conditions.

The reason why men get traumatised when they lose economic power is that culture has expectations on men and if they do not fulfil these they are regarded as failures. A man is expected to be strong and therefore if a man breaks down society gets alarmed. Therefore it has been important for us to study this situation so that society could find a better way to deal with the situation of traumatised men.

There are number of issues that influence such conditions on men and the following chapter will try to identify those issues.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4.1. THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE:**

In order to be able to understand why men get traumatised when they loose power in the family we need to understand how the culture's expectation for men is. It will be helpful for us to first look at the family set up and the roles each member of the family is expected to play.

The African culture has always prepared its young generation for responsible roles in life. The initiation school, which was more than just a circumcision rite, prepared young men for responsible leadership in the family and community. The same process was done with young women in the women initiation. These schools were branded barbaric and inhumane by the western civilization and Christians were forced to abandon these practices. The positive side of the initiation schools was that they groomed men into responsible leadership.

The mentoring of young men continued after the initiation graduation. At the graduation ceremony the chief would pronounce the name of the group (Mophato<sup>3</sup>) and from then they would always work together in the community projects. They are invited to the men's indaba (gatherings) in the Kgotla (traditional kraal). Here they interacted with old men; learn how community and family life is run from the old people. In the agrarian society, a

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<sup>3</sup> Mophato is a Tswana word meaning a "team"



young man would be taken to the cattle post to look after his parent's livestock. During this process, he is being groomed into becoming a man. While he is away from the female members of the family, he spends time with elderly men who teach him about life. It was during this time that a young man is "**empowered**" to take responsibility in life and in the family. When time comes that he is ready to take the leadership role, he is introduced to the female members of society. Normally negotiations with the prospective in laws will be done by the mothers while the young man is in the cattle post. Once the two families had agreed on all the aspects of marriage, they will then start to construct a special hut for the wedding.

The young man will then be taken home at night and the bride to be will be waiting in the hut for him. The young man will have been coached by the elders on what to do when he arrives in the hut and similarly the young woman will have been coached by the women. Once everything has worked according to the elders, negotiations for lobola and the ceremony would then proceed. This tradition involved the entire family and it was not a wedding between the two people but of the whole clan. Therefore the institution of the African family is built around marriage. These expectations become a norm and are internalized by members of the African society. In short, they become part of life.

It was also important to research the role played by the community in this regard and then look at its involvement in the family. It was

also important for the researcher define the family before going into details.

**The definition of family according to the Western understanding:**

There are three definitions of family according to the Western Culture, these are

- Nuclear or elementary:
- Conjugal
- Consanguineal family

**a) The Nuclear family: *also called elementary in sociology and anthropology:***

This refers to a group of persons united by ties of marriage and parenthood or adoption and consisting of a man, a woman, and their socially recognized children. This unit was once widely held to be the most basic and universal form of social organization. Anthropological research, however, has illuminated so much variability of this form that it is safer to assume that what is universal is a nuclear family “complex” in which the roles of husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, and sister are embodied by people whose biological relationships do not necessarily conform to the Western definitions of these terms. In matrilineal societies, for example, a child may not be the responsibility of his biological genitor at all but of his mother's brother, whom he calls father.

**b) Conjugal family**

Closely related in form to the predominant nuclear-family is the consanguineal family. As its name implies, the conjugal family is knit together primarily by the marriage tie and consists of mother, father, their children, and some close relatives. The stability of the conjugal **family** depends on the quality of the marriage of the husband and wife, and this relationship is more emphasized in industrialized, highly mobile societies in which people frequently must leave the residences of their blood relatives.

**c) The Consanguineal family:**

The consanguineal family groups itself around a descent group or lineage whose members are said to be blood relatives and consists of parents, their children, their children's children, and the children's spouses, who may belong consanguineally to another family. In non-literate societies, the perpetuation of the line has priority, and the consanguineal family derives its stability from its corporate nature and its permanence.

**d) The African definition of the family**

The definition of a family, in African context, is understood in the context of inclusivity. The family does not only refer to people living within the same homestead. This may include the nucleus members of the family within the same homestead. Unlike in the context of the Western culture

where grandparents and grandchildren are the closest members of the family. In the African context, family includes the in-laws. The family is not independent from the society. It belongs to the community.

Men have been socialized into playing a powerful leading role in the family as providers for the family. In the African context, tracing it from the pre-colonial period, roles in the family were clearly defined and the issue of abuse and oppression as depicted in the modern society was not possible. A family was not made up of only two people, but it inclusive of all members of the clan and the society. The in-laws from both the maternal and paternal parents played an important role in the formation and sustenance of the family.

The clan also played a very important role as well. Men spent most of the time or day together in the Kgotla or out in the field shepherding the cattle together. In the gatherings of men, very important social issues were discussed, including issues relating to effective family management. Young men were taught how to run the family and if one were identified to have had problems in their own family, older men would sit down with him and counsel him. Sometimes harsher measures would be taken against the one identified to be a trouble maker. This made men to think twice before they neglected or abused their families.

Traces of the pre-colonial family set-up could still be found in some of the rural areas in the country where the Western Civilization had not done much damage.

Nyasani,(1997) identifies and African family as a setting wherein the vertical power structure of the society is introduced and sustained as predominant over the freedom of individuals. Therefore, a man, even if he has his own family, remains subordinate to the rules of society. He remains accountable to society for any action he takes, even in his own home.

In an African context, the word family can also be used to include a wider community e.g. Africans in Diaspora are linked together by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. While they may not be related by blood, they may still regard themselves as a family. For instance, while the researcher worked in Geneva, at the World Council of Churches, he became part of the African community that worked there. The community extended to other organizations such as the United Nations, the International Red Cross Society as well as the International Labour Organization. The African community lived together as one family though people came from different parts of Africa. Each member of the community became part of the larger family and there was no individualism.

The community shared friendliness, hospitality, consensus and common frame-work seeking the principle of Ubuntu, and the emphasis on community rather than on the individual. New arrivals from Africa were baptised into this community and efforts were made to ensure that they immediately became part of the family. The elders within this community also acted as counsellors to the younger ones. They dealt with marriage counselling, other issues relating to personal issues. The Ubuntu among the members of the community was felt deeply when one member was bereaved. These features are typically underpinning the variations of African culture and identity everywhere.

Several African scholars such as Prof JS Mbiti argue that *“Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say, I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am. (1969:109)* Perhaps this concept can be clearly defined in the South African version which says, *“Motho ke motho ka batho”* (Tswana) *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Xhosa). This literally translates; a person is a person through other persons. This concept becomes a norm and a pattern of life among Africans in Diaspora.

A Kenyan Professor of Philosophy, at the University of Nairobi, Joseph M Nyasani (1997:97 – 100), argues that the Ubuntu among Africans was destroyed by the western foreign influences. He further argues that, under colonialism, the

African cultural traditions, beliefs and behaviours were regarded as inferior when compared to non African traditions. This, he says, resulted in Africans self-loathing.)

Another Kenyan, Professor of sociology based at the University of Nairobi, *Kimani (1998)* argues that the current African family's values have been adversely affected by the Western civilization. He argues that: *"The effects of capitalism are already being felt in our families. Individualism in society is increasing. Even families in rural areas like to operate in isolation, and those who offer any help, are keen to help their immediate families only. The family is becoming more independent. The loss of community networks and the development of individualism have resulted in increased occurrences of suicide, loneliness, drug abuse and mental illness. The communal system is breaking down. The extended family had certain functions to perform, for instance, to reconcile couples at loggerheads with each other, but this is no longer the case. It is one's business to know what's happening in one's marriage today"* (1988:page?)

In dealing with the influence of culture Gerkin, (1997) on the subject, "Problematic Social Trends: Implications for Pastoral Care", deals with the issue of the "two bread winners" family to illustrate how the roles, assigned by culture in the family had been changed by circumstances. He relates the story of the family starting normally as a one bread-winner family in line with the trends of the time which was a normal situation

with many families pre-2<sup>nd</sup> World War times. According to Gerkin, the division of labour during this period was an accepted traditional practice. The husband worked outside the home and provided for the family by bringing income while the wife remained home looking after children. The wife, the mother of the family, became the *home-maker*, or the *housewife*, looked after the family, cleaned the house and supported the husband, i.e. washed his work clothes, prepared meals for him as he left home in the morning. Gerkin continues by saying: “In times of stress, inside and outside the home, the couple tried to support each other as both laboured arduously in their respective spheres to approximate the vision they shared of a normal, healthy family. However, this situation was changed by the II World War when able-bodied men between the ages of 25 - 45 were conscripted to fight in the war and left women behind. In order to support the war, industries producing war machinery had to be kept working and women were called to replace their men who were in the war.

However, after the war, some women continued working and therefore creating a “two-breadwinner family”. The post war industrial revolution attracted more women to full time work and the phenomenon continued. This situation developed into a situation where children had to grow on their own without a mentor. Parents live early in the morning, sometimes even



before children woke up, and return late at night. Gerkin says this radical culture change, brings new challenges to society:

**a) The Situation of children:**

While the concentration may be on the traumatised men, children in the family can also be affected. Gone are the days when mothers would be at home to look after children. If both parents work, who should look after them? The result is that child care now goes outside the home or family, with children development being placed in the hands of strangers. While the child care facilities are structured in such a way that child development is of suitable for the children and standard is good, the home or family care can never be replaced.

**b) The question of single parenthood:**

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, modern women do not want to commit themselves to permanent relationship which may lead them to end up dealing with traumatised men. While women can afford to have a baby, take care of it without a man and continue to work. The emerging problem is that the child will also be traumatised when it grows up and start realising it has no father. Perhaps this is a topic that needs to be researched further.

Gerkin's story is corroborated by the stories of both the African and Afrikaner people interviewed in the areas under research. The Tswana people from the rural North West as well as Botswana itself, who come from the predominantly agrarian society, had the roles of men and women clearly defined by the culture. Men spent most of their times in the field outside the villages looking after the cattle and tilling the lands.

The villages and the crop fields as well as cattle posts have been clearly separated. The researcher took samples of two old villages just outside Rustenburg, the Tlokweng (Silverkraans) and Pella. The villages are almost 10 km away from the fields and cattle are camped completely away from the villages. Men and young men spent most of their times at the cattle posts looking after the cattle and fields while women stay at home to look after the children.

Men and older male children spent most of their time at the cattle posts and only come home to bring fire wood, meat and milk. During the tilling and sowing period women would join their husbands to help them while they till the land and then return to the villages to wait until the crops have grown enough. They then move with non-schooling children to join the husbands to hoe the fields and then prepare the harvest. They would normally leave the villages at the beginning of the autumn, after they had settled school children in school,

i.e. after buying uniforms and paying school fees and then join their husbands in the cattle posts areas until after harvest.

The school children would normally be left with elder female members of the family and in a situation where there are no elderly female members, a relative would be asked to stay with the children until after the harvest. After this period, women would return home to continue to look after the children and men remain in the cattle posts to look after the cattle. The returning home of women with harvest used to be a ceremonious thing. Every family will proudly bring back home ox wagon loads of bags of maize and corn, bags of dried morogo (traditional spinach), pumpkins and other products which would last families until the next harvest. In the mean time men would come home periodically with ox wagon loads of wood for fire and calabashes of sour milk. Young men would be kept at the cattle post until such time that he is ready to get married.

The situation in a typical Afrikaner family would be slightly different but the roles of men and women have been clearly defined by the Afrikaner culture. The family plays a very important role even in this situation. As commercial farmers, the entire Afrikaner family would live together in the farm, with everything in the same place, livestock, farming land, dwelling house, etc, but would have clearly defined roles between the husband and the wife.

The husband, who would normally work with the farm labourers, spend most of his time out in the field and only return home for meals and sleep at night. On a normal working day, the husband would wake up as early as 06:00 to supervise the milking of cows and the feeding of the rest of the livestock in the farm and then return home around 08:00 to have breakfast before tackling the harder labour of the farm. As in the African family, the husband is the main provider for the family. He sells products from the farm to provide for the family.

The wife stayed at home to look after the children, prepare those who go to school, (normally far away from the farm) in the case of the farms visited children attended school outside Swartruggens on the way to Rustenburg and the school bus ferries them every morning. They have to be prepared so that when bus arrives, they are ready at the gate. In addition to this, she would also supervise the domestic worker who does most of the work in the house; prepare breakfast for the husband and children in the morning clean the house and do the washing.

In the afternoon, when the children return from school, they have to be given lunch and then the wife will sit down with them to supervise and help them do their school home work. By that time the husband will have had his lunch and returned to the farm to supervise the afternoon chores of the farm, including the milking of the cows. The situation in most of the

farms has not changed much but that women have been empowered to take additional responsibilities such as doing the books, banking, general secretarial work, help with computer work as most of the farms are computerised and do general purchases for the farm.

The discovery of Diamonds and Gold, the Industrial revolution that came after the Second World War, the political setup and the failure of the agrarian system in the rural areas, completely changed the culture of the people. The global warming and radical climate changes had rendered subsistence farming impossible. The persistent droughts affected even livestock farmers and men had to be forced to look for livelihood far away from their families. Men had to leave their rural villages and go to work in the mines in cities or in the industrial areas. This changed the role of men and women. In most cases women remained in the rural villages looking after the children and some cases, even the livestock as well.

One other aspect that needs to be looked into is the apartheid system of relocating communities from arable land and dumping them into the homelands. An example of this situation is the Mogopa Community. They lived and farmed in the fertile land in the Lichtenberg district for many years. Farmers were successful but when they were moved and dumped in the rural areas where there was no farming, their cultural life was completely destroyed and life changed.

It is very interesting to listen to the patriarchs from both the societies as described above. How they have to say about the modern thinking of the patriarch system. They both agree that the distribution of roles were designed by culture and therefore there was no room for competition. The roles of men and women were clearly defined and each category accepted its role without any questioning. Men were expected by the culture to be the heads of the families and provide every comfort for the family while wives ensured that the home life is taken care of. It was scandalous behaviour for any able-bodied man to fail to look after the family.

The situation in Northern Namibia, among the Ovambo people is interesting when it comes to the definition of family. The North West people of the Ovamboland have what is called “Matrilineal system” where the woman plays a central role in the family. The family is built around the mother and children belong to her. Even at the time of separation or divorce, children automatically go with the mother. Therefore the father is a loner in the family. As long as he behaves well and fulfil his parental mandate, everything will be ok. But the culture of the Ovambo has a clear separation of roles. These roles were performed by both the husband and wife equally and did not have any sign of superiority or inferiority.

The husband’s role was outside the house, looking after cattle, ploughing and collecting wood for the family. It is the husband’s duty to ensure that the family have a roof of their head, i.e. build the house for the family. Whereas the wife’s

role was family making; looking after children, cleaning the house, cooking for the family etc. It is a serious scandal for an Ovambo man to be seen cooking at home when the wife was still alive, or for the Ovambo woman to be seen chopping wood in the field when her husband was still alive. The situation among the Herero's and Damaras is different, they adopt the patriarchal system.

Mbiti says, the role of women in Africa is one of the more controversial issues frequently discussed. The number of advocates for women's rights is growing significantly since the early 1980's with the development of the contextual and the feminine theologies. He further says the general educational level for women is rising and new expectations are also developing. He looks at the role of traditional African women from his experiences and agrees with the thinking of the Southern African patriarchs as noted above.

Mbiti asserts that the value of a woman begins when she is born and not when she is married. John Mbiti (1991, 63) supports his statement by quoting the Logbara proverb that says: "A baby girl means beautiful cows" (Mbiti, 64, citing Dalfovo, 214). Mbiti further says the traditional roles of wife and mother were held in high esteem and therefore a barren woman goes in deep sorrows in the African culture. In some quarters there has been a tendency to emphasize the strong roles women played in traditional African families. The African scholar who exemplifies this approach most strongly

is Mercy Amba Oduyoye<sup>4</sup>, who comes herself from the Akan people of Ghana, the only matrilineal people in West Africa. Most of the other literature by both women and men has tended to emphasize the largely supportive role of women in African traditional societies, stressing her role as wife, child-bearer and mother. He also quotes the Gikuyu proverb that says: "The woman who has children does not desert her home" and the other one "The woman whose sons have died is richer than a barren woman" (citing Barra, 60 and 61). A Swahili proverb says: "A barren wife never gives thanks" (Kalugila, 20), by which Mbiti (64) concludes: "nothing else is as valuable as having children; they are the deepest cause for giving thanks. If a woman has everything else, except children, she would have no cause or joy to give thanks". Mbiti goes further to cite the Ghanaian proverb that says: "A serviceable wife is often blessed with the birth of a tenth child" (Mbiti, 64, citing Bannerman, 19).

The high value which African traditional thought gives to children stands in contrast to attitudes in the modern western world, where, according to one recent survey, 70 per cent of couples with children reported that if they could live life over again they would, choose not to have children. While the validity of a single survey might be questionable to a certain degree, the fact that Africans visiting in Europe or North America are often shocked by the anti-child attitudes they

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<sup>4</sup> Mercy Ododye is a former Vice President of the World Council of Churches



encounter serves to underscore the differences which clearly exist.

Mbiti concludes his article on the role of women with the words "They are truly flowers in the garden. They give beauty, scent, and seed to life." (Mbiti 1991, 71). Mbiti's summary, while it seems to give a subordinate role to women, is meant to emphasize their importance, within a certain frame of reference. It should be noted that he makes reference to the importance of women here, in saying "beauty and scent", a dimension which, as it has been outlined above, is often repressed or undervalued in modern western thought. In the Tswana culture, old men when they counsel younger men refer to women as "glasses", they break easily. This is intended to indicate how precious women should be handled.

Where did we go wrong? The following paragraph will indicate to us how the African culture was influenced and assimilated by the Western civilization.

#### **4.2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION:**

To answer the question posed above, we need to look at what Peter Kanyandago says, in the essay entitled: "The legacy of Western Europe in Africa". Pastoral Care in African Christianity, 2000, 2005, His contention is that the problem does not lie with the Western Civilization as such, but how Africa met the Western Civilization. The arrival of the

missionaries and colonizers of the African continent made a negative impact on the African culture. All what was African was regarded as barbaric and needed to be completely changed. Mugambi, (2005, pgs 343 - 346) Says: “ *Cultural depreciation and insensitivity in the modern missionary enterprise has arisen from erroneous theology of mission which presupposes that the acceptance of Christianity necessarily demands total rejection of the African cultural and religious heritage and adoption of the culture of missionary without question or criticism.*” He continues, “*The consequence of this missiological error has been a superficial acceptance of Christianity, which is displayed in formal, daily life of the majority of African Christians.*”

The colonizers and the evangelizers considered Africans not human beings, their humaneness was doubted and therefore they considered this to be their duty and burden to impose and substitute the African barbarism with the civilization that would eventually uplift the Africans from their barbarism, cannibalism, immoral behaviour, and total darkness.

Kanyandago quotes three white missionaries as follows:

1) W.J.W. Roome:

*“There is no hope of deliverance unless some potent influence from without transforms his (African’s) life - grant to him power over evil spirits by which he is surrounded. The African is, in all pagan districts, an Animist. Every act is*

*connected in some way with the power of evil spirits. He is not a free agent... There are no homes in heathendom. Women are merely toys to be used as sport. Children are spawned and not born. Motherhood is a negligible quality. There is no blossom in its child life. It has produced more craven hearted men and women than are to be found anywhere outside of pagan lands."*

**2) Kitching:**

*"The naked tribes are for most part purely animal, devoid of all self-consciousness, destitute of all sense of independency or what we should call modesty, and regarding sexual matters in the same casual, unaffected way as we might regard questions of diet. Among the Bantu tribes in Uganda there is a strong sense of outward decency and propriety, which but serves to cloak complete indifference to the hither claim of morality. Waruta DW, Kinoti HW, (2005 pgs 52) He*

**3) Bendey:**

*"The African....does not think, does not reflect, does not reason, if he can do without it. He has a prodigious memory; he has great talents for observation and initiation, a lot of ease with the word, and has good qualities...But the faculties for reasoning and intervention are dormant"*

While the western civilization brought new things that helped to change a number of issues, Africa accepted everything that

came from Europe and regarded anything African to be barbaric. The aspect of African culture that received aggressive attack from the colonizers, especially the missionaries was the polygyny. Men with more than one wife were barred from becoming Christians and the missionaries imposed the western monogamy without any compromise. This has resulted in African men becoming Christians marrying, legally, one wife and then having a string of mistresses all over.

One of the important cultural institutions that were labelled barbaric was the initiation or circumcision school. Only one aspect of this cultural practice has been lifted above all other issues; the cutting of the fore skin of men and the mutilation of the woman's parts. This practice was completely discouraged and parents who took their children to this school were excommunicated from the Church. This left a vacuum in the cultural and social education. Yes, Christians were the most educated in the community but when it came to cultural and social education they were the poorest. But this is not all about this practice. Young men and were taught cultural issues relating to family life. Men were taught how to become leaders of the families and how to love their wives and children. The same thing was done with young women; they were taught to become responsible family women and were taught how to love their husbands and family. They were given lessons by cultural teachers on role that husband and wife had to play in life.

The missionaries' equivalent of circumcision school was the confirmation class. The confirmation class did nothing on social and cultural issues but that young women and men were made to recite the catechism and were taught to become good Christians. In communities that had both the traditions the sharp contrast between the behaviour of young people who went through circumcision school and those who went through confirmation class, were clear. Teenage pregnancy and illegitimate children were likely to come from the Christian young men and women.

#### **4.3. THE RISE OF THE FEMINIE THEOLOGY:**

The voices of women in the ecclesiastical circles are emerging from every continent. Women all over the world are recognising the fact that traditional expectations of long suffering and sacrifices which have been imposed on women by culture and religion can no longer be accepted. Under the auspices of a number of ecumenical formations such as the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Conference of European Churches and many others, female theologians have begun to challenge the orthodox and patriarchal systems that have been the pillars of the church for decades. Themes such as "Women in Church Leadership, New readings of the Bible, Women's Spirituality, Women and Economic Development, Challenges facing Young Women, Theologians, Models of Renewed Spirituality etc have been discussed by ecumenical women's fora.

Women in Africa have not been left from behind. Over a period of three decades, a number of female theologians have emerged and helped to champion the course for the rights of African Women. Elizabeth Amoah wrote an article entitled: “Theology from the Perspective of African Women as part of the essays contained in the book “Women’s visions edited by Ofelia Ortega (1995) She says: “Theology from the perspective of African women should not be seen only in terms of what is done in academic institutions.....African women who are not formally educated express their theology in the spontaneous, poetic lyrics, songs and prayers which are an ordinary part of daily life.” Amoah argues that the experience of women in life is the basis for their theologizing. The suffering they had gone through due to culture and misinterpretation of the Bible had prompted them to start questioning culture and the use of the Bible itself.

As expressed in the African women’s ecumenical movement called the CCAWT, African women recognise some of the dehumanizing African practices such as; widowhood rituals, food taboos, traditional laws of inheritance, female circumcision and submission to male domination. These practices affect the lives of women and cannot be left unchallenged. African women theologians argue that:

- God as a creator is the source of everything
- All humanity is endowed with equal capabilities

- All human beings share equally in the common wealth given by God

Therefore, in the light of this, no system should be used to dehumanize and marginalise anyone on the basis of gender, race, colour and class. Amoah quotes the Akan people idiom that says “All human beings are children of God, no one is the child of the earth” She continues argue that God had given each and every human being dignity and respect. The Church is the community of both men and women who believe in God the creator. The Church as an institution should allow and encourage women to fulfil their calling and responsibilities as equals to all human beings.

In her book “Discipleship of equals”, Fiorenza uses a methodology of situation critical analysis of society, culture and religion that keep women down. She says: “The women liberation demands restructuring of societal institutions and a redefinition of cultural images and role of women and men, if women are to become autonomous human persons and achieve economic and political equality” (1933:56-57) She further says: “Theology and Church have to be liberated and humanized if they are to serve people and not to oppress them,” (1933:63)

Fiorenza is of a similar opinion with Mercy Oduyoye that: “Christians in Africa must deal with the gap between ‘Christianity preached’ and Christianity lived’. They must

deal with racism among children of One God and disciples of the One Christ, with the exploitation and dehumanisation of the sister and brother for whom Christ died.” (1986:9)

#### **4.4. GENDER EQUALITY:**

Very often when people talk about “Gender equality” some people understand this to refer to women” The word in fact refers to both male and female. The problem might have been that people confuse the word with fight against patriarchy.

“Gender roles” are attitudes, behaviours, rights, and responsibilities that a society associates with each sex. Age, race, and social class further define individual’s roles, which influence how men and women interact and the attitudes and behaviours expected of each. Masculine and feminine roles are not opposite ends of the same continuum but are instead two separate dimensions.

A person may be described as “masculine,” as “feminine,” as androgynous,” i.e., having characteristics of both, or as “undifferentiated,” that are, having neither strong masculine nor strong feminine characteristics. People who are androgynous are believed to be more effective because they can perform both the “instrumental, directive, or masculine roles and the expressive, nurturing, or feminine

We use the terms “traditional” and conservative” to describe the belief that men’s and women’s roles are distinct, and terms “modern” and “liberal” to describe the belief that



roles are not ascribed according to sex. According to the traditional point of view, men are more assertive, competitive, decisive, confident, ambitious, and instrumentally oriented, whereas women are more nurturing, empathetic, helpful, sympathetic, gentle, affectionate and expressively oriented.

Traditional gender roles emphasize separate spheres of influence for women and men, with women inside the home and men outside the home. A modern, liberal, view of gender roles is that both men and women may engage in behaviours that have traditionally been ascribed to either sex. According to the liberal view, women may occupy leadership positions in the workplace, be autonomous and also be nurturing. Similarly men may provide childcare at home, and still remain achievement-oriented in the workplace.

Gender related attributes comprise a variety of factors, including masculine and feminine traits as well as different occupations, abilities, leisure interests, non-verbal behaviours, and attitudes toward women and feminism.

Southern Africa is a region that experienced a number of struggles over a long period. The struggle against oppression, especially against the apartheid system that was introduced in South Africa and Namibia, helped to shape women to fight for their rights along side the struggle against oppression. This fight was led by powerful ecumenical movements along side the liberation movement, particularly

from the early sixties. The whole region had to mount a fight against colonization and freedom from the apartheid oppression and the Churches were not left behind. Inside the ecumenical movements, issues of gender started to be debated and the region saw the leadership of people like Ms Brigalia Bam, former Deputy General Secretary and later the General Secretary, (SACC), Ms Sampra Bredt, former General Secretary of the, (CCZ), Rev Nangula Kathindi, former General Secretary, (CCN) Ms Sowazi, former General Secretary of the, (CSC) Ms Ramokhele, the current General Secretary of the CCL and many others who took the leadership of the ecumenical movement. Their leadership and courage helped to push gender issues on the tables of many Church Councils and Synods.

#### **4.5. THE STATE OF ECONOMY POST 1994:**

We cannot deal or understand the situation of men who are affected by the loss of economic power without looking at the trends of the economic situation in the country, which somehow, contributes to this frustration. Perhaps it will be helpful for us to go a few years back and understand how things were before the new South Africa came into being and how things developed since 1994 dispensation.

Since 1948 when the National Party of South Africa won the elections and started its programme of separate development, the minority white government embarked on a process to ensure that the separate development policy

worked, the apartheid system decided to create separate amenities according to racial divisions. 87% of the land was grabbed by the minority white South Africans and the remaining 13% divided among the blacks according to the ethnic groups. Semi-autonomous homelands were created to ensure that the separate policy of self determination was also maintained among the blacks. This system totally ruled out black South Africans from claiming any land or rights in what was termed white South Africa. Blacks working and living in the urban areas of white South Africa were tied to the homelands of their ethnic origin. They had to have annual contracts that had to be renewed annually. Those who worked in the urban cities, including migrants from the Homelands, were classified according to the pass law, Section 10: A, B, C, and D. This classification would tell whether you qualify for permission to seek a permanent job and stay in the township or you can only apply for a contract work and be confined to the hostel. At first there were only hostels for men but later on special hostels for women were also erected e.g. the Mzimhlophe Hostel near Orlando in Johannesburg.

The intention of the apartheid government was to, eventually, give these states total independence. Unfortunately, the apartheid government succeeded to give only four of them independence before it succumbed to domestic and international pressure to accept change and let the democratic process take place in the country.

It should be noted that by the time the old South African regime surrendered to negotiations, the economy of the country had already suffered major problems that were caused by the sanctions and the disinvestment by the world investors in support for the fight against the apartheid system. Though painful, the sanctions were applauded by many people within and outside the country except countries that supported the apartheid system such as Britain and others. Their argument was that sanctions would hurt those that were intended to help than the regime itself. True indeed, sanctions created massive retrenchments and unemployment throughout the country. Hardest hit were people from the homelands who had to return to the homelands and face the bleak situation of poverty.

While it was the wish of all the South Africans, particularly those who were previously disadvantaged, to have a better life after the fall of the apartheid regime, the new South Africa came with a lot of challenges. The high hopes many people had in the new government were dashed as soon as people started to realize that what they had hoped for will not come that early. The government seemed to be involved in building its image in the international arena and there was very little attention given to domestic programmes.

The major problem here was that the settlement reached between the black majority and the white minority regime was that it was a negotiated settlement. Therefore hopes that things were going to change suddenly and give the

previously disadvantaged majority access to economy and jobs were dashed by the fact that things could not happen overnight. Serious negotiations had to be made with those who had the power over the economy. Therefore the early years of post apartheid era were full of expectations and frustrations among the black majority, and people were disappointed when changes for better looked a distance away. Maybe the problem was that people's expectations were raised very high in order to ensure that they voted the old regime out of power and brought the ANC in.

The new government was faced with the dilemma of changing the old laws and putting into place new policies and legislations in order to do away with the past discriminatory laws that would help to change the lives of the people. But, the new government was faced with new challenges that were not part of the planning process:

- The Reconstruction and Development Programme, popularly known as the RDP, which was designed as a basis for the integration and coherent socio-economic progress towards eradicating the legacy of apartheid was not successful. The agenda of the RDP included the following: housing, urban policy, rural development, water, policies on disasters management, environment, transport and my other issues that were intended to correct the wrong of the past. The failure of this programme became an embarrassment to the government that even in the manifesto of the next General Election (1999), the RDP

was not included, while it formed the core of the subject of the previous election manifesto.

- **The Growth Employment and Redistribution:**

The RDP was replaced by the new controversial macro-economic strategy, The Growth, Employment and redistribution plan intended to provide economic underpinning for the RDP. In 1996 the government created a five-year plan—Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR)—that focused on privatization and the removal of exchange controls. GEAR was only moderately successful in achieving some of its goals but was hailed by some as laying an important foundation for future economic progress. The government also implemented new laws and programs designed to improve the economic situation of the marginalized majority. One such strategy, called Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), focused on increasing the number of employment opportunities for people formerly classified under apartheid as black, i.e. Africans, Coloureds, or Indians, improving their work skills, and enhancing their income-earning potential. The concept of BEE was further defined and expanded by the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Act of 2003 (promulgated in 2004), which addressed gender and social inequality as well as racial inequality. Britannica online Article 44032: South Africa, Economy: (2008 Page 15 – 16) ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)). The difficulty with BEE is that it is seen to be a platform for the enrichment of few black

people and widening the poverty gap. Those involved in BEE have become filthy rich, in terms of millions of Rand while the situation of the poor is not being improved at all. The Archbishop Emeritus of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, Desmond Tutu, criticised the BEE for widening the gap between the rich and the poor. He lamented that BEE continues where the apartheid system ended.

- **Rapid urbanization:**

Rapid urbanization took place faster than the government could think. The reasons for this are that when the Homeland system collapsed, the so-called border industries, which were established within the borders of the homelands or in the boundaries along these establishments, also collapsed.

- **Massive influx of refugees and economic migrants from African and other countries.**

South Africa, to many African people, is a place of prosperity. The first batch of African refugees arrived in South Africa for the first time after the Rwanda genocide. Before this refugees from African countries could not enter South Africa in exception of the Mozambican refugees. By that time South Africa did not have refugee laws in place and they did not know how to handle the influx. Many people abused the gap and people simply poured into the country.

- **The collapse of the neighbouring countries' economies:**

The collapse of Zimbabwe's economy and its political problems poses a new challenge to the South African economy. Unfortunately the South African government's attitude towards the situation in Zimbabwe did not help. Their silent diplomacy ensured that the ruling party in that country continued with its programmes of destroying its own country. Joblessness and acute shortage of food and other commodities left people of Zimbabwe destitute. Massive influx of migrants from Zimbabwe flooded the country. South Africa cannot ignore the situation of the Zimbabwean immigrants if they wanted to address the economic and development issues in the country.

- **Failure of investments:**

The failure or slow return of investors who left the country during the apartheid time. Most of the companies that traded in South Africa during apartheid and left in solidarity with the calls for sanctions are not returning as expected. A number of issues are making investors nervous to return and therefore efforts to rebuild the economy and create jobs for the people of the country are facing this challenge

- **Crime and other social problems:**



The soaring crime in the country can be attributed to a number of issues. Unemployment remains top on the list.

- **The collapse of the homeland system:**

Since the dawn of new democracy, and when the homelands system collapsed, a number of developments followed. As these were intended to keep the dream of homelands alive, they were heavily subsidised and paid very low salaries. When subsidies ended and protection against labour movements disappeared, the owners left. It is ironical that the majority of such industries were of the Oriental origin. These left the rural areas, which have now been incorporated into the new South Africa, dry and poorer.

While many people anticipated economic boom after the 1994 dispensation, the situation in the country seems to deteriorate. The gap between the rich and the poor seems to be growing by the day. Much as the country has achieved a lot in terms of racial and ethnic relations, as well as abolishment of racially segregating laws, there are still serious challenges that the country is still facing.

#### **4.6. THE RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT:**

The high rate of unemployment, not only affecting the uneducated people, but covering a vast spectrum of highly qualified people, remains to be the major reason for the abject poverty which leads to high crime and social problems in the country. Edmond J. Keller, of the University of California in Los Angeles, in his paper entitled: The Challenge of Enduring and Deepening Poverty in the New South Africa, says: “ While South Africa has living standards that are on average significantly above those in countries where chronic poverty is assumed to be most severe, its particular legacy of polarization and racially embedded poverty naturally raises questions about the ability of the poor to use social mechanisms of access to capital in order to throw off the yoke of poverty.” He continues to say, “You can walk down tree-lined streets or drive through well-appointed suburbs that belie (contradict) the notion that South Africa is mired in poverty; but, not far removed from these pleasant environs, the signs of chronic poverty are unmistakably there”.

The other fact was that, once all the restrictive laws were abolished, people from the rural areas were tempted to move to the big cities where it is generally believed that chances of job opportunities were more promising.

The prospect of owning a house in the cities also improved.

One had to first build and live in a shack for a while so that when the Provincial Government comes to do counting of those who should qualify for the RDP house; they should find them already resident in the area. In many cases, a lot of people have to pay exorbitant amounts of money to get access to the informal settlement so that they can also be counted as part of the community. The mushrooming of informal settlements in and around the major cities has not brought about any improvement but has worsened the situation of millions of poor people. The cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town are all surrounded by thousands of hundreds of in shacks with squalid conditions.

The Humans Sciences Research Council's Fact Sheet, dated the 26th of July 2004, and indicates that the proportion of people living in poverty in South Africa has not changed significantly between 1996 and 2001. It actually indicates a grim reality that households living in poverty have sunk deeper into poverty and the gap between rich and poor has widened. It indicates that 57% of individuals in the country were living below poverty line in 2001 and has unchanged since 1996. Both Limpopo and Eastern Cape remain the poorest of all the provinces, with the highest proportion of poor with 77% and 72% respectively while Western Cape remains the lowest in proportion in poverty at 32%. However, the situation in Western Cape is fast changing as exodus from Eastern Cape into this province is happening at an alarming

proportion.

The HSRC fact sheet is corroborated by the report prepared for the office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality dated 13 May 1998, edited by Julian May, assisted by Juby Govender. The report states that more than 50% of the entire population live in rural areas which accounts for more than 72% of the poor. The average poor family lives on an average of R353 per month. Due to exodus from the rural areas by young able bodied population, the average household in the rural area is headed by the pensioner who depends on the monthly state grant. This is shared with grand children whose parents live in informal settlements in urban areas and are unemployed. The reports indicate that the distribution of poverty is distributed unevenly among the nine provinces as follows: Eastern Cape 71%, Free State 63%, North West 62%, Limpopo 59% (this is a big gap between this report and the HSRC Fact Sheet which puts this province at 77%), Mpumalanga 57%, Gauteng 17% and Western Cape at 28%.

A further study indicates that the economy grew by 2.9% in the first quarter of 2002, by 3.9% in the second quarter, and 3% in the third quarter, rates that were considered good in view of the world slowdown. The unemployment rate continued to be troubling; it fell only slightly, from an estimated 29.5% in September 2001 to 26.4% in February 2002. Some encouragement could be drawn, however, from

growth in the manufacturing sector, which rose from 3.1% in 2001 to 5.1% by the end of July 2002; in addition, by the end of July manufacturing exports had risen 21% year-on-year.

By September, interest rates had been raised 4% in attempts to curb inflation. Consumer price inflation (excluding mortgages) rose from 5.8% in September 2001 to 12.5% by October 2002, owing largely to the fall in the value of the rand. The value of the rand to the U.S. dollar fell dramatically from January 2001 from about R7.5– \$1 to about R12–\$1 in January 2002 before recovering slightly in November to 9–1.

The 2002–03 budgets projected a 9.6% increase in spending and a 6.7% rise in revenue. The 2002–03 deficit was estimated at 2.1% of gross domestic product, up from 1.4% in 2001–02. Tax cuts amounting to R 15.2 billion (about \$1.3 billion) were announced and social grants for the elderly, the disabled, and veterans as well as child-support grants were increased above the **level** of inflation. Nevertheless, three million households continued to live below the **poverty level**.

This situation as depicted by these two reports has given rise to the following:

- High unemployment in both the rural and urban areas
- Family problems that lead to separation and divorce
- High crime rate and the escalation of social problems such

as the HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, depression, hypertension and prostitution.

- Xenophobia: The recent ugly face of xenophobia that has swept across South Africa has shocked the whole world. due to unemployment and scarcity of jobs, foreigners in the country are competing with the nationals for jobs. They are prepared to take any form of employment and remuneration and therefore unscrupulous employers would rather prefer them over the nationals who will not be prepared to accept low salaries and are protected by the labour unions. The bone of contention that fuels xenophobia is the informal trade market. Foreigners seem to be well ahead of their South African counter parts and therefore efforts by unemployed South Africans to make a living out of this market are challenged.

#### **4.7. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION:**

This chapter dealt with a number of themes that can be linked to the traumatic experience of men.

##### **Culture:**

Men have been socialised by culture that they are the heads of families. Culture had clearly assigned roles for men and women and men become traumatized by the changes that are occurring at the moment. They feel they can no longer

exercise their culture given roles as women are now doing them.

### **Influence of the economic situation:**

It is very clear from this study that the economy of South Africa post the 1994 dispensation failed to fulfil the high expectations of the majority of the South African citizens. As a result, high unemployment remains a major problem to the men who have families and are expected to provide for them. A number of factors have also not helped the economy to correct the imbalances of the past; the collapsing international economy that has left fuel and food prices beyond the reach of ordinary people. The influx of highly skilled economic migrants from the war-torn African countries, the repeal of a lot of apartheid legislation including the gender equality did not give the country a chance to address the situation at home. This can be seen now with the rising negative attitudes towards foreigners or xenophobia to be exact.

### **State of the economy:**

Negative international and domestic influences have hampered economic growth in the country. The new government attempted to correct this situation by the RDP, the GEAR and now lately BEE but the increase of crude oil and the soaring interest rates have not helped the economy. Therefore the number of unemployed people and those who

lose jobs is on the increase.

### **Unemployment:**

The high expectation of economic boom that was anticipated with the 1994 dispensation did not take place and unemployment situation has not improved. The government's efforts to try to address the imbalances of the past and create new jobs have not been successful. This state of affairs has put pressure on unemployment, particularly among men. The following conclusions will perhaps clarify the traumatic situation found among men in the country.

### **Gender Equality and the rise of feminine theology:**

The corrections of the past imbalances by enacting laws that protect women from the patriarchal abuse have seen men being challenged. Even in the Church circles, women started to challenge the Holy Scriptures that seem to support the male domination. Women organised themselves in different spheres of life and therefore challenged the status quo. Women are now able to do jobs that were originally meant for men. They can get better pay and are financially independent of men.

### **Influence of Western Civilization:**

While the western civilization brought good things to the African continent, there a number of things that were not



good. African culture was summarily regarded as barbaric and outdated and therefore good things thrown away by the missionaries. This left the African culture stripped of its core values and norms. It left vacuum and people started adopting foreign values which destroyed their culture. Among them these were the institution of marriage and family life.

This was the last chapter in this study and the following chapter will try to summarize the findings of the survey that was conducted to see how the issues discussed in the previous chapter have influenced the traumatic situation of men. At the end of the findings, the researcher will put together a number of suggestions to the Churches and society on how to deal with the situation of men.

## **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED THERAPEUTIC STRATEGIES TO THE CHURCHES:**

In conclusion, the researcher made an analysis of the questionnaires that were circulated to the different categories of people. Therefore this chapter analyses the results, and then worked on a proposal to the Church on how to develop a pastoral care model to deal with the situation of the traumatised men. As part of the conclusion and way forward, the researcher looked at a number of concepts and used them as part of the process. These terms are: Conversations, Positive Deconstruction, Membership, and the Caring Communities, internalization, externalization and privileging.

### **5.1. SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

There were four categories of questionnaires that were developed and distributed to the targeted respondents.

- A questionnaire specifically aimed at collecting data from men. In order to gauge the opinion of different generations, the questionnaires were distributed to three different age groups: 21 – 35 years, 35 - 50 years and 50+ years. 38 questionnaires were distributed to men in the urban areas and 26 questionnaires were returned, which makes it 68.4% of the distributed. 15 questionnaires were distributed to the rural areas of North

West<sup>5</sup> where the majority of people found in the area under research come from. The intention to distribute questionnaires in this area was to try to gauge the level of thinking of men who remained in the rural areas and of those who left and work and reside in the urban areas. From North West province only 8 were returned which makes 53.3% of the distributed questionnaires.

The other interesting observation is that the researcher discovered that most men preferred to discuss this topic in groups rather than to give individual interviews. They felt safer in a group than as individual whereas women did not find it difficult to discuss the topic individually. The researcher therefore targeted the men's guilds, visited men at the bars and in rural areas and visited men at the local kraals (Kgotla's)

In rural areas, it became imperative to use face to face interviews with the older generation who could not have time to fill in forms or could not read and write.

#### Summary to question no 1.1.

The distribution was done in the same category in both the urban and rural areas and the results showed that older men in urban areas were slightly above their counter parts in the rural

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<sup>5</sup> While North West Province was not originally included in the areas to be interviewed, it became clear right from the beginning of interviews that the research will not be complete without the opinion of the people from the rural areas where the majority of people in the Roodepoort – Krugersdorp, including the adjacent townships of Soweto and Kagiso came from.

areas whereas younger generation showed a steep difference between young men in the rural areas and those in the urban areas.

65% of men interviewed, i.e. 26 men living and working in the urban areas but of rural origin, strongly believe a man's role as the head of the family is a God created position right from the beginning. This thinking is comparable with that of men who are still living in the rural areas. The older men, 50+ year olds are very strong about the opinion that men should be leaders, not only in their families but in the nation as a whole. Man has been given the leadership role both in the community and in the family.

There is a Tswana expression that says, "Tsa etelelwa pele ke e namagadi tsa wela ka lengope." This is translated "When the cattle is lead by a female one, they will fall into the ditch" They strongly believe that the western civilisation had tampered with the African culture and gave women more powers over men. They strongly believe that the new government has been very quick to appease women by giving them (women) positions that are much stronger than men. The old government recognised this role and ensured that men earned a higher salary that kept him to be a leader.

Men further argue that a man's authority in the family and in the nation used to be gauged by the wealth he had. This included livestock and a number of women and children. This did not only

give man authority over his family but over the whole community and nation and such a man was respected and feared by everybody. If you had no wealth you were not respected, even in tribal courts your case would never be taken serious. To support this view, men quote the book of Job in the Old Testament: Job 1:1 – 5 and 2:9. When Job was a rich man everybody in the family and community respected him. His house was full all the time and he had parties. But when his fortunes tumbled, i.e. when he lost the economic power in his own family, everybody disappeared and his own wife and servants stopped respecting him. Men therefore argue that this problem is not new. They argue that, what is happening in South Africa today is what has happened in the past and will continue even in future. A man is judged by what he has.

Men in this category lament the fact that the new government has abandoned them and decided to promote women at their expense. They question the honesty and integrity of the current President who seem to be keen to promote women when his time to retire from government is about to happen. Why didn't he do it right from the beginning of his leadership?

A younger and progressive generation see things differently though. Especially in the urban areas where this research was done, many of them have not been to the rural areas and do not even in-depth cultural knowledge. They grew up in the cities and therefore have been influenced by the Western culture. The majority of these categories are graduates who have stable and

good paying jobs. They are married to independent women who earn good salaries. They argue that life is about sharing responsibilities and therefore do not see any threat from a woman who is independent and earning a higher salary. This can be seen in the number of marriages that are contracted in the ante nuptial contracts. In this situation every partner has his/her own share and therefore there is no room for stress. If the other party falls down it is his/her own problem and will be at the mercy of the other partner and cannot blame him/her.

**Summary of question :1.2.**

Answers from the older generation do not drift away from the responses as reflected in the above question. 22 of the answers, representing 55%, feel that the loss of economic power to women is problematic to men. While they agree that not all women are revengeful when they have economic power in the family, the situation reduces a man to a child in the family. Culture dictates that a man should guide the family and lay down family rules but when you are a beggar, you cannot dictate any rules. Therefore the majority of the older generation find it very difficult to exist in such a family though they agree that the older generation of women still regard marriage as an important and sacred cultural heritage and to them the respect to a man is not based on economy. Even if the wife is sympathetic, they argue, the community or nation will not be. Other men will start calling you by names to indicate that you are no longer a man.

Three men from the older generation, making 7.5% of the respondents, argue that the situation depends on how the marriage was built from the beginning. If both parties understood the vows taken at the time of marriage, losing economic power should not be a problem. If both partners can remember that they vowed that “through thick and thin they would stand together, respect in both partners will continue and there will be no difference”. The situation becomes difficult if partners did not build a sound relationship in their marriage from the beginning. They therefore do not see any difficulty in doing so.

Though a number of younger generation who are independent, does not see this as a problem as long as the two are working and have good relationship. The problem comes when a man loses not only the economic power but a job as well. Younger women cannot wait for someone who is seen to be a burden and will quickly takes off. Therefore this threat is more serious for the younger generation than the older ones.

### **Summary to Question: 1.3**

The responses from young men indicate that Gender Equality is not a problem for them, but to the older generation, most of them in the lower class category and have strong rural background, feel Gender Equality is a problem to men. The younger men most of whom have a tertiary education have been involved or at least, have been aware of the debates around gender issues. One of them

said: *“gender equality is not about men losing the power they have in the family but recognition and enhancement of the gifts the other partner in the family has. It is about developing responsibilities to exercise equal rights in the family. Material dependency, which was the basis for a family in the past, is no longer an issue.”*

**Summary to question 1.4.**

The answer for those who support the idea of gender equality is that, yes, the wife's higher salary is not just a relief but a support to the family.

**Summary to question 1.5.**

Yes, extra income in the family implies that the family will have enough cash to use. They will be able to take their children to better education, have a better home and enough money to plan for the future. They stress that the important issue in this case is mutual relationship.

- A questionnaire specifically aimed at collecting data from women - 32 questionnaires were distributed to women in the urban areas. The distribution was carefully made to include both the older and the new generations in order to gauge their pattern of response. Of these 29 were returned, which makes it 90.6% and of the remaining three questionnaires, one never came back and the other two respondents preferred to give



verbal response due to pressure of work. 22 questionnaires were distributed to women in the rural areas of North West Province, in the districts of Swartruggens, Zeerust and Rustenburg 16 questionnaires were returned, 72.7% and due to time factor, the researcher was unable to follow up on the defaulters.

The pattern of answers to this question is almost the same as those given for the above question though women seem to be stronger than men in articulating their position. Women in the urban and rural areas, irrespective of the age group, feel that men are subject to their own inner built perceptions fuelled by the traditional believe of the roles of both the sexes. While culture dictates that men are the heads of the families and should provide for the families, women have shown greater responsibility when it comes to heading of families. They argue that, most men when they lose their jobs, as it has been the case since the mid eighties when the pressure for disinvestment in South Africa increased, which culminated into massive retrenchments and closure of industries, became traumatised and lost hope of life.

### **Summary to question no 1.1.**

The majority of women from the urban areas responded that the concept of leadership as contained in Paul's letters is not African. It is a Jewish concept of a woman status. Paul advised that women should submit to their husbands like they would do to their Lord. This should be understood in its context. In both Ephesians 5:23 –

31 and Colossians 3:18 – 35, Paul encourages women to submit to their husbands but in both the cases, Paul also brings about a very important role of a husband, “love your wives” (Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly, and gave himself up for it;)<sup>6</sup> Paul speaks of love that has sacrifices just like Jesus who sacrificed his life for his followers.

Women argue that marriage is not about material or economic power but about love. If both partners married for love and not material support, when things turn bad, this will not be a problem as love will take over. It is not true that a man should lose his status in the family because of material issues. In a true African culture, women respect their husbands irrespective of what they have. In fact many women would like to get married to a man who is not rich so that both can build up a family together.

However, some women do agree that African culture put tremendous pressure on both men and women when it comes to marriage. A lot of women would prefer to marry a rich man than a poor one for security. That is the reason why many women end up in abusive relationship. They are seen to be gold diggers who are after men's wealth. In some cases men can even go to an extent of pretending to be rich in order to attract a woman and once they are married she discovers that the wealth that attracted her was in fact a borrowed wealth.

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<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 5:25

The pre-colonial era dictated that women stay home and look after the house and children when men went out to look for livelihood for the family. Both performed two very important roles that complimented each other.

**Summary of question: 1.2.**

The answer to this question is partly answered by the responses as summarised in the above question. If the centre of marriage has been true “love” and material attraction, the status of man in the family will continue to be the same. Nothing will change it. Women feel it is their role to embrace such a person and to show love to him. One woman reminded the researcher that at the alter when they married, the couple took vow that “Through thick and thin they will stick together.” A woman, who runs away from the marriage when the man loses economic power, is a woman who did not understand why she was in marriage in the first place. Women agree that this situation create tremendous problems for many marriages but women understand that it is not a self-induced condition; they will ensure that their husbands get counselling during this time. If possible they will seek professional help for them. One woman indicated that when she experienced the same problem, she arranged that her husband enrolls for studies while still looking for a job and this paid dividends. Instead of him moaning about his unemployed situation, he spent more time studying and at the end of the studies he managed to get a better job.

**Summary to Question: 1.3**

Women in general hail the establishment recognition of the Gender Equality. It has been put into place at the right time when the rights of women were being abused. Women indicated that violence against them has escalated and many of them have been forced by legal systems to remain in abusive marriages. They needed a man for protection but this has been abused by many men. Gender Equality has opened opportunities for women to be able to do things on their without reliance on men. Women believe that Gender Equality is not about men but about recognition that all human beings were created equal in the image of God. Women also recognise the establishment of the Gender Commission which is a platform for women to articulate their issues and make sure that their rights are protected. The introduction of tougher measures to ensure compliance with the Bill of Rights and women's rights in general is seen as a step forward to the new South Africa. Children who were disadvantaged by the old system can now access maintenance grants from their fathers and therefore can also get education and other necessities of life. Women recognise the fact that Gender Commission and Gender equality is not biased to men but that it also protects them. One woman quoted the case of one the popular musician and poet who has instituted maintenance claim against his wife after divorce. The laws of the country do allow that a male spouse can claim maintenance from his divorced wife if he has evidence that she is able to do so and he is unemployed or earn very little that he cannot survive on his salary, especially if he has custody of children. The case as mentioned if

won will prove that Gender equality process is indeed a reality on the country.

**Summary to question: 1.4.**

Women agree that her higher salary is a blessing to the family. In the African context, women are the ones who know what is happening in the house and therefore if they have enough cash, they are able to make sure that important accounts are paid on time and that the family lives comfortably. Extra income will allow the family to even go on holiday to ease stress in the family. The spouse's lower salary does not mean he has lost his status as fathering the family. One woman said she had the same problem and she insisted that they have a joint bank account in which the two salaries would be deposited at the end of the month. This helped to ease tension as the account always reflected one figure at the end of the month rather than individual persons and it was jointly administered.

**Summary to question: 1.5.**

The demands of the modern life are that there is always a need for extra cash. The current economic situation demands too much cash and if the wife salary is higher, this will mean less stress in the family. For women wealth cannot be translated into power as men take it. They will be able to take their children to better education, have a better home and enough money to plan for the future. They stress that the important issue in this case is mutual relationship.

## **Summary to question 1.6.**

In a case where a husband earns very little money women interviewed responded by saying it will be very helpful in this situation that the couple agree on financial responsibilities in the family. Where possible, ensure that the wife, with a higher salary, take more responsibility and that the husband less. It will be dehumanising to such a husband to continue asking for money when you know he earns little. The problem is that, men will be afraid to show that they are unable to give money and they will give everything and in turn fall into depression.

- A questionnaire aimed at the collection of data from the pastors and elders who interact with both the sexes during their work in the parishes - 26 questionnaires were distributed in four parishes in the area under research, i.e. 7 parish pastors of three different denominations, and 19 elders from 6 different denominations. All the seven pastors returned the completed forms making it 100%, whereas 18 completed forms from the elders in the six denominations were returned, that is, 94.7%.

In general responses from the Church indicate that the level of family problems is growing. The report of spousal abuse due to stressful men indicates that the loss of status in the family by men is a major problem. The high rate of divorce can be traced to the problems related to loss of economic power. Instead of men seeking professional counselling when they

find themselves in difficult situations, they opt for drinking heavily to try to avoid the reality of their situation and this in turn brings stress in the family.

However, the Church also admits that there are clear cases of spousal abuse by some women who find themselves on the chairperson's chair in the family. They abuse their spouses, call them names and go to an extent of influencing children to stop respecting their fathers.

- A questionnaire aimed at the collection of data from local police members, including police for – 30 questionnaires were distributed at the two main police stations of Roodepoort and Dobsonville and only 11 were returned, representing 36.6%. No questionnaire was distributed in the rural areas. Police claimed to have no time to sit down and complete the questionnaires as they were too busy and at the end of the day feel too tired to do any other job. However, 3 of them later agreed to have personal interviews.

The summary of respondents indicated that cases being referred to police on family violence have escalated seriously since the mid 90's. Most of the cases are related to spouse and children abuse. Cases of suicide have also increased as men would rather face death than a situation where you have no economic say in the family.

## **SOME OF THE ISSUES FROM OPEN DISCUSSIONS:**

- Men are what they are because of the societal prescription. Society expects a man to be successful; you have to marry and have a family and provide for them. Failure to fulfil this renders you useless and a failure.
- The African Society/community and not individuals set roles and rules; people used to live as part of the community and therefore whatever they did was part of the community. In this arrangement, there was no room for spousal abuse. A man knew he was accountable, not only to his immediate family, but to the community as a whole.
- A prominent medical Doctor, who spent most of his time as a physician for the National soccer team, in an interview broadcast by the SABC Africa, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2008<sup>7</sup>, at 03:00, added his voice to these discussions and said: *“This problem affects mostly black men than any other race due to economic situation. The majority of men who are experiencing this trauma are those who are in the lower class. Those in the middle class do not feel the difference even if their wives earn higher salaries.”* This statement was corroborated by one of the respondents to the questionnaire who said: “If my wife who is a CEO of a known company earns R100 000 per month and I as a General Manager of a company earns R70 000, 00, what difference can this make? But for a teacher who earns a

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<sup>7</sup> The SABC Channel Africa broadcast a debate on the issue of gender with particular emphasis on the role of men in the current situation.



gross salary of R7 500, 00 with a Bachelor's degree and his wife a Rep of renown company and earns R30 000 per month there is a real problem.

- The current economic set up has broken family life. Parents are forced to spend more time away from home at work and children are left on their own. The working mother and father have not time to develop children into his/her cultural norms and values. In the urban areas especially, the extended family is no longer in existence and there are no grand parents who could look after the children while their parents are at work. Children pick up foreign values and norms in the streets and at school. Therefore people who grow up in these situations do not know their cultural background, values and norms. In extreme cases not even their language.
- Moving away from the rural communities into cities has created individual family systems. The culture of family come-together is no longer in existence and such a family exists on its own. In suburban family life, you do not even know who your next door neighbour is. You meet at the gate and just exchange greetings and nothing more.
- Very important cultural institutions such as initiation schools were demonized by the western civilization. Only the bad side of this cultural institution was highlighted, i.e. the cutting of the foreskin and mutilation of the women's private parts. Initiation was more than these. Young men and women were

taught cultural values including how to engage a woman into love relationship, how to look after the woman and the family. At the same time young women were taught how to love a man and look after a family.

- For women, the most important issue is how men understand relationship and love. Love is not about material needs but sharing life together. If a couple could understand this from the beginning, the difference in earnings will not be a problem. A clever family is that, from the onset, ensure that the family is a true single unit. All family accounts and transactions are combined and used collectively. In case where there is a problem, the family will still continue to function as a unit and not individual. Most of the marriages are in community of property.
- Men should accept that there is change and therefore should be ready to go with changes. The mind set that says a man is head should be changed to understanding that a head can not exist on its own. One man quoted Paul in 1Corinthians 12:12 – 17. A family is not a one person unit but consists of several members who are equally important; the husband, the wife and children. All perform different roles to make up one family unit.

While the research was being conducted in South Africa and in the West Rand in particular, the researcher took the advantage of

his work to extent interviews of men and women in other countries in the SADC region where the researcher's work . The striking similarities of responses have been observed with Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Women in these countries seem to be more liberal than in Malawi. The latter country still reflects a high degree of patriarchy and even in most of the mainline Churches, e.g. the Lutheran, Anglican and the Presbyterian Churches the ordination of women is still a major problem. So far the Lutheran Church is still to ordain its first female pastor. The pressure is becoming heavier on the Church Leadership from the Lutheran community both in the SADC region and world-wide. Malawi comes from a tradition set by the late dictator, Hudson Banda where the inferior position of women was made very clear.

## **5.2. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

At the end of this study, one is able to admit that the situation in South Africa has changed too fast for men to be able to cope. While there are indications that patriarchy was not intended to be what it developed to be, there are clear indications that discrimination against women was supported by the legislations of the past regime. The constitutional reform that came about as a result of the new dispensation ensured that all forms of discrimination were removed from the constitution and therefore opened opportunities for women to develop. This development included access to

economic benefits, improved remunerations for women and opportunities to self development such as higher education.

Unfortunately, these developments occurred at the same time when the economy of the country suffered serious decline due to factors beyond the country's powers such as the escalating international oil price and other commodities. These issues hampered the economic reforms which would have created jobs and ensured that the transitional changes were not harsh on men.

The decision by the Public Service Commission to push gender equality in government senior management to 50% implies that men who are currently searching for jobs in that category are likely not to get them as priority is now given to women.

The flood of influx of economic migrants, which included highly skilled people from the African countries have also exerted more pressure on local men. South African men, who are products of the apartheid educational system, were not prepared to compete with their African counterparts, who were prepared by their countries' Educational system, to develop life skills and not to become good employees. This can be observed these days with the explosion of the xenophobic attacks on foreigners. It has been reported that ,at one stage the entire shift of the engineers at the Hwange Power station in Zimbabwe left their job and went to join

ESCOM in South Africa, leaving the power station with only the manager. While all these vacancies were open in South Africa for South Africans, there were qualified engineers to fill them and since Zimbabwe had trained engineers, it was easy for them to come and occupy the posts.

The high incidences of social related illnesses such as stress, depression, trauma, high blood pressure, heart related diseases and suicides are the clear signs of the sickness in our society.

The gender equality and all related laws are seen by men as ploys by the government to further humiliate men. Besides the loss of economic power in the family, men believe that gender equality has also made them to loose the authority to govern over their families. In some cases minor family squabbles are reported to the police and men are arrested for that. In the current situation, it is not only the wife who is expected to report cases of abuse; the neighbour can do it if he/she suspects that something wrong in the family next door is happening. As a result men are living with fear that they can be arrested. Some men tell stories where they are taunted by wives to provoke them into beating them so that they can report them to the police.

However, on a positive note, a lot of men support the protection of women and children who fall victim to abusive men. While the world is putting the whole blame for abuse of

women on patriarchy, the forefathers of patriarchy argue that the African culture never allowed this and point to the western civilization for this problem. They argue that the African culture had clearly defined the roles of men and women and there was no competition. They further argue that Gender Equality is a western ideology just like colonialism.

### **5.3. PROPOSED THERAPEUTIC STRATEGY FOR THE CHURCHES**

#### **5.3.1. Acceptance of the situation of men:**

- The beginning of the therapeutic process should be an open and welcoming acceptance that men have a problem. The society, Church and the government should be seen to be sympathetic to the problems men are facing due to the changes taking place in the country. While the intention to close the gap between men and women were genuine, men feel these have been extremely quick, and that the society put heavy blame on men for the imbalances of the past.
- Unlike many African countries, the education of a girl child in South Africa was not restricted. Many girls managed to obtain education even though the apartheid laws discriminated against them and could not get the jobs or get paid according to their qualifications. Now that this system has been

changed, more women get access to good paying jobs and dependency on men's salaries has been eliminated.

- The current middle age men in South Africa, (Between the ages of 35 – 55 years) are the direct products of the apartheid system and therefore many of them have the type of education that only help them to become good employees than people who can make life for themselves. These are men who have to cling to the type of jobs they have because if they loose them, chances of getting new jobs are very limited.
- Indications are that in most job adverts, the first priority is given to women. If and when five people are called for interview, and a ratio is three men to two women, chances of men getting the job are limited. As indicated earlier in the research, all efforts are being made to close the gap between men and women, particularly in the senior management positions in the public service. The Minister of Public Service, Mrs Fraser-Moleketi, was quoted by the media recently as saying the Ministry is viewing the failure of Directors to fill the gap in a very serious light and are prepared to ensure that the 50% target is reached.

- Jobs that were traditionally reserved for men are now open to women, e.g. truck driving and even working underground in the mines.

### **5.3.2. Creation of the caring communities:**

One of the problems facing men is that very few men belong to communities where they can be part of and get support when life becomes difficult.

The other problem is that men have a tendency of isolating themselves from society once they become traumatized or depressed. The isolation is caused by the fact that society does not expect a man to be traumatized and when it is discovered that a man is suffering from depression, especially if it is family related, the society look at such a man as a weakling. Therefore men will not want to share their frustrations; they would rather get into isolation, suffer alone and eventually commit suicide.

Ed Wimberly (1999), talks about “The caring community”. He says, “Caring community has its central task – the guidance and nurture of persons into their full development as human beings.” It has to be firmly grounded in a spiritual or faith tradition and it has to have an abundance of active symbols that impact persons’ lives.



Our Churches should create such caring communities for men to have a home where they can express their frustrations without fear of being ridiculed. Most of the mainline Churches have men's guilds that create a platform for men to come together. While in some Churches this is a platform where wounded men can come and heal their wounds, the majority of the men's guilds are nothing but a fund-raising mechanism for the Church. More time is spent on Church fund-raising projects and very little time is devoted to dealing with social issues. At a Synod of a Diocese in Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa recently, the report of the Men's League indicated that Moral Regeneration, with particular emphasis on family, was had been their theme for the past two years (A period after the last synod) yet their report indicates that 90% of time was spent on fund raising activities to help the Diocese raise funds for the renovation of the Diocesan Office and farewell function for the Bishop. Nothing is mentioned about real activities on Moral Regeneration. A sister Diocese also had the Men's league re-fence the Diocesan Centre and very little activities on other issues.

The escalating economic woes due to increasing prices of petrol, the interest rates, and food are increasing stress on men who are already suffering

from the general pressure from society as indicated in this study.

It is therefore very important that men have a safe place where they can relate their problems without fear of harassment. The Church is capable of creating such. Being human means being virtually connected to a caring community. The concept of “Ubuntu” “You are because I am” comes into picture again at this point. In the African context, no human being is an island. We belong to one another and in times of trouble we need other human beings. We need to accept that the process of urbanization and the western civilization destroyed our cultural values and norms and people live individual lives. There are no more family structures that embrace the wounded members. As expressed in the very first paragraph of this study, men have no homes where they can sit together and discuss their problems and the war against patriarchy seems to worsen this situation. While people prefer to live individual life in urban areas, the Church is the place where people meet. In fact it is a second family for most of the people. South Africa is a country with a percentage of Christians.

The conversations in the caring community should reflect the fundamental value and universal worth of all the people. In caring communities, relationships

and relationship building are primary.

Commodification of persons is discouraged.

### 5.3.3. **Counselling to develop positive conversations:**

Again here, Ed Wimberly (1999) has a powerful tool that he uses to describe how people internalise issues into their lives and these in turn shape the future of the people. He deliberates on the issue of “conversations.” He says: “We grow and develop and interpret life through internalizing conversations – within the variety of contexts i.e. home, school, work, church, peer groups and play”.

Ed continues to say, “There are families-of-origin conversations that result from our “**membership**” in families. There are cohort conversations or same generation conversations with peers. There are faith conversations that take place within the Church that are multi-generational.” Therefore the African men have internalized the conversations that men are powerful over women and therefore should become heads of the families. They have also internalised the conversations that if you loose economic power in the family, you loose your status as a man in the family. These conversations have been spread and decentralised into society and therefore men become

disorientated when they find themselves as under dogs.

Therefore counselling should provide the space for examining the negative conversations that men have internalized. It is about facilitating the privilege of positive conversations so that one can move forward in one's life and vocation.

Counselling should be a process of articulating current stories and conversations that go into making up the counselee's stories, assessing their stories and its impact on their life, and deciding to re-author or re-edit the story conversations.

There are negative and positive conversations e.g. In Clifford the negative conversation is that which led him into life circumstances that his life-esteem and curtailed his growth. He looked at himself as a useless being that is not liked by other human beings, including his own immediate family. He succumbed to the conversations that he was not like other fellow human beings and therefore chose the life that was not the same as that of other fellow human beings and got deep into substance abuse which destroyed his life and ended in prison.

The reason why men exclude themselves from society and end up committing suicide once they get

depressed is that, like Clifford, they look at themselves and see something different from real men; men who have economic power and authority over their families. They see themselves as absolute failures and do not see any reason to exist.

But while in prison Clifford was brought back to the “Positive conversation” – the conversations he had internalised as a young boy in his family. The mere sight of the book he was familiar with as a young boy, in his family, brought back the positive conversations of his youthful days. It helped to rekindle his life-esteem and enhanced his capacity for growth into the image of God (imago Dei) human striving for meaning is never fully satisfied with negative conversations. Negative stories always impoverish the person Positive stories enrich the person.

In our African life, there are positive and negative conversations that have been part of our history. As described earlier, men used to have conversations in the “traditional kraals, the lekgotla’s” Young men were groomed into positive conversations of life. They were taught responsibilities as men and groomed into responsible men.

At the same time there were negative conversations that also existed within society. The conversations that told men they were superior to women and therefore

should maintain such attitude. Conversations such as: If you are a man, you should beat up your wife even if she did nothing wrong. This will make her know that you are in control and she will respect you.

Surprisingly, there are also negative conversations from women that say, a loving man is the one who beats up his wife. If a man does not beat a wife who makes silly mistakes, it means he does not care or love her anymore. He does not want to correct her, for this reasoning, beating is a correctional measure. Is this fear or what?

We can recall some of the old stories that the patriarchs used to guide young and up-coming men. The story of two neighbours who went to drink and returned home drunk. The other one advised his friend that every time he arrives home his wife must jump and greet him and give him food, otherwise he hits her hard. To prove this to his friend, there will be a noise at his home when the two men arrive home from drinking and the beating and screaming of the wife would be heard and he would join the party by beating his own wife. In the morning the friend's wife comes out intact with no marks of beating but his own wife bruised and bleeding. The friend discovered very late that in fact his friend beat up the dried ox skin and his wife made artificial screams.

## **SACRED IDENTITY FORMATION**

Ed Wimberly (1999) says: “We become persons by internalising conversation in which we take part. We become Holy persons by giving conversations with God, a privilege status over all other conversation. God is present in my struggle with life and death concerns I can depend on God to be present in both the suffering and pain of the recovery process and in the transactions from life to death.

The reason why there are so many so many suicides is because when people get depressed they no longer feel God’s presence in their lives. They become empty and the reason for living is no longer there. They feel worthless.

Ed continues: “I can trust God because God sees me as a person endowed with value and worth. God loves me enough to help me see myself as a person worthy of God’s valuation. Sacred identity formation; something that God does partnering with. The way we are led by God to sort through a variety of cultural conversations about human worth and value until we can prioritize God’s conversation the way Job did. Our faith community assists in the process of sacred identification formation.”

## **EXTERNALIZATION AND POSITIVE DECONSTRUCTION:**

Ed Wimberly (1999) describes externalization process as the decision to face the pain caused by privileging negative stories and conversations in life. It refers to the process of reflection that helps persons to reflect on ways their recruitment took place and the impact that the recruitment has on the growth and development. It is the process to lessen the impact of negative conversations and to promote more positive conversations, through exploring one's recruitment.

Men in South Africa need to be helped to externalize the conversation that they had internalised through the patriarchy. If they are helped to understand that loosing economic power does not reduce a person to sub-human level, they will be helped to start looking at life positively and contribute positively both in the family and society. The ego looking directly at the conversation basic of one's personality. It assures psychological or ego strength and a desire to grow. It comes when person realizes that his or her life, up to that point, has been lived trying to avoid internal pain. It involves one writing his own biography, writing gives one a chance to review. Negative conversations with others affect our conversations with God.

### **5.3.4. Creation of men's organizations in society:**



Finally, it is important to call upon Churches, government and NGO's to seriously look into the issue of the formation of organizations where men can come together and discuss issues relating to their lives. At the moment there are very such organizations and the majority of men do not have access to them. The only organization that was established a few years ago, the South African Men's Forum, should be used as a spring board to create home for men. The forum is experiencing some problems though. Mr Mbuyisa Botha, the Secretary General of the organisation, in his report to the Member of Parliament highlighted the successes and failures. Some of the failures included lack of support from both religious leaders and resistance from the traditional leadership. He highlighted the success story of the Mpumalanga Boys camp. He said that the camp was able to help boys with skills to cope with change and challenges. A number of new men's forums are starting to come up, especially to fight the HIV and AIDS as well as violence against women. A very rural village in North West, Mabieskraal, will be launching a Men's forum in July to address the issues raised above. A very interesting online Men's forum for Lesotho create a platform for men to discuss issues affecting men online, (AllAfrica.com) Such organizations should be able to work on the empowerment of men as well.

### **5.3.5. Involvement of men in the counselling process:**

The therapeutic process will not be complete unless men are directly involved in the whole process. Men will continue to see the process of gender equality as a move to disadvantage them if the process excludes them. Unless the tone of accusation of men is lowered, men will continue to believe that gender equality process is nothing but an onslaught on them. It will also be very helpful if the concept “Gender Equality” is clearly defined to include both sexes and in all meetings discussing issues of gender all efforts be made to balance the participation in the debates. The LWF seminar on “Gender equality” that was held in November 2007 in Kempton Park, indicated that there is still a thinking that gender is all about women. The ratio of participation between men and women was not comparable, it was 80% female and men who were present felt misplaced.

*Rev Bafana Khumalo, (2005:), argues that “Men can and should play a role in the quest for gender equality. I submit that the struggle for gender equality is key to the success of our vision for a vibrant democratic society. In the last decade, much of the work in which we have all been engaged, focused on women’s empowerment. While this was vital, it is my humble submission that perhaps the time has come that we, as*

*gender activists, need to broaden the base by targeting men to be part of the struggle for gender equality.*

*There are many others who also assert that the scourge of gender violence cannot be dealt with adequately if the perpetrators of such heinous crimes are not part of the process that seeks to eliminate this crime from our society.” While I do not agree wholly with the harsh language Rev Bafana uses to describe men, e.g.*

**“perpetrators of such heinous crimes”** I do assert that the whole process will be futile if men are continuously seen to be perpetrators and not victims of the history or culture.

#### **5.3.6. Creating platforms to discuss**

Churches should be encouraged to set up mentoring programmes for both young men and women. As mentioned earlier in this research, those cultural institutions such as initiation schools were labelled barbaric by the western civilization but there was nothing put in their place to nurture the young and growing youth. The researcher therefore wants to suggest that the following be done by the Churches:

##### **Confirmation Classes:**

The confirmation class should incorporate life skills to include issues of relationships and how to relate to

opposite sex. It should be able to nurture young people to understand relationship as they grow so that they understand what is expected from people who decide to engage in a relationship. It is one of the challenging issues in Christian family to talk to young people about sex and children learn this from friends and media. The Church can play a very important role by engaging the confirmation class children in these issues. The HIV and Aids scourge compels all sectors of community to engage young people in the education about proper sexual behaviour. This implies to the group that will be discussed below.

### **Youth Programmes:**

Almost all Churches have youth programmes that could be enhanced to include programmes to guide the young people. The youth at this stage are exposed to many things and are at the experimenting stage. Our entertainment media such as the Television, computers – internet and cellular phones expose youth to things that are detrimental to their situation.

### **Scouts and Girl Guides in High Schools:**

These were some of the programmes that were in place during the 1960's but were discontinued in the 1970's when the students started to question some of the policies in the education including language.

These were replaced by youth programmes that were intended to brain wash students into accepting the apartheid education.

Some of the values of the scouts and girl guides were the discipline they instilled in young people. These could still be used and help to build our youth.

#### **5.3.7. Incorporating cultural values in counselling:**

It will be unfortunate if the valuable heritage that the African community had inherited from the patriarchal system could be poured down the drain together with all what is seen to be negative. While patriarchy is being blamed for all the wrong things and in particular, oppression of women, it is not every aspect of it that is evil or heinous as Rev Khumalo (2005 :) describes it.

Peter Kanyandago (2005 pg 63) says: *“Theologically it can be stated emphatically that an African cannot be an authentic Christian without affirming his/her African heritage. The African personality in him/her is the raw material of the transformation action of the Spirit.”* He continues: *It is sometimes disheartening however, that at the time when people of various cultures throughout the world are looking and fighting for their own identities, some ‘experts’ including well-intentioned Africans and ‘Africanists’ claim that it is no longer*

*possible to speak of an African Culture.” He concludes by saying: “Such detractors suggest that all Africans have been swallowed up in the technological and industrial cultures which have acquired some kind of universality.”*

The falling apart of the family systems which kept people together and held everybody accountable, the closure of the initiation schools and many cultural institutions led to the individualized society and family structures. A number of these institutions could still be rehabilitated and help to address the situation of the African men.

Nick Pollard (1997) strengthens this idea in his theory of ‘Positive Deconstruction’. Nick Pollard says: “the process of positive deconstruction involves four elements: identifying the underlying worldview, analysing it, affirming the elements of truth which it contains, and, finally, discovering its errors.” In this case, the underlying worldview is that, “African culture believe that men are superior to women and they should be heads of the families”

According to him, positive deconstruction occurs when someone dismantles issues, to examine them more closely, identify parts that need to be replaced and re-use those that are still in good shape. Nick

Pollard uses an example of a motor mechanic who dismantles an engine of a car to rebuild it again. He examines every part to see if it can still be useful before throwing it away. The parts that are damaged or bad are discarded while those that can still be used are cleaned and used again. Patriarchy should be positively deconstructed, studied and all the good elements identified and improved or reshaped. Those that are not good for the process of life discarded.

This process should be done by both men and women. No doubt, patriarchy is the major problem that the modern society is vigorously struggling with, yet, according to the patriarchs themselves; there were good intentions and good elements of culture from the beginning. Therefore society needs to examine this system positively in order to help both men and women to understand it. The African society will make a big mistake to think that there is nothing good that the African culture can do to contribute to the modern life.

#### **5.4. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION:**

This chapter dealt with the last part of the research, the summary of the findings i.e. it summarised the answers from the respondents, made findings and conclusions. Then the chapter ended with the proposed therapeutic steps that the

church and society could implement to address the situation of traumatised and depressed men.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **6.1. APPENCIES:**

#### **6.2.1. SURVEY ON THE SITUATION OF MEN WHO LOOSE ECONOMIC POWER IN THE FAMILY**

For decades, men in South Africa and many African countries have enjoyed the role of being the main provider and protector of the family. The concept, **“head of the family”** implied a lot in terms of playing a leading role in the family. A man literally became the main provider of the family while the woman played a homemaker and supportive role. She looked after the family and raised children.

Since the new dispensation in South Africa, the economic situation of women has improved tremendously. The campaign for the equality through the Gender Equality process and the Feminine Theology has seen many women coming out of the oppression of economy and climbing the ladders of prosperity and better live. On the hand, the policy of gender equality seems to have negative effects on the lives of men who had the privilege of having better salaries and enjoying the economic authority and being the major breadwinners in the family. Before this, many women's salaries were just an augmentation of the husband's salary and most of the financial transactions in the family

were done in the name of the husband. Women could not buy on credit without the authorization of the husbands. With the new dispensation, all those barriers have been removed and women have been empowered.

Once men lose their jobs or discover that their wives are earning far more than they do, they get depressed and their lives deteriorate hopelessly. They become alcoholics and sometimes take their own lives or decide to wipe out the whole family.

This situation does not only confine itself to married couples, but to single men as well, especially the young ones. Many young women have the opportunity of going through tertiary education and are therefore earning better salaries and can afford to buy houses and cars independently from male counterparts. They do not need the security and comfort of men and can live on their own.

As this phenomenon is fast becoming a reality in the country, the researcher aims to study it further, to see how prevalent it is and work with men to make them aware of it and to find ways of accepting it as a reality. The researcher will further work with the Church to help to develop counselling strategies for the affected men



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- 1.5. If the spouse can contribute more, there will be enough cash to address other expenses. Do you regard this statement as factual?

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- 1.6. If you have to ask for money from your spouse when you know he earns less than you do, would you feel free to do so?

1.2. The African culture has always regarded man as the head of the family; this concept is supported by the Holy Scriptures, especially Paul the apostle. A man is seen to be in authority when he is able to provide and protect the family. Do you have a feeling that a man who is no longer having economic power can still play this role?

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- 1.9. If the spouse can contribute more, there will be enough cash to address other expenses. Do you regard this statement as factual?

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- 1.10. If your spouse will have to ask for money from you knowing that you earn less than you her, would you feel free to do so?

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<sup>i</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, The Bill of rights Article 9: paragraph 3