

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background and need for the study

Enough ink has been spilled in quarrelling over feminism, and perhaps we should say no more about it. It is still talked about, however, for the voluminous nonsense uttered during the last century seems to have done little to illuminate the problem (De Beauvoir 1972:13).

Many of the issues raised by feminism have not been resolved. French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray (1993:5) describes the problems surrounding sex differences and relations as the issue of the current age. The continuing topicality of feminism is evident in the new streams of enquiry it has birthed, most notably Queer Studies and Masculinity Studies, both concerned with “the problem”, as Simone De Beauvoir (1972:13) puts it, of gender. Since 1994 and the advent of democracy, racial and gender transformation have been on the agenda in every sphere of South African society, including the religious sphere. This study seeks to determine the way in which three contemporary Afrikaans<sup>1</sup> corporate churches<sup>2</sup> represent gender to their members and to society in general. I will also reflect on the possible implications these representations may have for post-apartheid South Africa and its official move towards racial and gender transformation and integration in the country, especially since these are highlighted in the South African constitution.

Religious traditions and practices are generally viewed as sacred by their constituents and are not easily or openly contested. Historical Christian and church imagery is believed to be instructive and prescriptive and against this background the demands contemporary church imagery makes can also be considered hegemonic, especially in their prescriptions regarding preferred Christian gender roles and types. This study addresses what Ursula King (2006) calls the mutual blindness between Gender Studies and Religious Studies by exploring, describing and analysing the representation of gender in contemporary church

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “Afrikaans” and “Afrikaner” are used in this study to refer to white Afrikaans-speakers. It is, however, acknowledged that the three churches under consideration, namely kerksondemure, Doxa Deo and Moreletapark, are open to and accepting of people of other races and speakers of other languages, although these races are not represented prominently in the visual material under analysis in this study.

<sup>2</sup> The term “corporate church” is preferred to “mega church” in this study. The term “mega church”, although preferred by the mainstream, is not frequently used in academia to define church size in South Africa, as this term is strongly associated with the large American tele-evangelical congregations. According to Dr Lourens Bosman (2009), minister at Lux Mundi congregation and occasional lecturer at the Department of Theology at the University of Pretoria, the only South African church which can be considered a mega church is the very large organisation Rhema. Dr Bosman believes that the term “corporate church” is a more suitable expression to describe the size and the nature of the three churches under consideration in this study.

imagery from a Visual Culture Studies perspective. For these purposes, a visual Barthean semiotic analysis is carried out on visual promotional material produced by three South African, Afrikaans, corporate churches. The analysis seeks to demystify and denaturalise the material's potentially mythical, ideological and hegemonic underpinnings. This study contributes to the field of Visual Culture Studies as it situates religion as part of visual cultural expression and because contemporary Christian visual culture enjoys little attention from researchers, especially in South Africa (see 1.4). Furthermore, the making and functioning of contemporary church or Christian imagery enjoys practically no attention from scholars,<sup>3</sup> which is in stark contrast with the rich tradition of investigation into religious imagery and its iconographies in Art History. This study is also particularly relevant to South African culture, and especially visual culture, owing to the central role religion has played, and perhaps still plays, in white Afrikaner identity formation.

Since the promotional material generated by churches today is generally not perceived as “high culture” but is rather thought of as mass media or “low culture”, it falls outside the conventional art historical sphere of investigation, where it traditionally received most attention. Visual Culture Studies, with its roots in Culture Studies and Art History, its broad and inclusive notion of culture (Agger 1992:2-6), and its ready investigation into everyday symbolic and expressive practices (Lister & Wells 2001:61), can comfortably accommodate the topic under discussion here. In this study, religion is believed to be a form of cultural expression (Lemon 2001:356). The visual material produced by the churches investigated in this study is, therefore, considered as cultural artefacts produced in a religious setting. Not only does the material referred to in this study constitute the visual culture of the three churches, but it also forms part of the wider phenomenon of Christian popular culture as is visible in Christian bookstores, Christian television programmes and Christian magazines. It is also interesting to look at how the so-called Christian gender representations in this study correspond to mainstream gender representation in the mass media, as is considered later in Chapters Three and Four.

This study views church imagery as powerful and in need of interrogation owing, first, to the context in which it exists. The use and circulation of images in churches afford them a certain amount of religious authority. Even the spatial arrangement of a setting such as a church imposes a certain subject position on to all those present. Similarly, the imposing

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<sup>3</sup> Related work, and one of the few in this regard, are those of David Morgan, entitled *Visual piety. A history and theory of popular religious images* (1998), *Protestants and pictures: Religion, visual culture, and the age of American mass production* (1999), as well as *The visual culture of American religions* (2001) edited by Morgan and Promey.

nature of church architecture serves as a case in point, as does the traditional pulpit-pew arrangement on the inside of the building. In this sublime and authoritative context churchgoers receive and interpret imagery from a source of spiritual superiority – the church. Such images are, therefore, genealogically connected to the idea of church images as didactic moral instruction of the illiterate masses through warning and example. As South African religious systems are mostly inherited from Europe, one could assume that this genealogy is applicable to South Africa. Churches deal in the divine and, therefore, seek reverence, not contestation. Second, I consider church images to be powerful precisely because they are created with mythical and ideological meanings in mind, albeit subconsciously, which are enforced by their context. The need for this study is further underlined by a gender audit undertaken in 2007 and 2008 by the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness, in association with the South African Council of Churches, in order to determine the status of gender transformation in South African churches.<sup>4</sup>

This study does not seek to explore the theological underpinnings of the representation of gender by the Afrikaans corporate churches in their visual material. It would be deficient, however, not to allude to the theological complexities thereof, as well as the great amount of theological research which has already been conducted on the issue of gender equality, specifically in terms of women in Christianity and in the church.<sup>5</sup> I would like to stress that the issues which underlie the research questions of this study are of a cultural and not a theological nature.

From the literature reviewed, a gap in research on the contemporary representation of gender in the church is recognised. This gap exists not only from a Visual Culture Studies perspective, but also from a theological and literary perspective, as most completed research focuses on the representation of Biblical figures by mainstream culture and representation of the gendered idea of Christ, as is further explored and contextualised in the literature review. Issues of gender in the Afrikaans church, especially beyond that which concerns the position of women and people of alternative sexualities, are also not commonly contested from inside South African theology, as is discussed below.

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<sup>4</sup> This audit formed part of a three-pronged study of gender in the church undertaken in Zambia, Malawi and South Africa, funded by Norwegian Church Aid. The South African study comprised church policy and doctrine review, and focus groups with church members and leaders (Norwegian Church Aid & Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness 2008:43-71).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Bailey (2000); Bruce (1982); Groothuis (2005a, 2005b, 2008a, 2008b); Kaiser (2005); Lemen (2004); Para-Mallam (2001); and Wright (2006). For literature on women ministers in the church see Cornell (2003); Cramer (2003); and Swain (2002).

The scope of this study comprises visual material of three Afrikaans corporate churches from 2007 to 2008 in the Pretoria-Centurion area, namely the Dutch Reformed congregation Moreletapark (hereafter referred to as “Moreletapark”), *kerksondemure*<sup>6</sup> (“church without walls”)<sup>7</sup> which was formerly known as the Dutch Reformed congregation Verwoerdburgstad) and Doxa Deo, a so-called ‘charismatic’ Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) Afrikaans church. The emphasis on the corporate church within this study is owing to the availability of researchable data. A vast amount of Afrikaans Christian congregations exist in the Pretoria-Centurion area, but many are too small in terms of members and resources to produce significant amounts of visual material for analysis. Therefore, corporate churches were selected because of their greater proliferation of visual communication.

The term “corporate church” refers to a congregation usually located in a city or large metropolitan area, which has an active membership numbering 350 to 500 or more persons, and that functions as a large organisation (Rothauge 1983:26; Oswald 1991; Mann 1998). All three of the churches considered in this study qualify as corporate churches based on their number of active members. Apart from their definitive size, corporate churches are known for their extensive programming; their small group or cell culture; their charismatic visionary head pastors; their use of corporate communication and branding strategies in order to create unity and identity in large, often fragmented congregations; as well as their command of massive resources. Employing the definition of the corporate church, as used by Arlin Rothauge (1983), Roy Oswald (1991) and Alice Mann (1998) in this study, also aids in understanding the nature of these churches. The characteristics and workings of the corporate church as manifested in Moreletapark, *kerksondemure* and Doxa Deo are described in Chapter Two.

The nature of this study is qualitative and cross-sectional and, as previously stated, it considers visual material from the three churches from 2007 to 2008. Although a longitudinal study might prove to be equally interesting, this particular cross-section is relevant in determining the contemporary representation of gender in the church. It would be equally important to enquire about the representation of gender in other denominations represented in the Pretoria-Centurion area, but such an extension to the topic is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

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<sup>6</sup> This is the church’s preferred spelling of their name – with no capital letter and the word “sonder” in italics.

<sup>7</sup> Please note that I have made all translations from Afrikaans to English in this dissertation.

Although this study investigates how gender is represented by three Afrikaans corporate churches, it focuses on the representation of men and masculinity.<sup>8</sup> In general, investigations into the representation of masculinity are scarce, especially when compared to the availability of studies on the representation of femininity, and even more so in a religious context (Conradie 2004:149). Furthermore, various studies on the topic of “women in the church” have been conducted,<sup>9</sup> also using South African data,<sup>10</sup> but the topic of “men in the church” or “men in Christianity” remains under-researched. The *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality*, established in 2007 does, however, present work on masculinity and Christianity from time to time. Only one study from South Africa dealing with masculinity in an Afrikaans church context is known to exist – Gert Cloete’s (2001) Masters dissertation, entitled: *Alternatiewe sieninge van man-wees* (Alternative views of being a man). Cloete’s dissertation investigates the influence that dominant social discourses on masculinity exercise on Dutch Reformed men’s perceptions of what it means to “be a man”. Stella Viljoen’s (2008) doctoral research entitled, *New masculinities in a vernacular culture: a comparative analysis of two South African men’s lifestyle magazines*, also deals in part with Afrikaner Christian masculinity through her investigation of the, now defunct, Afrikaans Christian magazine, *MaksiMan*. Viljoen (2011:311) believes that for the brief time that the magazine existed, “it offered a unique window onto aspects of Afrikaner Christian masculinity”.

Studies on the representation of femininity in Christianity have been relatively well researched. For example, Art History has investigated the depiction of the Virgin Mary (Miles 1992; Katz & Orsi 2001; Wright 2006), Media Studies has considered the depiction of women in religious television (Abelman 1991) and Feminist Theology has looked into the representation of women in Early Christianity (Tulloch 2004). Few studies specifically focused on the representation of contemporary Christian masculinity exist. Owing to this gap in the research, as well as the fact that gender in the church and in Christianity is quite frequently investigated from a feminist and Women’s Studies perspective, I choose to employ a slightly different focus and theoretical point of departure. This study therefore concentrates on the representation of masculinity in the church and takes its theoretical motivation from Masculinity Studies, as well as from some aspects of Feminist Theory.

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<sup>8</sup> In this study references to “men and masculinity” and “masculinity” are used interchangeably. Where representation is concerned “men” or the “male body” are considered the main carriers of masculinity. The same principle is applied to references to “women and femininity” and “femininity”.

<sup>9</sup> The focus in research on the experiences of women in the church is also a symptom of the common conflation of gender with women (Shefer, Ratele, Srebel, Shabalala & Buikema 2007:1).

<sup>10</sup> See, amongst others, Duff (2006); Holness (1997); Makoro (2007); Pieterse (2002); Ralphs and Kretzschmar (2003); Sparrow (2006); Swemmer, Kritzingger and Venter (1998); Van Helden (2002); Van Rensburg (2002); and Van Schalkwyk (2006).

With its concentration on masculinity, this study investigates the representation of masculinity in the Afrikaans corporate church according to three themes considered central to the construction of dominant heterosexual masculinity: firstly, professional occupation and leadership; secondly physical activity and adventurism; and thirdly, fatherhood. The themes of masculinity representation in this study, derived from various sources in the literature, are all considered to be markers of masculinity, as is discussed in Chapter Three, and are portrayed prominently in the visual sample obtained from the selected churches. A general theoretical background to each theme is provided in Chapter Three.

Whilst this study mainly focuses on the representation of masculinity, the representation of femininity is also considered as it relates to that of masculinity. This relationship between the representation of masculinity and the representation of femininity is explored in Chapter Four, which considers the representation of gender in the Afrikaans corporate church in a broad sense. It is recognised that breaking down the concept “gender” into simply “the masculine” and “the feminine” is highly problematic. I believe, however, that this essentialist breakdown of gender into male and female poles is appropriate in the context of this study.

## **1.2 Aims and research questions**

The aim of this study is primarily to describe and critically analyse the representation of gender in the three Afrikaans corporate churches through a Barthean visual semiotic analysis of their visual material. The representation of the masculine is focused on, but it is from contrasting the representation of both masculinity and femininity in the churches that the most significant conclusions regarding the representation of gender, especially in terms of the creation of binary oppositions, the portrayal of stereotypes and the support of essentialism, may be drawn. David Collinson and Jeff Hearn (2001:150) believe that an “analysis of men and masculinities is likely to be enhanced ... when the relation between women and femininity is acknowledged”. Masculinity and femininity should be considered in tandem in a Gender Studies investigation, as it is theoretically accepted that masculinity and femininity are constructed in relation, and often in opposition to each other, especially in the semiotic approach (Connell 2001:33). Collinson and Hearn (2001:150) warn, however, that a dedicated and nuanced focus on masculinities could become “a new, and perhaps more sophisticated means of forgetting women, of losing women from analysis and politics”. I doubt that this is the case in Masculinity Studies, as through the course of

its development, it has proved itself to be self-critical in this regard. The manner in which Masculinity Studies focuses on identifying, describing and problematising “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 2001:38) reveals its self-critical nature, as it succeeds in this area in laying bare the latent power of men. Certain scholars (e.g., Posner 1995:22; MacKinnon 2003:ix; McKay, Mikosza & Hutchins 2005:170) would also argue that it is precisely because men and masculinity are invisible and taken for granted, that men enjoy privilege and power. For these reasons, an investigation into men and masculinity is not only in order, but also necessary to the feminist agenda of destabilising patriarchy.

The practice of analysing masculinity in contrast to femininity finds application in the recent doctoral study on masculinity in South African magazine culture by Viljoen (2008) mentioned above. Her investigation is mainly concerned with masculinity, but also pays attention to how femininity is constructed, and the meaning this construction implies for masculinity in the two men’s magazines she investigates. The decision to concentrate on the representation of masculinity in my study also serves to limit the scope of this dissertation purposefully, whilst allowing a detailed analysis to take place within the chosen theoretical and methodological framework.

As previously mentioned, this study aims to draw aspects of Gender Studies and Feminist Theory, as well as Men’s and Masculinity Studies, into a South African Christian context, and to place the issue of Afrikaner identity construction’s connection to religion in the context of Visual Culture Studies. This study also, ultimately, considers the visual material of these three churches in light of a greater postmodern, global, Westernised culture within which it functions. The main research question of the study is therefore: How is gender represented in the visual material of three Afrikaans corporate churches and what meanings and implications do these representations hold for the changing society in which they function? Other research questions include:

- How does the representation of masculinity occur in the visual material of the churches according to three themes considered central to social and cultural notions of masculinity?
- How do various socially constructed myths of masculinity manifest in the themes derived from the visual data and what ideological meanings are embodied by them?
- Is gender articulated, in the visual communication under investigation, by constructing the feminine as the opposite to the masculine, and the masculine as the opposite to the feminine?

To sum up, this study aims to provide:

- an overview of the relevant literature and a description of an applicable theoretical framework from Visual Culture Studies and Gender Studies.
- a brief overview of the background of the three Afrikaans corporate churches, focusing on their history, functioning as corporate churches, men's and women's ministries and gender ideologies.
- an introduction and theorisation of the issue of the visual representation of masculinity, as well as its accompanying myths.
- an introduction and theorisation of the concept "gender and Christianity" with specific focus on "masculinity and Christianity".
- a critical visual semiotic analysis of the representation of masculinity in the visual culture of three Afrikaans corporate churches, according to three themes.
- a brief analysis of the way in which the representation of femininity is constructed in contrast to that of masculinity, and an analysis of the representation of gender in the churches in broad terms.

The analysis presented in this study seeks to uproot the mythical, ideological and hegemonic undercurrents of the representation of gender in the Afrikaans corporate church. Led by the analysis of the data and as a response to the research questions stated above, I wish to test the assumption that the selected churches represent gender in dualistic, essentialist and often stereotypical terms, and that this representation attests to the churches' participation in the biological essentialising of gender, which polarises men and women into strict binary dualisms.

### **1.3 Research methodology**

This study is conducted as a qualitative semiotic visual analysis and critique of visual material from the three Afrikaans corporate churches selected according to specific criteria, which are stated below. The research methodology firstly consists of a review of the relevant existing literature, which it draws from and seeks to build on. Secondly, an appropriate theoretical framework is constructed from the two intersecting fields in this study, namely Visual Culture Studies and Gender Studies. The theories outlined below are applied to the analysis of the study's data in Chapters Three and Four. A broad theoretical framework is discussed below, and a contextualisation of the three themes of the representation of masculinity is provided in Chapter Three. Contextualisations such as



this, as well as that of the three churches in Chapter Two, form part of a methodological strategy of incorporating an iconographical concern for context into this study – a decision which is justified in the theoretical framework below.

Thirdly, the research methodology consists of a visual semiotic analysis of the selected samples of visual material from the three churches. The three themes of masculinity are interpreted, situated in and critiqued from the existing theoretical discourse surrounding them in Chapter Three. The data collected was analysed according to Barthes's approach to visual semiotic analysis. Each visual or multi modal text collected which met the sampling criteria discussed below, was treated as a unit of analysis (Du Plooy 2009:56) and coded according to the levels of semiotic meaning discussed below in the theoretical framework. Finally, the previously formulated research questions are answered based on the semiotic analysis and tested against the theory.

A purposive availability sample (Du Plooy 2009:123) of visual material from 2007 to 2008 was drawn from the three Afrikaans churches according to the following criteria: the material must be visual communication, or multi modal texts, and must therefore contain an image or both an image and text, and the material must also contain references to gender, either in the form of depictions of male and/or female figures, or in references to masculinity and/or femininity. These sampling criteria also assist in limiting the scope of the research.

Data collection occurred along the following lines. Communication officials from the three Afrikaans churches were contacted and consulted on the availability of visual material meeting the sampling criteria. A preliminary sample was drawn of such visual material during the proposal phase in 2008 in order to determine the feasibility of this study in terms of availability and accessibility of data. The three participating churches could make data available from 2007 and 2008, which is all they had archived in some meaningful and systematic manner. From this preliminary sample I found that enough visual material which meets the sampling criteria existed and was accessible, though not without some limitations, as is discussed in Chapter Five.

As this preliminary sample was sufficient I decided to adopt it as the study's actual data sample. With the help of the communications officials at the three churches I made a review of all visual material available in order to locate all visual data which met the sampling criteria. Another reason why I decided to use the 2007-2008 sample obtained in

the proposal phase is because the churches, although co-operative, do not concentrate on lending support towards academic studies, especially ones such as a gender study that might provide critique of their practices. The preliminary sampling process alone took two months in terms of planning, preparation, arranging meetings with the churches' communications officials and execution. As the procedures followed were thorough and the sample obtained sufficient, I viewed repeating this lengthy process as an unnecessary expenditure of time. I believe this to have been a good decision, as the next step was to obtain written permission from the churches to use their visual materials, as well as their names in this dissertation and in subsequent academic publications (see Appendices 1-3). Obtaining signed permission letters from all three of the churches took a total of six months. Further sampling would thus have delayed the completion of these administrative processes, as well as this dissertation.

#### **1.4 Literature review**

Over the past two decades there appears to have been a trend in research on the representation of gender,<sup>11</sup> especially by the media (e.g., Craig 1992; Nixon 1997; Adams 2003; Foxhall & Salmon 1998; MacKinnon 2003; Schubart & Gjelsvik 2004; Prinsloo 2006). Current research on the representation of gender in the media, according to my research, focuses mainly on the following three areas, namely: film (e.g., Claydon 2005; Hunter 2005; Powrie, Davies & Babington 2004; Lauzen & Dozier 2005); the print media (e.g., Jiwani 2005); and television broadcasting, which focuses mainly on media effects (e.g., Hendriks 2002) and programme content (e.g., Cuklanz & Moort 2006; McCabe & Akass 2006; Agirre 2011).

The area of research on the representation of gender by the media in which the most exhaustive research has been conducted is that of the print media, especially in terms of gender representation in magazines (e.g., Benwell 2003; Crewe 2003; Frisby & Engstrom 2006; Laden 2001; Martinson, Hinnant & Martinson 2008; McRobbie 2000; Royo-Vela, Aldás-Manzano, Küster-Boludo & Vila-Lopez 2007; Viljoen 2008). Research on the representation of gender in magazines can be further divided into research on the representation of gender on magazine covers (Kitch 2001; Yunjuan & Xioaming 2007),

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<sup>11</sup> For example, Davis and Van Driel (2005); Lewis (1995); and Whiteley and Rycenga (2006). The representation of gender in Victorian times has also enjoyed much attention from researchers, such as Finch (1991); Kestner (1995); and Langlinais (2005).

print advertisements in magazines (Ferguson, Kreshel & Tinkham 1990; Morris 2006) and magazines for adolescent girls (Sengupta 2006; Sypeck, Gray & Ahrens 2004).

My study falls in the intersection of the abovementioned prolific research on gender representation and research on the relationship between gender and religion, in the specific area of *the representation of gender in religion*. The topic of gender and religion also seems to have undergone much scrutiny over the past decade, producing a body of research<sup>12</sup> almost equal to that of the representation of gender as such. Research on the representation of gender in religion explores this subject as it manifests in various religions, including: Islam (Hortaçsu & Ertürk 2003; Kahf 1999; Matar 1996; Moallem 2008; Dwyer, Shah & Sanghera 2008); The Church of the Latter Day Saints, or *Mormonism* (Morin & Guelke 1998); Buddhism (Georgieva 1996); religions which practice goddess-worship (Eller 2000); Hinduism (Georgeson 1992); and Christianity (Bartlett 1995; Giles 2002; Milne 2002). Research on the representation of gender in Christianity occurs furthermore in three main streams, namely the representation of Christian gender in the mainstream media (Abbot 2006; Abelman 1991; Warren 2002); the representation of Biblical male or female figures (Bergmann 2007; De Jong 1991; Exum 1996; Kallis 2002; Riegel & Kaup 2005; Tulloch 2004); and, the gendered representation and sexuality of Christ (Horowitz 1979; Johnson 1984; Steinberg 1983).

As is apparent from the above outline of the literature, there has been a significant amount of research on the intersecting areas of this study, namely gender representation, gender and religion and representation of gender in religion. Very little of this research has, however, been directed at the representation of gender in the visual communication of the contemporary church, especially in South Africa, and there is no available research, to my knowledge, on the representation of gender in the visual communication of the Afrikaans church. It is this particular gap in the discourse around the representation of gender in religion which this study seeks to fill.

As mentioned previously, this study investigates gender representation from a Masculinity Studies perspective as an alternative to the common focus on women's issues and feminist frameworks employed in research on gender and religion. The investigation of the representation of masculinity is a fairly new field of enquiry, which grew in popularity

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<sup>12</sup> For example, Cramer (2003); Hackett (1998); Harrison (2007); King and Beattie (2004); Landman (1994; 2007); Morin and Guelke (1998); Pechilis (2008); Stenhouse (2006); Trousdale (2005); Valantasis (2006); and Winter (2003).

amongst researchers in the mid 1990s. The development of this new research stream is considered here briefly. One of the earliest considerations of the representation of masculinity in the media can be found in prominent media theorist, John Fiske's foundational work on television media, *Television culture* (1987). In a chapter entitled: "Gendered television: masculinity", Fiske (1987:198-223) details how masculinity is constructed and portrayed in the popular television series, *The A-Team* (Asheley, Cannell & Lupo 1983-1987). Fiske maintains that action television shows are a masculine type of television, as opposed to soap opera, which is a feminine type of television. In the following decade, the first dedicated volume on masculinity in the media, *Men, masculinity and the media. Research on men and masculinities*, appeared in 1992, edited by Steve Craig.

In 1993, Art History turned its attention to the issue of the representation of masculinity in the form of Carol Duncan's collection of essays, *The aesthetics of power. Essays in critical Art History*. In this collection, Duncan (1993:27-56) dedicates an essay to the portrayal of fathers as masculine embodiments of authority in pre-revolutionary French art. Shortly after Duncan's compilation, the first work dedicated specifically to the representation of masculinity in the visual arts appeared in 1995 as a collection of essays inspired by an exhibition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with the name, *The masculine masquerade. Masculinity and representation*. The collection of essays, edited by Andrew Perchuk and Helaine Posner, considers the representation of masculinity in contemporary art with a focus on the representation of homosexual masculinity. In the same year, John Lash (1995) published *The hero. Manhood and power*, which considers representations of the male hero throughout Art History. By 1997, Abigail Solomon-Godeau cemented Art History's interest in the topic of masculinity representation in her book, *Male trouble. A crisis in representation*. Similarly, the inclusion of a chapter by Sean Nixon devoted to the representation of masculinity in a volume edited by Stuart Hall (1997), entitled *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, proves the growing significance of the topic to Culture and Media Studies.

Research into the representation of masculinity in the new millennium became more specialised. Masculinity as portrayed in men's magazine culture received increased attention, especially from scholars such as Benthien Benwell (2003), Ben Crewe (2003), and Viljoen (2008). The portrayal of masculine characters in film also received attention

from various scholars.<sup>13</sup> In *Representing men. Maleness and masculinity in the media*, Kenneth MacKinnon (2003) provides a broad theorisation of the representation of masculinity in the media by genre, by considering masculinity in film, television, advertising and mediated sport.

Building on what are now considered the foundational works on Masculinity Studies by authors such as RW Connell (1995; 2001) and Stephen Whitehead (2002), Masculinity Studies has developed a strong presence in South African gender research. In this regard, work by Robert Morrell (1996; 1997; 2001; 2002; 2006)<sup>14</sup> features prominently. One of the first collections of works on South African masculinity is edited by Morrell (2001), namely *Changing men in Southern Africa*, and investigates a wide range of masculinities of both European and African descent in Southern Africa. A subsequent collection of work is *Men behaving differently. South African men since 1994*, edited by Graeme Reid and Liz Walker (2005). Morrell, with Linda Richter (2006), compiled another book on South African masculinity, which is specifically dedicated to fatherhood, entitled *Baba. Men and fatherhood in South Africa*. A recent volume on young South African masculinities has also seen the light (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema 2007).

Although under-researched, the topic of masculinity in Christianity has been considered by scholars investigating the contemporary American Christian men's movement known as the Promise Keepers (see Chapter Three). Most prominent of these authors is renowned gender scholar, Susan Faludi. In Faludi's (2000) groundbreaking and popular book on American masculinity, *Stiffed. The betrayal of modern man*, she presents research on the Promise Keepers, which includes an ethnographic look at the members of this influential movement in their domestic and local settings. Michael Kimmel (1997); Louise B Silverstein, Carl F Auerbach, Loretta Grieco and Faith Dunkel (1999); and Bryan Brickner (1999) have also contributed to research on The Promise Keepers phenomenon. Notably, Dane Claussen (2000) has edited a collection of works by various authors entitled *The Promise Keepers. Essays on masculinity and Christianity*, as did John P Bartkowski (2004) in a collection named *The Promise Keepers. Servants, soldiers and godly men*. The Promise Keepers phenomenon is widely believed to find its roots in an earlier Christian men's movement called Muscular Christianity, which has received interrogation from various historians, such as Tony Ladd and James Mathisen (1999), and Clifford Putney

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<sup>13</sup> In this regard, see amongst others Barker (2006); Gates (2006); Holmlund (2002); Lehman (2001); Powrie, Davies and Babington (2004); and Spicer (2001).

<sup>14</sup> Also see, more recently, Morrell and Hearn (2012) and Morrell, Jewkes and Lindegger (2012).

(2001). The link between Muscular Christianity, rugby and masculine identity construction is also considered to some extent in *Making men. Rugby and masculine identity*, edited by Timothy Chandler and John Nauright (1996). A handful of South African scholars – Broodryk (2010); Du Plessis and Maree (2009); Viljoen (2008); and, Viljoen and Koenig-Visagie (2011) – have recently conducted research focusing on masculinity and Christianity.

While a helpful literature background exists on masculinity and Christianity based on the Promise Keepers and on Muscular Christianity, these bodies of related research investigate two white, American and British Christian fundamentalist men's movements. The fact that these are the most prominent concentrations of literature available is problematic. Arguably, not all Christian-based masculinities are fundamentalist. Furthermore, Christianity is as wide-spread and hegemonic as Western belief systems themselves and therefore finds application in various localities with varied implications for religious gender beliefs. This phenomenon also points to a lack of description of "vernacular masculinities", as Viljoen (2008:ii) uses the term, in research on men and masculinities.

### **1.5 Theoretical framework of study**

A dual theoretical approach, comprising Visual Culture Studies and Gender Studies is employed in this study. Visual Culture Studies is the broader theoretical milieu in which this study is situated and within this area the study of representation and semiotics is concentrated on as the main theoretical approach. Gender Studies is used as an interpretive theoretical approach with a specific focus on Masculinity Studies as well as selected relevant ideas from Feminist Theory. In the first part of this section I provide a brief introduction to Visual Culture Studies followed by an exposition of representation and semiotics as a theoretical approach. In the latter part of this section I provide an overview of the central theoretical ideas in Masculinity Studies, as well as a consideration of certain applicable ideas from Feminist Theory.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The discussions of literature and theory provided in this chapter serve as broad contextualisations of the topics and issues in this study, some of which are returned to in Chapter Three.

### **1.5.1 Visual Culture Studies**

As mentioned previously, this study falls in the broader theoretical area of Visual Culture Studies, an interdisciplinary approach founded on Cultural Studies, which considers “the visual” as primary and central to culture (Bal 2003:6; Lister & Wells 2001:62-63). WJT Mitchell (1994:11) views this primary concern with the visual as co-incidental with what he calls “the pictorial turn”. This idea is taken further in Visual Culture Studies and culminates in the conception that culture is primarily visual (Bal 2003:6). One of the main concerns and interests of Visual Culture Studies is visual representation. Jeanne van Eeden (2010:6) maintains that, “[c]ultural studies holds that the world is constituted by representations that operate from positions of power and that texts are never neutral or transparent”. In the next subsection, I consider Stuart Hall’s (1997) views on representation, as well as a theoretical and methodological approach commonly connected with the analysis of visual representation, semiotics. Visual Culture Studies lends itself well to a study such as the one undertaken for this dissertation, which crosses disciplinary boundaries between Gender Studies and Religious Studies. Owing to Visual Culture Studies’ interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature, it often takes as its prerogative the right to combine and appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodologies from various fields and disciplines. The integrity of the field of Visual Culture Studies lies in the responsibility with which researchers and scholars appropriate such frameworks and methodologies (Lister & Wells 2001:64). Its eclectic tendencies are often considered a strength, as Visual Culture Studies is seldom prescriptive in terms of the use of theories and methodologies (Lister & Wells 2001:90). I, therefore, seek to combine theoretical frameworks and methodologies to form a relevant and applicable approach to this study, which is outlined later in this section.

An important aspect of Visual Culture Studies to note for the purposes of this study is its inclusive notion of culture, which it inherited from Cultural Studies (Agger 1992:2-6). Like Cultural Studies, it is interested in problematising and investigating the “everyday” and the “ordinary”, whereby it takes everyday and ordinary visual cultural artefacts as material for analysis, a characteristic practice, which dates back to Walter Benjamin’s Arcades Project from 1927-1940. Nicholas Mirzoeff (1998:3), a contemporary Visual Culture theorist, famously states that Visual Culture Studies investigates a variety of aspects of visual culture “from oil painting to the internet”. Visual Culture Studies, with its Culture and Media Studies heritage, considers a wide range of textual practices and expressed and

represented experiences and takes a constructionist view of culture as constitutive (Lister & Wells 2001:61-62).

It should be noted that although Visual Culture Studies acknowledges its roots in Culture Studies, it does not see itself as “merely a specialized sub-division or extension of Culture Studies, but as a reworking of the whole field of concern” (Lister & Wells 2001:62) with a definite and dedicated focus on the visual aspects of culture. Similarly, Mieke Bal (2003:7) believes that “[i]nterdisciplinary study consists of *creating* a new object *that belongs to no one*”. But it is also for its intensive focus on the visual that Visual Culture Studies receives critique, as not all culture and all experience can be explained through an analysis of the visual.<sup>16</sup>

As a result of this all-embracing definition of culture, Visual Culture Studies can support a study, such as this one, which investigates how churches represent gender to their congregation members and to the public. In Culture Studies, according to Martin Lister and Liz Wells (2001:61), “[c]ulture is taken to include everyday symbolic and expressive practices”. Religion, as mentioned previously and for the purposes of this study, is believed to be a form of social and cultural expression (Lemon 2001:356). The visual communication produced by the churches investigated in this study is, therefore, considered to be a set of visually expressed cultural artefacts produced in a religious setting. In these terms the data obtained for this study, namely various visual materials such as brochures, posters, announcement pamphlets, newsletters and website imagery, are considered the visual communication of these churches and therefore also constitute the visual culture<sup>17</sup> of these churches. From a different perspective, these visual materials could also be considered to be the corporate communication of the churches and suitable methodologies and theoretical frameworks could be drawn from the field of Organisational and Corporate Communication for its analysis and interpretation. Visual Culture Studies, in its interdisciplinarity and inclusivity of various forms of visual culture is, however, more than sufficiently suited to accommodate a study of the data, which is considered to be symbolic expressions of culture and lends itself to an analysis of visual representation

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<sup>16</sup> Bal (2003:6) views this primary regard for the visual as a form of visual essentialism, which insist on the purity of images and desires “to stake out the turf of visibility against other media or semiotic systems”.

<sup>17</sup> In recent years space itself has been considered as culturally constructed and a part of visual culture. Such notions of cultural space have formed the basis of certain investigations into visual culture and the emerging interest in spatialisation in Visual Culture Studies is hereby acknowledged. The physical space of the churches in this study will not be investigated as part of their visual culture, mostly because church buildings do not provide visual representations of men and women for gender analysis, as is the sampling criterion for the data as explained in section 1.3.



through semiotics. The compatibility of Visual Culture Studies and the study of representation and semiotics results from their shared constructionist view on culture and the production of meaning, which is considered below.

### **1.5.1.1 Representation**

In Visual Culture Studies, images are understood to be representations (Lister & Wells 2001:64), and the study of representation through an investigation of visual language and visual culture is central to Visual Culture Studies. According to Hall (1997:16), “representation is the production of meaning through language”. In this sense, representation is believed to refer to the description, depiction, portrayal or symbolising of something (Hall 1997:16) and the term is also used as such in this dissertation. Furthermore, the study of representation also takes a constructionist approach to how meaning is produced in culture and to representation itself as constitutive (Hall 1997:5-6) of (a) reality. In this field the opinion is held that everyday culture cannot be separated from the practices of representation, visual or otherwise, in that representations form part of broader social discourses (Hall 1997:6). According to MacKinnon (2003:23), “[t]he way we think about gender ... is both reflected in and produced by the images that surround us in our culture”.

Notions of representation have, however, changed dramatically over time.<sup>18</sup> I therefore acknowledge that other definitions, interpretations and applications of representation are also used in academia, but for the aims of this study representation is used as it is conceptualised and employed by Culture Studies, especially in the work of Hall (1997) and with a focus on visual semiotics as theorised by Barthes (1972; 1977) as a mode of analysis.

The study of meaning in representation has become prominent as part of what Hall (1997:2) calls a greater “cultural turn” in the social sciences that is concerned with meaning. According to Hall (1997:3), “[w]e give things meaning by how we represent them”. Meaning is, therefore, constructed through representation, but it is also the result of signifying practices (Hall 1997:24). Representation is conceptualised as a practice itself (Hall 1997:34) and is not neutral or innocent. Owing to its nature as a constitutive practice, the study of representation is important to Gender Studies, because identity is constructed

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<sup>18</sup> Julie Reid (2008:197-226) provides a chronological account of the development of ideas around representation from Plato to Baudrillard.

and articulated by way of representation. According to David A Bailey and Stuart Hall (1992:21), “identities are positioned in relation to the discourse around us. That is why the notion of representation is important – identity can only be articulated as a set of representations”. The construction of gendered and sexual identities is, therefore, primarily a matter of representation. Regarding the representation of social gender groups, Richard Dyer (1993:1) states that, “how social groups are treated in cultural representation is part and parcel of how they are treated in life ... poverty, harassment, self-hate and discrimination ... are shored up and instituted by representation”. In Chapter Three, a focused theoretical background is provided for the representation of masculinity.

The study of representation concentrates on visual language (its strongest tie to Visual Culture Studies) which is considered both a producer and a reflector of the world (Hall 1997:7). The notion that representation simply depicts the world as it is, like a reflection in a mirror, is rejected and problematised in the study of representation, especially in light of the fact that culture and meaning are both considered to be constructed. In the constructionist approach a separation is made between “the *material* world, where things and people exist, and the *symbolic* practices and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate” (Hall 1997:25). This approach therefore acknowledges the importance of symbolic practices in everyday life, and for Visual Culture Studies, the symbolic operates strongly, although not solely, on a visual level. Hall (1997:9) stresses the fact that one must, however, study the physical material forms in which the symbolic circulates. In the case of this study, these physical forms are the visual material collected from the three churches.

### **1.5.1.2 Visual semiotics (and iconography)**

In light of the previously discussed ideas around Visual Culture Studies and representation, I will now consider the chief methodological approach of this study, namely visual semiotics. Semiotics, representation and Visual Culture Studies are closely related in the sense that “the semiotic approach provides a method for analyzing how visual representations convey meaning” (Hall 1997:41). Traditional visual semiotics, as developed by the French critic, Roland Barthes (1972; 1977), is preferred in this study – a choice which is justified later in this section. First I will consider what constitutes a semiotic analysis according to Barthes and will then look at perhaps his greatest contribution to the field of semiotics – the theorisation of culturally constructed social myth.

Barthes's method builds on Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's theory on the components of the sign. A sign is the most basic semantic unit of meaning and it consists of two parts, according to De Saussure, namely the signifier, which is the form or vehicle of the sign, and the signified, which is the concept or idea related to the sign (Hall 1997:31). Barthes (1972:113) explains that the sign is the associative total of its signifier and its signified, its form and its related concept. In his groundbreaking essay "Myth today", part of a collection of essays entitled *Mythologies* (first published in 1957), Barthes (1972) employs De Saussure's linguistic theory and transposes it for use on visual objects. According to Hall (1997:36), De Saussure himself foresaw the possibility of developing his theory to a broader "science that studies the life of signs in society". Barthes successfully adapts a linguistic theory to the reading of "the everyday" and popular culture and treats ordinary activities and objects as texts that produce meaning and which use "languages" that can be read (Hall 1997:36). Barthes (1972:110) states explicitly that his theories are not limited to "oral speech", but are also applicable to other "modes of writing or of representations; not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity ...". In his applications of his theory, Barthes was concerned with figurative images, specifically photographic images (Van Leeuwen 2001:92). Owing to this open-ended idea of what might constitute the "language object" or "mode of representation" (Barthes 1972:115), Barthes's semiotics falls in comfortably with the corresponding agenda of Visual Culture Studies. Hall (1997:36) states:

The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that, since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning they must make use of signs; and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amendable to an analysis which basically makes use of Saussure's linguistic concepts ...

Barthes's (1972) theory can be seen to function in terms of levels or "layers" (Van Leeuwen 2001:94) of meaning of signs and codes. The first level or layer of meaning is the level of denotative meaning, which Barthes (1972:117) simply refers to as "meaning". This is a descriptive level and involves "obvious interpretation" (Hall 1997:38) and simplistic or basic meaning on which there would be wide consensus. According to Malcolm Barnard (2001:149), "[d]enotation is the kind of meaning understood when shapes, lines, colours and textures are understood as representing things in the world". The second level of meaning, that of connotation or "signification" according to Barthes (1972:116), comprises broader associated meaning, where one begins to "interpret the completed signs in terms of the wider realms of social ideology – the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society" (Hall 1997:38). According to Barnard (2001:149), "[c]onnotation

is often explained as the thoughts, feelings and associations that accompany one's perception of an example of visual culture". It is also on this second level, that of signification, where Barthes believes myth functions (Hall 1997:39; Van Leeuwen 2001:97). Barthes (1972:115) contends that myth is a metalanguage, functioning on top of a first semiological system (the level of denotative meaning), on a second semiological system (the level of connotative meaning). Barthes (1972:115) provides the following diagram to explain his theory on these levels of meaning and on his theory of myth:



Figure 1: Diagram of Barthes's theory on language and myth. (Barthes 1972:115).

On the first level of denotation, or language, one finds De Saussure's signifier and signified which form their "associative total" (Barthes 1972:114), the sign. Barthes (1972:117) refers to this sign in the first order or level as the "linguistic sign". On the second order, that of connotation or myth, the linguistic sign is hollowed out and robbed of its meaning and made a signifier to a new signified, that of myth (Barthes 1972:114). The linguistic sign now becomes the mythical signifier, which is an impoverished sign which has regressed from meaning to form (Barthes 1972:117). According to Theo van Leeuwen (2001:39), "[t]he first, completed meaning functions as the signifier in the second stage of the representation process, and ... yields a second, more elaborate and ideologically framed message or meaning". It should be noted that Barthes uses the term "linguistic" in "Myth today" in its broad sense, in that various modes of representation, or language objects, especially the visual, can also function like languages in their construction of meaning.

In "Myth today", Barthes (1972) provides a technical exposition of how myth is constructed through providing explanations of analytical separations of signifier, signified and sign. He applies his theory more instinctively (Hall 1997:42) in the other essays in *Mythologies*, which discuss myth in various cultural practices and objects. I use his theories as an analytical methodology in Chapters Three and Four through employing an analysis of the levels of meaning according to the following levels or layers: firstly, denotation; secondly,

connotation/myth; and, thirdly, ideology. In order to avoid being overly technical, I do not venture into discussions on which sign is hollowed out or robbed to form which signifier for which myth. This would, however, be appropriate for a dedicated mythic analysis, which is not the main aim of this study. I am rather concerned with the total meanings of the images produced by the churches, but I also discuss which myths manifest in the material and which ideologies are at play.

Barthes's ideas about what myth is and how it operates in culture are, nevertheless, relevant to this study. There exists a vital distinction between Barthes's idea of socially constructed myth and the conventional notion of narrative myth, though one could argue that narrative myth might feed into social myth and vice versa. Narrative myth can be understood, in this regard and for the purposes of this study, to refer to the folklore, fiction and mythology of cultures, such as Greek mythology and Norse mythology. Van Leeuwen (2001:97) explains that myths are, in Barthes terms, "very broad and diffuse concepts which condense everything associated with the represented people, places or things into a single entity". A common misconception is that myths are untrue or false, by some means, but this is not the case for Barthes's social myth. Barthes (1972:121) maintains that "*myth hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear". The distortion Barthes refers to is the hollowing out of the meaning and history of the linguistic sign in order to appropriate it as the mythical signifier for the mythical signified. Distortion also aids the naturalisation of myth, which is discussed later in this section.

Myth, for Barthes (1972:109), is a "system of communication", "a message", "a mode of signification", "a form" and, most importantly, "a type of speech". This speech is not limited to oral speech as discussed previously, but can include other language objects and modes of representation. Myth, it seems, can employ any language object to its purposes, it "sees them all as the same raw material; their unity is that they all come down to the status of language" (Barthes 1972:114). A single myth can, therefore, appear across various language objects. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the same myths of masculinity appear in various media and in various discourses. The myth of the male breadwinner is a case in point. This persistent masculinity myth appears in literature, in film, in television, in news media and in various other languages, objects or modes of representation. This is possible, because "it is the language which myth gets hold of to build its own system" (Barthes 1972:115). Myth is a metalanguage: it is a language of other languages.

Myth, furthermore, produces and reproduces ideology (Barthes 1972:137-141). Van Leeuwen (2001:97) states that myths “are ideological meanings, serving to legitimate the status quo and the interest of whose power is invested in it”. The myth of the breadwinner, for instance, upholds ideologies of patriarchy and of capitalism (see Chapters Three and Four). Barthes (1972:112) articulates the relationship between myth and ideology in the following way: “This is the case with mythology: it is a part of both semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology as it is an [*sic*] historical science: it studies ideas-in-form”.

As myth is culturally and socially constructed it is never innocent or neutral, as previously stated. In this regard, Barthes is particularly interested in how myth is “naturalised” (Van Leeuwen 2001:97), and made to appear “common sense” in various ways. Myth “assumes the look of generality: it stiffens, it makes itself appear neutral and innocent” (Barthes 1972:125). Myths are naturalised through the mere fact that they are represented. According to Barthes (1972:117), “signifiers are credible wholes, they have at their disposal a sufficient rationality”. This idea also contributes to the power of images as well as visual representations, that as signifiers they appear already cohesive and therefore demand to be taken as natural and as evidence of reality. Myth is further also naturalised through its ability to manifest across various language objects, as already discussed.

Myth is naturalised, paradoxically, though distortion (Barthes 1972:121-122). Myth does not refute reality or history completely, but appropriates it for its own purposes. Myth robs the linguistic sign of its meaning and its history, but the sign remains and is used as myth’s signifier. It is because there is “enough reality” in myth that we believe it and accept it as natural. Barthes (1972:125) believes that, “[m]yth is speech stolen and restored. Only, speech which is restored is no longer quite that which was stolen: when it was brought back, it was not put exactly in place”. Distortion of reality, therefore, naturalises myth. Ambiguity also aids in naturalising myth as there is a constant oscillation between the language system, on which myth is built, and the myth system. Barthes (1972:123) states that:

myth is a double system ... its point of departure is constituted by the arrival of meaning ... the signification of myth is constituted by a sort of constantly moving turnstile which presents alternatively the meaning of the signifier and its form, a language-object and a metalanguage, a purely signifying and purely imagining consciousness ... The meaning is always there to *present* the form; the form is always there to *outdistance* the meaning. And there is

never any contradiction, conflict or split between the meaning and the form: they are never in the same place.

Myth is hegemonic, it seeks to “tell us how things are”, or how they should be. In this sense myth “points out and notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us” (Barthes 1972:117). There is always motivation behind mythical signification and its intentions define it (Barthes 1972:124-125). In its naturalisation of ideology, myth depoliticises speech (Barthes 1972:142) according to its own hegemonic agenda. The myth is taken as a fact (Barthes 1972:131).

A final idea from Barthean semiotics which is used in this study is anchorage. In “Myth today”, Barthes (1972:115) states that, “the semiologist is entitled to treat the same way writing and pictures: what he [*sic*] retains from them is that they are both *signs* ...”. Barthes here starts to refer to the notion of analysing image and text together, which he takes further in *Image-music-text* (1977), where he develops the idea of anchorage, whereby text which accompanies an image serves to anchor the intended meaning of the image. “[A]ll images are polysemious”, according to Barthes (1977:38-39) and anchoring text functions to stop “connoted meanings from proliferating”. In this regard the image and its accompanying text is considered a single “indivisible unit of analysis” (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001:7) and is thus applied in Chapters Three and Four.

Although this study employs semiotics as a basis for its analysis, it utilises a combination of traditional Barthean semiotics, as well as certain elements of iconography from Art History in an attempt to remedy some of the problems which have been identified with semiotic analysis. Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt (2001:5) encourage the combination of elements from different approaches and believe that, “the choice of an appropriate method of analysis is dependent on the nature of the project in which it is to be used, on the visual material that is being investigated, and on the goals of the research project ... sometimes several methods may be necessary”. Barthes’s conceptualisation of semiotics is preferred as a basis for analysis for its roots in structuralism which facilitate systematic and methodical analysis, as well as for its particular relevance to gender analysis. Owing to semiotics’ structuralist foundations, it lends itself particularly well to critical gender inquiry, which itself is often concerned with the embedded structure of gender in culture. According to Connell (2001:33), the semiotic approach “has been widely used in feminist and poststructuralist cultural analyses of gender ... It renders more than an abstract contrast of masculinity and femininity”. Barthean semiotics is also preferred, in this regard, for its ability to peel away the layers of meaning of a text, revealing its

underlying myths and latent ideologies. The issue of uncovering myth and ideologies in cultural artefacts is also relevant to gender analysis, as gendered myth, especially in the form of stereotypes, as well as ideology, such as patriarchy and essentialism, often forms the topics of gender investigations.

Barthes's version of semiotics, and the iconographic method (also simply referred to as "iconography"), as developed by Erwin Panofsky (1955), are considered to be corresponding theories. They both share an interest in representation, as well as the views that meaning is layered and that there are "hidden meanings in visual texts" (Van Leeuwen 2001:92, 94). Van Leeuwen (2001:100) argues that the three layers of pictorial meaning in iconography – namely, representational meaning, iconographical meaning, and iconological symbolism – relate closely to the levels of meaning developed by Barthes. Representational meaning is close to denotation as it is the basic meaning, primarily of natural subject matter represented (Van Leeuwen 2001:100). Similarly, the layer of iconographical meaning could be viewed as close to connotation as it denotes ideas or concepts attached to the representational meaning, the "secondary or conventional subject matter" (Van Leeuwen 2001:100). Finally, iconological symbolism, described by Panofsky (1955:55) as "those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion", is the equivalent of ideological meaning, according to Van Leeuwen (2001:101).

The main difference between Barthean semiotics and iconography is that whereas the former considers the image as crystallised, frozen and separate from its temporal and physical setting, iconography ventures into a discovery of the context of the artwork. It is on the issue of a neglect of context<sup>19</sup> that conventional semiotics receives the most critique (Barnard 2001:163) and it is also in this area where I supplement the visual semiotic analysis used in this study with the iconographic approach. Just as the iconographer would go into great depth of background and contextual research regarding the artwork, I have attempted to employ this method in order to situate the findings of this study in the broader discourses of gender and its representation. In Chapter Two, for example, I provide a contextualisation of the three churches investigated here in order to provide insight into the context of their functioning, their production of visual communication, as well as their gender ideologies. As part of this methodological tactic, further theoretical background is also provided for the three themes of masculinity representation in Chapter Three.

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<sup>19</sup> This problem is allegedly eradicated in one of the latest revisitings of semiotics, known as social semiotics. See, amongst others, Hodge and Kress (1998) and Van Leeuwen (2005).



Another strength of combining Barthean semiotics and iconography, apart from a resultant deeper sense of context, is that whereas semiotics is based on linguistic theory, iconography is based on pictorial, or art historical theory. Iconography, in its investigation of pictorial convention, according to Lister and Wells (2001:71), “allow[s] us to start from noticing things about images rather than about written language and then seeking to apply linguistic concepts to images”. Iconography therefore allows for the analysis of images as *images*. Lister and Wells (2001:73) also call for a looser and more intuitive application of visual analysis in stating that, “it has become clear that a too rigid application of systematic methodologies for visual analysis, which take written or spoken language as a model, is self-defeating. There is always a tendency to miss the specificity of the medium, and the practices built around it in social use, where signification actually takes place”. In this regard I believe the combination of Barthean semiotics and iconography to be symbiotic, but as previously mentioned, I am committed to a more intuitive application of Barthes’s theory, as he himself applied it in the essays in *Mythologies*. For De Saussure meaning could be mapped systematically, but as Hall (1997:42) points out: “Barthes also had a ‘method’, but his semiotic approach is much more loosely and interpretatively applied”, especially in his later work. My commitment to a looser application of Barthes’s theories is not intended as a sidestepping of proper methodological practice, but rather as a purposeful methodological strategy in acknowledgement of the nature of visual analysis. Furthermore, the practice of using a looser application of methodology is a widespread phenomenon in research using semiotic analysis. Communications research expert, Gertruida du Plooy (2009:220) acknowledges this practice and states that “[t]he requirements of a reliable measuring instrument (analytical scheme), of drawing an accurate and representative sample, and of treating units of analysis equally are to a certain extent relaxed”. The belief that semiotics can bring to the social sciences a “more scientific” approach to the least scientific object of inquiry – culture – has been recognised as problematic (Hall 1997:34-35).

Although I am opting to supplement Barthes’s approach to semiotics with the method of background contextualisation from iconography, I would also argue that in this sense, Barthean semiotics’ greatest point of critique – its disregard of context – is perhaps also one of its greatest strengths. The manner in which Barthean semiotics is able to isolate an image, as well as the structural roots of this methodology, makes it applicable to “any and all examples of visual culture” (Barnard 2001:163). These characteristics render this approach to semiotics particularly relevant to my study, which applies the same mode of

analysis to different types or genres of visual texts, such as website imagery, printed material, print advertisements and magazines.

On a final note regarding my analysis of meaning in the churches' visual materials in this study, I wish to clarify my use of the term "discourse". I recognise that references to "broader discourses" start to venture into the area of Foucauldian discourse analysis, but as this study already employs a double methodology of semiotics and iconography, I believe it to be in order to avoid venturing into the theoretical and methodological complexities of Foucault's approach. I make use of the term "discourse" in this study in a more general sense – as an agent for the production of meaning – which is also the sense in which Barthes uses the term in "Myth today" in various instances. Foucauldian analysis would use the term in a specific manner to refer to issues of the production of knowledge and power, not merely the production of meaning (Hall 1997:43).

### **1.5.2 Gender Studies**

This section provides a Gender Studies framework for this study, compiled from Masculinity Studies and certain applicable ideas developed in feminist scholarship. As mentioned previously, the theories discussed here constitute an interpretative framework applicable to the analysis and interpretation of findings in Chapters Three and Four.

#### **1.5.2.1 Feminist foundations**

Apart from its rigorous critique of patriarchy, feminism has also succeeded in problematising notions of biological determinism and essentialism. The idea of biological determinism is based on biological differences between the two sexes, male and female (Bem 1993:6). According to biological determinism, gender – a cultural construction – is determined by sex – a biological given – and this belief supports dominant heterosexuality. Biological determinism finds its justification in various scientific explanations about the intrinsic differences between men and women, ranging from theories on genetics to neurological and cognitive development (DeFrancisco & Palczewski 2007:30-34). These scientific-biological accounts of sex difference play an important role in social and cultural ideas concerning gender differences and roles. The male–female<sup>20</sup> gender binary so prominent in culture is hereby believed to be naturally derived from sex differences (DeFrancisco & Palczewski 2007:30). According to Sandra

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<sup>20</sup> In this study binaries are indicated with an em dash to signify poles of binary oppositions.

Lipsitz Bem (1993:6), these “biological accounts of male-female difference and male dominance ... have emerged since the mid-nineteenth century [and] have merely used the language of science ... to rationalize and legitimize the sexual status quo”. In biological determinism the belief is held that,

[t]here is something genetically inherent in the male of the species ... that makes them the naturally dominant sex; that ‘something’ is lacking in females, and as a result women are not only naturally subordinate but in general quite satisfied with their position, since it affords them protection and the opportunity to maximize maternal pleasures. Which to them are the most satisfying experiences of life (Ortner 1998:27).

Theories of biological determinism and male physical dominance function to uphold social gender beliefs and also give rise to androcentricism, whereby the male or the masculine is perceived to be not only dominant in society, but also central. Women, as secondary in society, are perceived in terms of their sexual or reproductive responsibilities towards men, or in terms of their domestic responsibilities in male-dominated households (Bem 1993:42). Bem (1993:1) states that, “[t]hroughout the history of Western culture, three beliefs about women and men have prevailed: that they have fundamentally different psychological and sexual natures, that men are inherently the dominant or superior sex, and that both male-female difference and male dominance are natural”.

Biological determinism fuels a social gender belief, which is that owing to the intrinsic biological differences between the sexes there are also essential differences between men and women, who are gendered as essentially masculine or essentially feminine. According to this belief, “sex differences between men and women have been culturally constructed into gender differences between men and women” (Peach 1998:11). These ideas of biological determinism and essentialism have been problematised by feminism, Queer Theory and Masculinity Studies, especially in terms of the social constructionist approach. The latter approach holds that gender, like meaning, is socially constructed and culturally learnt (DeFrancisco & Placzewski 2007:51). According to David Gutterman (2001:58),

the axis that serves as the fundamental basis for gender identity in the West clearly functions along [the] organization of same/different. The perception that men and women are “opposite sexes” (with accompanying “genders” – masculine/feminine) creates the expectation that one is either a man or a woman and that these two categories are essentially separate. This sense of difference then becomes the demarcation of otherness when gradations of value are placed on the two distinct domains.

Essentialism has also been problematised within Art History, especially in the work of Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (1982; 1992; 2005), who state that, “[t]he definitive assignment of sex roles in history ... has created fundamental differences between the sexes in their perception, experience and expectations of the world, difference that cannot help but have been carried over into the creative process, where they have sometimes left their tracks” (Broude & Garrard 1982:7). Elaborate lists of culturally constructed gender binary oppositions have been compiled by various scholars, giving an account of how essential differences between men and women have been articulated (see, for example, Fiske 1987:203). Biological determinism and essentialism construct gender in binary terms at opposite poles as feminine female and masculine male; such gender binaries have proved to be particularly relevant to an interpretation of the findings of this study.

What is important to recognise regarding biological determinism and essentialism in the context of this study is that this belief is particularly prominent in Christian doctrine, especially doctrine that is based on a rather literal interpretation of the Bible. In Christianity gender differences are generally believed to be part of God’s creation and of God’s divine design of human beings (Bem 1993:1). To go against this design is often considered a sin in Christian discourse, especially where homosexuality is concerned. Likewise, in certain contexts, the Christian notion of male headship maintains the idea that men are sanctioned by God to be the head of or over women and the Pauline writings are often cited as motivation for this idea (McCloughry 1992:61). Male headship is further supported by the fact that in the Bible both God and Jesus are men. The image of God is a Man. This association of manliness with ultimate authority aids the male headship doctrine. Christian men often strongly identify with the masculinity of God and frequently adopt Jesus as a role model (cf. Faludi 2000:238). In Chapter Three, further background is provided on the topic of “gender and Christianity”, with specific focus on “masculinity and Christianity”.

In attempting to explain the universal subordination of women in a ground-breaking essay entitled “Is female to male as nature is to culture?”, Sherry Ortner (1998) interrogates not only the fact that gender binary oppositions are constructed, but also how these binaries are aligned and valued. Following De Beauvoir’s ideas from *The Second Sex*, Ortner (1998:29) argues that the universal, or pan-cultural secondary status of women in society results from the notion “that women are being identified or symbolically associated with nature, as opposed to men, who are identified with culture”. According to Ortner (1998:28-29), every culture devalues and seeks to exert control over nature. Owing to women’s physiology and their natural reproductive functions they are believed to be closer to nature

and are, as a result, devalued, controlled and subordinated in the same way as nature is by culture. This nature–culture split is, for Ortner (1998:288), an artificial and conceptual one, as no such distinction can be made in reality. There is, however, as a result of this distinction, a strong association between male and culture and between female and nature, the one highly valued and the other devalued. “In Western culture”, according to Gutterman (2001:58), “that which is usually associated with men (activity, culture, reason) is usually held in higher esteem than that which is associated with women (passivity, nature, emotion)”.

Another prominent gender split in cultural practice is the activity–passivity binary which is articulated in Laura Mulvey’s (1975:8) essay, “Visual pleasure and narrative cinema”, in which she theorises the scopophilic nature of narrative cinema. In scopophilia – the pleasure of looking – the female image is presented as a passive object subjected to a curious and controlling male gaze. Women, therefore, connote an erotic “to-be-looked-at-ness”, whereby woman is constructed “as image” and man “as bearer of the look” (Mulvey 1975:11). “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance”, according to Mulvey (1975:11), “pleasure in looking has been spilt between active/male and passive/female”. Mulvey furthered ideas developed by John Berger in a BBC television series published in book-form in 1972 as *Ways of Seeing*, wherein he addresses “ways of seeing” across various forms of visual culture ranging from high art to popular media. Much of Mulvey’s work echoes Berger’s (1972:47) notion that, “*men act and women appear*”. Masculinity is thus constructed through action and femininity through inaction, passivity or the appearance as mere image-object.

A final gender binary relevant to the analysis in this study is the separation between public and private space. Nancy Duncan (1996:127-145) explores the binary opposition of public versus private space and investigates the cultural association of the feminine with the private and the masculine with the public. In terms of the public–private binary, women are believed to belong in the private sphere of domesticity and men are believed to belong in the public sphere of politics and paid work (Duncan 1996:129), although men move seamlessly through both. According to Duncan (1996:128), the public–private dichotomy is gendered and thus “employed to legitimate oppression and dependence on the basis of gender; it has also been used to regulate sexuality”. From the above discussion, the following aligned sets of culturally constructed gender binary oppositions are employed in the analysis and interpretation of this study:

Male – Female

Culture – Nature

Active – Passive

Public – Private

The background theories from feminist scholarship discussed here regarding biological determinism, essentialism and their resulting gender binary constructions are mostly applicable to the interpretation of this study's findings in Chapter Four. An account of the main ideas in Masculinity Studies follows, which serves as a general introduction to the analyses of the churches' images representing masculinity in Chapter Three.

### **1.5.2.2 Masculinity Studies**

The study of men and masculinities has developed fairly recently, especially over the past two decades (Connell, Hearn & Kimmel 2005:1). The concept of "masculinity" in this field can be understood to mean "the discourses and practices which indicate that someone is man, a member of the category of men" (Collinson & Hearn 2001:147). There is therefore a theoretical separation of the male human, a biological entity, and masculinity, a culturally constructed gender identity. The study of men and masculinities acknowledges its "feminist parentage", according to Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett (2001:3), "for one of the direct consequences of feminist thinking and action has been to expose and highlight the power, position and practices of men". Feminist critique of patriarchy has, therefore, resulted in the conceptualisation of men as gendered by themselves (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:3). According to RW Connell, Jeff Hearn and Michael Kimmel (2005:1):

The field of gender research has mainly addressed questions about women and has mainly been developed by women. The impulse to develop gender studies has come mainly from contemporary feminism, and women have therefore mainly been the ones to make gender visible in contemporary scholarship and public forums. Revealing the dynamics of gender, however, also makes masculinity visible and problematizes the position of men.

The study of men and masculinities (hereafter referred to as "Masculinity Studies") has contributed a number of key ideas related to broader gender inquiry, which includes the notion of multiple masculinities, hegemonic masculinity, masculinism, and the crisis of masculinity hypothesis. From its inception, Masculinity Studies has recognised the existence of various forms of masculinity, or "multiple masculinities" (Whitehead 2002:3), dependent on the various social, cultural, economic and ethnic settings which produce

masculinity as a cultural identity construct. As in feminism, the social constructionist approach to gender is also prominent in Masculinity Studies. Masculinity, in this view, is not a monolithic entity, but a fluid identity, which is never fixed or stable and is always changing (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:8). The acknowledgement of multiple masculinities in Masculinity Studies does not, however, draw attention away from the fact that men's domination over women at different levels of society, culture and practice is persistent and continuous (Collinson & Hearn 2001:153). In these self-aware terms Masculinity Studies has, as central to its theoretical and methodological points of departure, fostered the notions of hegemonic masculinity and masculinism.

Connell (2001:38) develops the idea of "hegemonic masculinity",<sup>21</sup> which is identified "as the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women". This form of masculinity, which functions to keep men in power and women powerless, is also referred to as normative or dominant masculinity and men who aspire to it "still act dominant and 'hard', deny their emotions, resort to violence as a means of self-expression, and seek to validate their masculinity in the public world of work rather than in the private world of family and relationships ... such performances not only often go uncriticized, [but] are lauded by many, both women and other men" (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:7). Dominant or hegemonic masculinity should, however, not be understood as a form of masculinity, but rather as a pervasive and prolific configuration of power. Hegemonic masculinity is, according to Connell (2001:38), "not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations".

Arthur Brittan (2001:53) refers to this configuration of power which privileges men, as "masculinism", which "is the ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination. As such, it is the ideology of patriarchy". Brittan (2001:53) further states that, "[m]asculinism takes it for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour, and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres". Masculinism, the ideology of patriarchy, is also believed to be resistant to change (Connell 2001:53). Therefore, whereas masculinities are understood to be multiple

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<sup>21</sup> Since the mid-2000s the appropriation and application of the concept "hegemonic masculinity" in academia has been problematised. For recent discussions this regard, see Hearn and Morrell (2012) and Messerschmidt (2012). For the purpose of this study, I employ Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity as outlined above.

and various, the power which supports male domination and superiority, masculinity, has proven to be consistent.

Dominant masculinity is constituted through warding off threats against it, especially in the form of femininity and homosexuality. In a polarised view of gender, masculinity exists only in contrast to femininity (Connell 2001:31) and is constituted as not-feminine and not-homosexual. Normative masculinity, furthermore, makes heterosexuality compulsory (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:19). Through compulsory heterosexuality, strict binary or polar definitions of gender are constructed and maintained through biological determinism and essentialism. According to Gutterman (2001:62), “the cultural demand for heterosexuality creates the need for clear markers of gender so that sexual partners can be ‘correctly’ chosen”. Binary constructions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity serve the function of clear gender markers. This constitutes the heterosexual matrix, in Judith Butler’s (1990) terms, which dominates Western culture (Gutterman 2001:61) and whereby heterosexuality is constructed as normative. Butler’s (1990) heterosexual matrix can also be referred to as the “gender order”, in “which males are the primary beneficiaries” (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:12). Men benefit from masculinism, hegemonic masculinity, the heterosexual matrix and the gender order through what Connell (2001:40) refers to as the “patriarchal dividend”, which is “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women”.

The notion of representation as constitutive of reality and identity gains importance in a study on gender, as cultural signifying practices are often taken up by individuals as gender role performances (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:18). In a gender framework, and from a performative view of gender (Butler 1990), portrayals of men and women constitute the “gender scripts” (Whitehead 2002:170) that culture provides for the correct (Brod 1995:15) performance of gender roles. Because individuals tend to tailor the way they live their lives – even on a subconscious level – according to the “scripts” provided by cultural representations, the content of these scripts demand denaturalisation and demystification as hegemonic and ideological texts. In the context of this study, the churches’ visual material portrays certain ways of being a man and being a woman and, therefore, can be understood to be the gender scripts that these churches prescribe for their members.

An idea which is frequently posited and problematised in Masculinity Studies, is the notion that masculinity is in crisis. Whitehead and Barrett (2001:8) argue that for masculinity to be in crisis, there needs “to be a core masculinity; something which is natural to men and



which men can aspire to and hold under most conditions". The masculinity that is experiencing threat, it seems, is dominant hegemonic masculinity. Various scholars have dedicated work to this idea that masculinity is under threat, most notably Leanne Payne (1978), in *Crisis in masculinity*, Anthony Clare (2000) in *On men. Masculinity in crisis* and Susan Faludi (2000) in *Stiffed. The betrayal of the American man*. The topic of masculinity in crisis is also explored in a number of journal articles by South African author Jennifer Lemon, in *Popular culture and the 'crisis of masculinity'* (1992a), *The crisis of masculinity and the renegotiation of power* (1992b), and *Masculinity in crisis?* (1995).

In crisis in masculinity theory, it is commonly proposed that masculinity is experiencing a crisis owing to: the advances of feminism and the demand for women's rights; post-industrialisation, major job losses for men and economic disenfranchisement; and the pressures and effects of consumerism (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:8). The "masculinity in crisis theory" is employed in explaining the prevailing backlash against feminism, as well as men's use of violence directed at women and other men in order to sustain their dominance and "points to crisis tendencies ... in the modern gender order" (Connell 2001:44). As hegemonic masculinity finds itself under threat these "[c]risis tendencies may ... provoke attempts to restore dominant masculinity" (Connell 2001:45). Such attempts commonly manifest in machismo and aggressive masculinity, a turn to outdoorism, as well as homophobic and anti-feminist tendencies, which culminated in the rise of new men's movements such as the Christian Promise Keepers and the mythopoetic movement (Whitehead & Barrett 2001:4) (see Chapter Three).

The notion that masculinity is in crisis is, however, contested and problematised in academia and Whitehead and Barrett (2001:6-10) provide a noteworthy critique of the idea that masculinity is in crisis: masculinity remains dominant in culture, men still enjoy better employment and remuneration than women, traditional forms of masculinity remain persistent, and claims that masculinity is crisis have been made before at other points in history. Whitehead and Barrett (2001:8) state that:

A study of historical debates about men and masculinities reveal an interesting pattern. For it is apparent that whenever larger social and public concerns raise their head ... then very quickly the issue of boys/men come to the fore: usually how to change them, control them, provide them with purpose, or simply avoid the worst excesses of anti-social male behaviour. What emerges, in fact, is a moral panic around men and masculinity, which can quickly turn into a backlash against women and feminism.

The real crisis is not, it seems, in masculinity but, as Connell (2001:44) implies, in the greater gender order itself. Masculinism then reacts and overcompensates for its loss of face. It could also be argued that the strong tendency to focus on masculinity as though it were in crisis might be a political attempt to restore dominant hegemonic masculinity itself.

## **1.6 Overview of chapters**

This study's background, research problems, research design and methodology was discussed in this chapter. I also described the study's position in the available literature and motivated its necessity. The broad theoretical framework in which this research is situated was also discussed here.

Chapter Two provides a contextualisation of the three Afrikaans churches used in this study as corporate churches, as well as an introduction to their ministry structure, with specific focus on their gendered ministries. The nature of communication and visual culture is also discussed in this chapter and an introduction is provided to the gender ideology present in the three churches, by way of a description of their men's and women's ministries.

The gender ideology of the three churches in this study is expanded in Chapters Three and Four. The representation of masculinity in the churches, the main focus of this study, is analysed and discussed in Chapter Three according to the three themes mentioned earlier: professional occupation and leadership; physical activity and adventurism; and fatherhood.

In Chapter Four, I discuss and critique the representation of femininity in the three churches in relation to the representation of masculinity discussed in Chapter Three. In this chapter I consider the representation of gender in the three churches in broad terms. The representation of femininity is, however, treated as a foil to that of masculinity and therefore does not receive the same depth of analytical and theoretical treatment. This chapter is particularly concerned with the nature of gendered ontology in Moreletapark, *kerksondemure* and *Doxa Deo*, as well as with issues relating to family. I also refer to certain elements which are not represented in the visual material collected from the three churches in his chapter, especially to the lack of representation of alternative sexualities.

In Chapter Five I provide a summary of this dissertation as well as a discussion of the contributions and limitations of my research. Suggestions for further research are made in this chapter. I also draw my final conclusions and contextualise and problematise the findings of my study in the global context of the rise of neo-conservatism and religious fundamentalism in the West.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONTEXT AND GENDER IDEOLOGY OF THE SELECTED CHURCHES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the relevant background information on the three churches in order to contextualise this study and to sketch the characteristics and workings of the corporate church. Firstly, Rothauge's (1983) ideas around church size categories are explained to serve as a backdrop to an understanding of the corporate church. With a discussion of the definitions and characteristics of the corporate church, Moreletapark, *kerksondermure* and Doxa Deo will be positioned as corporate churches in terms of their active member numbers, locations and ministry formats. Secondly, I provide a description of the gendering of ministries at the three churches by discussing their men's and women's ministries and their latent gender ideologies.

The largest congregation featured in this study, the Dutch Reformed congregation Moreletapark, has experienced rapid growth in the past 20 years. Founded with 2 100 members in 1985 by means of a split from Pretoria-Oosterlig congregation (Meer oor Gemeente Geskiedenis 2010), it has since grown to a staggering 17 000-member strong congregation with a 7 100-seater church auditorium. Moreletapark is also the largest Dutch Reformed congregation in the world.

The Dutch Reformed congregation *kerksondermure* was founded in 1986 under the name *Nederduits Gereformeerde Gemeente Verwoerdburgstad* (Dutch German Reformed Congregation Verwoerdburgstad), referring to the former name of the suburb now known as Centurion, in which the church is located (NG gemeente Kerksondermure 2011). Owing to the name change of the suburb, the congregation changed its name to *kerksondermure* (church without walls) in 2006. The name change also reflects an ideological shift in the church to openness and inclusivity. *kerksondermure* is the second largest Dutch Reformed congregation in the world.

"*Doxa deo*" is Latin for "the glory of God". Owing to the amalgamation of the two former AFM churches, Corpus Christi and Fontana, the ever growing Doxa Deo church was founded in March 1996 (Doxa Deo 'n kort historiese oorsig 2008). The then newly founded Doxa Deo would function as one congregation with two campuses, namely the Brooklyn campus and the East campus, which survive to this day as the axis of the already 18-campus-and-counting organisation. The Brooklyn and East campuses accommodate

2 000 and 1 000 people respectively per worship service each Sunday. These two campuses work very closely together on various fronts and most of the visual data collected for this study from Doxa Deo is shared by the Brooklyn and the East campuses. An image or advertisement that is created at the East campus will, therefore, often also be used by the Brooklyn campus and vice versa (Van der Linde 2008). In general, Doxa Deo functions as a bilingual organisation, switching between English and Afrikaans. For the purposes of this study I consider the Doxa Deo Brooklyn and East campuses as Afrikaans churches, owing to the fact that in these geographic areas, they function in mainly Afrikaans communities. The language used in the data from Doxa Deo in this study does, however, alternate between English and Afrikaans.

## **2.1 Church size categories and the Afrikaans corporate church**

Routhage (1983:1), the initiator of categorising churches according to size, develops four main categories of churches, primarily according to active member numbers: the family church, the pastoral church, the program church and the corporation church. Active members are considered to be those individuals who attend worship services and church activities at a given congregation with some measure of frequency. Active member numbers are usually determined by considering the average attendance of main worship services over a one-year period (Rothauge 1983:1). Apart from basing his theories on church size and active member numbering, Rothauge (1983) also considers the nature of interpersonal relationships and the format of ministry in a given congregation. Although Rothauge's theories on church size categories are rather aimed at gearing congregations towards better new member ministry, they can illustrate the functioning of the three churches and shed light on the nature of the visual material under analysis in this study. A brief explanation of the family church, the pastoral church and the program church is provided, after which the corporate church is discussed in greater detail to include a positioning of Moreletapark, kerksondemure and Doxa Deo according to Rothauge's definitions and theories and Oswald (1991) and Mann's (1998) expansions and comments on Rothauge.

Mann (1998:20-21) makes two useful divisions of Rothauge's categories. She firstly distinguishes between churches which function as organisms and those which function as organisations and secondly, between churches which are group-centred and those which are pastor-centred. According to Mann (1998:20), the two churches which function as and

resemble an organism are the family church and the pastoral church and the two churches which function as an organisation are the program and corporate church.

Organism churches have an intuitively apprehended central relationship in which the congregation's identity lies inherent. In the case of the family church this central relationship exists between the congregation members as a primary group or single cell, and in the case of the pastoral church between the central pastor and the congregation members (Mann 1998:20). Identity in the organism is not shaped or planned, but is inherent in the central relationships. In the larger organisation churches, the program and the corporate church, owing to varied membership and planning, identity is not so apparent or intuitively grasped and the leadership invests much energy into constructing a unifying identity for the diverse congregation (Mann 1998:21), which is often accomplished through communication and branding strategies (see 2.2). Organisation, therefore, serves to bring the group together under a single, planned identity.

In the group-centred versus pastor-centred distinction, Mann (1998:21) refers to the manner in which the organism or organisation centres its life: around the group or around the central pastor. According to Mann (1998:20-21), the family and program churches are more group-centred as opposed to the pastoral and corporate churches which are more pastor-centred. The family church is group-centred because of its close relational ties and the program church because the congregation is too large for the pastor to take personal care all the members (Mann 1998:22). The pastoral church is, as the name suggest, more pastor-centred, as in this setting close relationships develop between the pastor and the congregation members, because they are few enough for the pastor to take care of. In the corporate church a central figure is needed "to project a large enough symbolic presence ... to unify a diverse and energetic community" (Mann 1998:23). A short description of the other three types of churches, namely the family church, the pastoral church and the program church, is given to contextualise the corporate church and to place the three churches in this study in Rothauge's (1983) framework.

### ***2.1.1 The family church: a group-centred organism***

Set in rural areas, small towns and some urban centres and with up to 50 active members, the family church, according to Rothauge (1983:3), has "the basic dynamics of a one-cell unit, such as a family with strong parental figures in control of the norms and changes in the family life". Strong interpersonal ties and one-on-one relationships characterise the

family church and it is also known for mutual ministry and co-operation (Rothauge 1983:3). Owing to the intimate love and care between congregation members, communication is not limited to that which happens inside church walls but extends to extra-congregational interpersonal communication between members of ‘the family’ (Rothauge 1983:4). The congregation member is conceptualised as being part of a collective or family and not necessarily as being an individual (Rothauge 1983:7), which is more likely to be the case in the larger churches in Rothauge’s model, such as the program church and the corporate church.

### **2.1.2 The pastoral church: a pastor-centred organism**

Unlike in the family church, clergy find themselves at the centre of the pastoral church (Oswald 1991:3). The central pastor acts as the leader of the church, surrounded by a leadership circle (Rothauge 1983:10). With between 50 and 150 active members, the pastoral church is slightly larger than the family church and is usually set in towns and suburbs with two to three cells of close relations and pastoral care (Rothauge 1983:10). Mann (1998:4) describes the pastoral church as “a multi-cell organism — a coalition of several overlapping family-friendship networks unified around the person and role of the pastor”.

The family structure of the family church is not entirely dissolved by the larger numbers of the pastoral church, as it operates, according to Rothauge (1983:11), “as a super-family with a ‘big daddy’”. For Oswald (1991:3), the pastoral church has a “sense of itself as a family where everyone knows everyone else”. Strong feelings of belonging and of oneness can therefore be found in the pastoral church and interpersonal relationships between congregation members remain a prominent trait (Oswald 1991:4).

The central leader provides pastoral care for virtually all members of the congregation and members respond with loyalty and attention (Oswald 1991:3). The prominence of the central leader increases more and more, also to outsiders or prospective members of the church (Rothauge 1983:12), which culminates at times in a prominent and sometimes charismatic persona, similar to the one found at the head of the corporate church. With a larger congregation such as the pastoral church, communication between the leadership of the church and the congregation members becomes more important for effectiveness (Rothauge 1983:11). The interpersonal communication between congregation members, in terms of church life, starts to be encroached upon by organisational communication.

Organisation in the pastoral church is flexible and casual and changes to incorporate different tasks, as according to Rothauge (1983:16), “organization is not a key issue in their life. Strong family ties and an effective pastoral leader stand out in vital churches of this size”. Because of its multi-cellular structure, versus the single-cellular structure of the family church, the pastoral church can offer its members and involved parties a greater diversity of talents and associations (Rothauge 1983:25).

### ***2.1.3 The program church: a group-centred organisation***

The program church has 150 to 350 active members and is usually set in larger towns, urban and growing suburban areas (Rothauge 1983:17). Owing to this increase in numbers, the central leader or pastor can no longer keep contact with the entire congregation and he or she now acts as enabler or chief administrator of the church (Rothauge 1983:17). The pastoral work of the clergy therefore now resides in administration, which according to Oswald (1991:5), centres around planning and producing quality programmes for the church. Personal care for members by the pastor is replaced by various programmes (Oswald 1991:5).

Church life evolves around a variety of programmes, groups, activities and worship services. The success of a program church depends on democratic organisation and leadership by the laity, who take over some of the pastoral functions (Rothauge 1983:17-18; Oswald 1991:5). The central leader’s pastoral caregiving is now directed at the lay leaders of the abovementioned programmes and activities (Oswald 1991:5). The father-figure of the pastoral church becomes a facilitator, and according to Rothauge (1983:18), “[t]he major decisions are made in representative governing bodies, such as the vestry and program councils”.

In such a large congregation, creating good communication and unity is very important (Rothauge 1983:18). Members might often feel as though too many things are going on at the church without their knowledge and it is therefore essential to ensure that events are communicated adequately and that programme areas are integrated meaningfully (Rothauge 1983:19). Church members are viewed as individuals, rather than as part of a collective as is the case in the family and pastoral church (Rothauge 1983:20). Interpersonal relationships are therefore no longer so close and intimate and some members might know one another only superficially, owing to the congregation’s size (Rothauge 1983:25).



#### **2.1.4 The corporate church: a pastor-centred organisation**

For brevity's sake, the characteristics of the corporate church are discussed here in conjunction with an exposition of the relevant information on the three Afrikaans churches which position them as corporate churches. As mentioned in the Introduction, Rothauge (1983) devised and uses the term "corporation church", whereas Oswald (1991) and Mann (1998) use the term "corporate church" under Rothauge's exact definition. In this study the more contemporary term, "corporate church" is preferred to the older "corporation church", as the word "corporate" holds some useful associations in the mind of the reader which will aid in the understanding of the workings of this particular size church in the contemporary context of 2007-2008.

As previously mentioned, the corporate church functions as a large organisation encompassing active membership of 350 to 500 and over and it is usually set in cities and metropolitan areas (Rothauge 1983:26). Moreletapark, kerksondemure and Doxa Deo could all be defined as being corporate churches on the basis of size and setting. Both set in affluent Eastern Pretoria, Moreletapark and Doxa Deo have high active member numbers, Moreletapark with roughly 17 000 (Rabie 2009/03/24) and Doxa Deo with 11 679 people attending services each week over their 13 campuses (Van der Linde 2009/03/31). Doxa Deo's service attendance, therefore, averages 898 members per campus. Set in the equally affluent suburb, Centurion, just south of Pretoria, kerksondemure similarly hosts 11 000 members (Loubser 2009/04/06). All these churches fall comfortably in the 350-500 and over active member parameters for the corporate church.

The corporate church manifests in more complexity and diversity than the other size churches. In this pastor-centred organisation, the central pastor, amongst other pastors, now appears as the head pastor who becomes a personage in the church and community owing to his or her prominence and "acquires a legendary quality over a long pastorate" (Rothauge 1983:26). The head pastor is viewed and appreciated as a charismatic individual and a public or even celebrity figure (Oswald 1991:7; Rothauge 1983:29). The head pastor is still an administrator as the central pastor is in the pastoral church, but acts in this case more as "a chief administrative officer of substantive operations" (Oswald 1991:7).

The pastor-centredness in the corporate church is, however, different from the pastoral church as very few congregation members actually know the head pastor personally.

According to Rothauge (1983:26), an interpersonal relationship between clergy and church members is not a necessity in the corporate church. Mann (1998:23) points out that the head pastor acts as a symbolic presence, an identity in terms of which to understand the church's purpose. Rothauge (1983:26) similarly states that "[t]he head pastor becomes a symbol of unity and stability in a very complicated congregational life". Unifying prominent head pastors are present in all three of the churches in question. Doxa Deo and Moreletapark have a head pastor figure in their respective prominent senior pastors, Pastor Alan Platt and *Dominee* (Reverend) Dirkie van der Spuy. To a less public extent, kerksondemure has *Dominee* Fanie Venter as leader minister.

Doxa Deo's Alan Platt can be seen as an almost celebrity-like figure within Gauteng and perhaps even in national Christian circles, as he often acts as guest speaker at Christian conferences and gatherings. Rev. Dirkie van der Spuy from Moreletapark has also become quite a public figure in recent years, unfortunately thanks to media attention to a high court ruling in 2008 on Moreletapark's employment termination of a music teacher on the grounds of the teacher's homosexuality. Van der Spuy also publicly barred an appearance at Moreletapark church by the homosexual singer-performer-standup comedian Nataniël (De Villiers 2005). Reverend Fanie Venter from kerksondemure is, although well known in his community, not as publicly prominent as Platt and Van der Spuy.

Apart from their public prominence, for whatever reason, two of the head pastors of this study's churches are cited for giving their churches new direction under visionary leadership. Alan Platt has been with Doxa Deo since its inception in 1996 and with his city-reaching strategy built the Doxa Deo empire up to a 18 campus-strong organisation spread all over South Africa and abroad (Alan Platt senior pastor ... 2006). Van der Spuy is credited with starting the very popular and effective *Omgeegroep* (Care Groups) ministry at Moreletapark in 1988 (20 jaar van Omgeegroep ... 2009). The *Omgeegroep* ministry has since spread to many other Dutch Reformed congregations over South Africa.

The basic outline of the program church still exists in the corporate church, but in a much more multi-dimensional manner "with more divisions of activity and more layers of leadership ranks" (Rothauge 1983:27). Also similar to the program church, the lay leadership takes on a multi-level function, with the opportunity to climb the ladder of influence (Rothauge 1983:27). The staff is a sizeable one comprising various skilled professionals (Mann 1998:5). Each of the three churches enjoys a large and diverse staff.

Moreletapark has ten full time ministers (Oor die leraarspan 2009) and they also have a number of communication, administration and technical staff. kerksondemure has five full time ministers (Ons predikante 2008), and communication and administration staff. The Doxa Deo Brooklyn campus in Pretoria has 24 central ministry staff members (Span en personeel). The Doxa Deo East campus in Pretoria has 20 members in its leadership team and six members in its support team (Leierspan en Ondersteuningspan). Other staff members include administration, communication and technical personnel.

Programming at the corporate church is so extensive it even reaches into the daily aspects of members' lives. Rothauge (1983:27) cites the following as examples of programming at the corporate church: recreation facilities; various music groups, such as choirs; social activities for the youth; hospital facilities; affiliated retirement housing; and business networking. All three churches in this study have massive ministry program portfolios and in all three cases include: main worship services; ministries according to age groups, such as youth and children's ministries; marriage ministries; arts ministries; community and outreach programs; counselling services; training and enrichment courses; cell or Bible study groups; and men's and women's ministries. Doxa Deo is the only church that has its own school, which includes a pre-school, primary school, college (high school) and after school caretaking facilities (Doxa Deo skool 2008).

This diverse and wide-ranging nature of programming leads to the creation of small groups where personal relationships between congregation members tend to develop, as the corporate church is too large for all the members to "know everyone" (Rothauge 1983:27). Small groups are brought together during the Sunday worship service, which stands out as an event on the church's weekly schedule and is constructed as a rich experience of the highest quality for its large congregation (Oswald 1991:6). In the light of its nature and prolific programming, Mann (1998:5) views the corporate church as "a significant institutional presence in its community". The relationship between the church and the congregation is like that between an organisation and the public. Good public relations are paramount. Communication between the church as organisation and the members happens in a formal context.

One characteristic of the corporate church which should not be understated is its command of abundant resources (Oswald 1991:6), and this is also the case in Moreletapark, kerksondemure and Doxa Deo. As financial matters are often of a sensitive nature and because some of the churches requested specifically not to have any of their

financial data discussed in this dissertation, the specifics of their monthly income are not represented here in detail. I believe it would suffice to say that one can deduce from the fact that these churches are set in affluent areas, Pretoria East and Centurion, they enjoy substantial monthly contributions from their large number of members on top of support from the larger organisations with which they are affiliated. Moreletapark and kerksondemure are both part of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), under the central leadership of the General Synod and Doxa Deo subscribes to and forms part of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in South Africa. All of these churches, therefore, receive monetary support from their parent organisations.

Another indicator of the reach of churches' income and resources is the large estates they own, often in more than one location. kerksondemure's large worship and administrative church building is located on the corner of Hendrik Verwoerd Drive and Hippo Avenue in Centurion. Expansion into various satellite campuses, another common trait of the corporate church (Rothauge 1983:29), further testifies to Doxa Deo's growth and means.

In 1992, the Moreletapark congregation acquired a piece of land on Rubenstein Drive in Moreletapark, where they built the first of their impressive buildings for R4 680 595. For the year 2002/2003, Moreletapark drew up a R16,3 million budget with over 12 000 members and 300 *Omgeegroepes* (Care Groups). Under the leadership of the famous Christian speaker, Dr Bruce Wilkinson, R59 million was raised in the worship services for a new congregation centre. Building on the new *Woodlandssentrum* (Woodlands Centre) on De Villebois Mareuil Drive in Woodlands, Pretoria, started in 2005. Moreletapark had to hold six worship services at the Rubenstein centre on a Sunday morning to accommodate everyone. Personnel started the big move to the new Woodlands Centre in December 2009 (Rabie 2010), where the church is currently based. This new larger centre has four halls, adequately equipped studios for television and radio broadcasts, six kindergarten classrooms, and a play area. In addition, the congregation plans on opening a restaurant on the premises (Rabie 2010).

## **2.2 Communication and visual culture in the corporate church**

With a great command of resources, as well as a great demand from church members, comes the need for and use of various avenues of communication. The corporate church's prolific production of communication material is one of the main reasons why it was selected for the purposes of this study. Each of the churches selected for this study

employs various avenues of communication with their members, such as advertisements, in-house magazines, interactive multi-media websites and announcements and presentations in the main worship services.

Visual culture is created in Moreletapark, kerksondemure and Doxa Deo in similar ways. Sunday services form the basis for all communication in the church and it is also the foundation of the church's visual culture. At these services announcements are made before the sermon and printed versions are made available at the entrances to the church's main auditorium. During the announcements made by, usually, a member of the church's leadership, the three churches commonly employ digital slide presentations, showing advertisements of the church's activities, projected onto screens over or near the pulpit. On both these digital slides as well as on the printed announcement pamphlets the church will have its visual "look and feel" represented, mostly through the display of logos and visual identity elements.

In the churches' foyers one commonly finds, apart from the announcement pamphlets, various other printed materials ranging from posters to prospectuses, flyers, and brochures. All three of the churches also publish their own newsletters in the form of glossy magazines. Moreletapark publishes *Op pad* (En route), which was named *Nuwe Dimensie* (New Dimension) until early 2008; kerksondemure has a publication named after its abbreviation *ksm*; and Doxa Deo produces *focus* magazine. These newsletter magazines mostly contain feature articles on the churches' activities as well as articles containing a spiritual message, which are mainly written by the leadership or prominent figures in the church. These publications are important carriers of the visual culture of these churches, as they are read by most church members. Churches such as the ones in this study have significant numbers of elderly people, who are often unwilling to engage with the church through electronic avenues, such as the internet. This segment prefers printed materials and therefore reads these newsletter magazines religiously.

The church website is also a vessel for visual culture in Moreletapark, kerksondemure and Doxa Deo. The website serves as a central point of communication in these churches for members of the church as well as interested members from the public. Digital images that are used in the slide presentations on the Sunday services are often used on the website as well, and vice versa. Sometimes a single design is used in various media, for instance as a projection in the service, on the website, as well as in printed form. This is also the case with almost all digital images used as data in this study. The data used in

this study are representative of the various “spaces” or applications of visual culture in the three churches discussed above.

The audiences of this visual communication from the three churches are mainly Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans (Van Aswegen 2009; Rabie 2009/12/08; Van der Linde 2008), with the exception of a few members from other language and racial groups, and are also from middle to higher income groups. The visual communication of the three churches is mostly created by professional graphic designers in collaboration with dedicated communication teams. Moreletapark and Doxa Deo have full-time graphic designers on staff who do most of the design work. At Moreletapark, designs for printed materials and electronic marketing have to be approved by the Communication Manager or Communications Officer before release (Rabie 2009/12/08). Doxa Deo and *kerksondemure* follow similar collaborative processes.

In my opinion, Moreletapark, *kerksondemure* and Doxa Deo do much to establish their churches as brands and therefore employ certain corporate branding strategies. The head pastors of the three churches have become, to a certain extent, the “faces” of their respective church-brands. Each of these churches also has their own logos (Figures 2-4), colour schemes and use vision-mission statements. Doxa Deo even has a CD containing its branding material and instructions for communicators at the church. Typical of the organisation-type church in Mann’s (1998:21) terms, a great deal of effort is put into constructing a sense of identity in the corporate church. Here the corporate branding phenomenon of the mission/vision statement and strategic plan manifests towards this end of identity construction. Doxa Deo’s city-reaching strategy has already been mentioned and it unites its members under the following slogan: “Touching cities, changing nations” (The Doxa Deo dream 2006). Doxa Deo has also articulated specific mission, vision and strategy statements.<sup>1</sup> Moreletapark has extensive articulations of various mission, vision and value statements<sup>2</sup> for the congregation itself and even for separate ministries.

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<sup>1</sup> Doxa Deo’s vision statement reads: “Doxa Deo aims to transform 12 strategic international cities thereby influencing the nations with the primary focus being city-reaching and city-transformation” (The Doxa Deo dream 2006). The church’s mission statement is: “Doxa Deo is a church with a city transforming strategy striving to establish the Kingdom of God in every facet of the community. Campuses are the primary vehicle facilitating processes and ministry to transform the cities. This is achieved by developing the potential of the people living in the cities in order to: Surrender – a Passion for God reflected in a life of integrity; Serve – ‘n [*sic*] Passion for people reflected in a life of service; [and] Subdue – ‘n [*sic*] Passion for the Kingdom reflected in a life committed to city transformation” (The Doxa Deo dream 2006). Doxa Deo also uses the following strategic statement or slogan: “mobilizing ... infiltrating ... modeling” (The Doxa Deo dream 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Far too many of these statements exist to be represented here adequately. Moreletapark has the following main vision statement, as translated: “We dream that everyone will be a follower of Jesus, who will make followers of Jesus” (Oor ons gemeente 2009). “Our journey[:] Be like Jesus, Do what Jesus does; [and] take people along on the journey” as translated, is used as main mission statement (Oor ons gemeente 2009). For

kerksondemure also follows this route of comprehensive verbalisation of mission, vision, values and identity statements.<sup>3</sup> Various ministries and programs at the three churches also receive their own branding (see 2.3).



Figure 2: Moreletapark's logo,<sup>4</sup> 2009.  
(Welkom by Moreletapark Gemeente 2009).



Figure 3: kerksondemure's logo, 2010.  
(Voorblad 2010).



Figure 4: Doxa Deo's logo, 2010.  
(Welkom by Oos Kampus 2010).

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further descriptions of the vision and mission statements of particular ministries please consult Moreletapark's website.

<sup>3</sup> Again these statements are various and miscellaneous. kerksondemure strives towards the following core values, when translated: "Relationships: We exist for relationships with God, believers and the world. Fulfillment: We live surrendered to and in the power of the Holy Spirit that cultivates true life change... Followers: We help one another to be radically obedient followers of Jesus. Renewal: We want to share in God's passion to bring his world to renewal (wholeness). Diversity: We welcome the fact that not everyone is, thinks, feels and does the same. We thus welcome diversity and attempt to be contemporary" (Meer oor ons 2008). Mission and vision statements for separate ministries are available on kerksondemure's website.

<sup>4</sup> The colour of this logo could not be reproduced here to look exactly like in the original electronic file. This is the case with most images containing blue in this dissertation. My analyses are, however, based on the original images.

### 2.3 Gendered ministries

As previously mentioned, all three churches in this study have various ministries – a feature the corporate church inherited from the program church. Moreletapark, kerksondemure and Doxa Deo have great numbers of ministries, representing diverse activities and interests in the churches. For example, Moreletapark boasts over 50 different ministries which include the following: the *Omgeegroep* ministry; an arts ministry; various ministries according to life phases, such as age and marital status; community and social ministries; training opportunities; prayer ministries; a gifting ministry; men’s and women’s ministries; missionary work and evangelism; technical support; an African ministry; a Christian book store and a kindergarten (Bedieninge 2009). kerksondemure and Doxa Deo each have unique diverse ministry structures as well.

Emerging from the Christian belief in essentialism (discussed in Chapter Three) the gendering of ministries in churches is commonly practiced. All the churches under consideration in this study follow this trend: Moreletapark has the *Mannebediening* (Men’s Ministry) and the *Vrouebediening* (Women’s Ministry); kerksondemure has the *Vonkel Vroue* (Sparkle Women) women’s ministry and the *Adam Bediening* (Adam Ministry) men’s ministry; and *Doxa Deo* has the Flourish women’s ministry and a men’s ministry which is branded in a weaker fashion than the Flourish ministry. Certain types of ministries are also regularly associated with specific genders – the hospitality ministry, for example, is often associated with femininity, as are arts, handwork or crafting ministries. Most forms of leadership and teaching ministries in these churches are often associated with masculinity. This preoccupation with gender roles is founded on essentialist beliefs about gender, which assume that each gender has its own function to fulfill.

Material from the churches’ men’s and women’s ministries are especially suited to the sampling criteria used in study, as their promotional material is mostly visual or multi modal and contains depictions of male and/or female figures or references to masculinity and/or femininity. A large part of the data analysed in this study is, therefore, produced in relation to the three churches’ men’s and women’s ministries, but the ministries are not the only originator of the data, as is discussed in Chapters Three and Four respectively.

Although one can appreciate that branding is needed in the corporate church to create unity and identity in large fragmented congregations, one wonders, however, at the agenda behind the gendered branding of ministries, a practice common in mainstream



product marketing. The existence of these gender-branded ministries warrants description and discussion, not only because they produced a significant part of the data sampled for this study, but also because they can provide clues about the congregations' possible gender ideologies. Official formulations of gender ideology do not exist in the three churches in this study. I would assume that this is because gender remains a highly contentious topic in the church and that as a result, churches do not want to expose themselves by formalising their position, nor open themselves up to critique by instating policies on gender. The beliefs uncovered in this study are, therefore, "unspoken" ideologies in the three churches. A discussion of the information available on Moreletapark, kerksondermure and Doxa Deo's men's and women's ministries at the time this study's data sample was drawn is given below.

### **2.3.1 Men's ministries**

On Moreletapark's website, the *Mannebediening* (Men's Ministry) has its own page (Mannebediening 2008) which contains the following statements regarding the men's ministry, when translated:

#### Mission

We attempt to win other men for God continuously. To also equip them as spirit-filled, faithful disciples of Jesus and then to mobilise them to lead more men to Jesus.

#### Vision

That every man will be a man after God's heart. So he will also be a blessing unto his family and others.

How is this vision and mission attained?

We attempt to get other men involved in our activities. As such he becomes isolated from his responsibilities and worries. Then we try to create an atmosphere which is, depending on the situation, conducive to teaching or for contemplation and self-investigation, or conducive to a true meeting with God.

#### Activities

A-teams: Where 3 to 5 men to talk one another on a weekly basis about their spiritual growth and about things that matter in their lives.

#### Worship evenings

A get-together on a Friday or Saturday for praise and worship.

## Camps and caucusing

We leave the city and go and isolate ourselves in the bushveld. This gives us the opportunity to experience and appreciate God's love anew.

### Father and child camps

During these weekends dads are strengthened and re-equipped for his [*sic*] role as father. The emphasis falls on strengthening the bond between a dad and his daughter or son, however.

### 4 x 4 camps

This is like a regular men's camp, except that we also give boys time to play with their toys for a bit.

### Outside-congregation men's camps

We also offer men's camps and caucuses for other congregations, if they ask us.

The Lord wants to bless every man, his wife and children through Moreletapark's Men's Ministry.

In the information above regarding the *Mannebediening*, it is evident that activity is stressed in this ministry. In the example discussed here from the *Mannebediening*, one finds abundant references to mobility and to outdoor activities. In the above text one also sees how masculinity is linked to godliness, as each man is envisioned as a man after God's heart and as it is the ministry's mission to make more men disciples of Jesus. Men are also framed in the context of their families in the *Mannebediening* website information above. Chapter Three conceptualises and discusses each of these topics.

A document entitled "*Hoekom 'n Mannebediening?*" (Why a Men's Ministry?) (Appendix 4), received with the data collected from Moreletapark, serves as a manifesto for the church's gender ideology regarding men and masculinity. The document explains Moreletapark's understanding of Biblical male roles in marriage, the family and in the workplace. A full analysis of the gender statements in this document would be in order, but for the sake of brevity I highlight only a few. Translated, the opening statement firmly frames Afrikaner society as patriarchal:

In especially the Afrikaans society, the patriarchal principle still applies strongly, that is where the man is still head of the house, even though he does not serve the Lord. If you have reached the man and he starts on a journey with the Lord, you have immediately reached the family. Testimonies [of] where this has happened confirm it unequivocally.

Regarding the above statement Moreletapark seems to be condoning male patriarchal headship inasmuch as it provides a spiritual entry point into the family. Male headship and breadwinning is a prominent theme in the data in this study and these roles are offset against subordinated female roles of service and caregiving. In the “*Hoekom ‘n Mannebediening?*” document women’s roles in the family are downplayed, whereas men are made solely responsible for the morality and spiritual wellbeing of the entire family. In this case one could argue that the sex awarded the most responsibility is the sex to which the most power is attributed.

A man’s responsibility to his children is stressed in the document, especially as a role model. In the following translation the appropriate type of relationship between a man and a woman is also prescribed:

The man is head of the house and he must take on the responsibilities that the Lord placed on him. As early as Genesis 3:16 it is written “...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says “Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God”. This is the order that God instated.

Judging from this document, Moreletapark espouses a fairly conservative gender ideology; the origins of such traditional Christian gender beliefs are discussed in Chapter Three. A further indication of Moreletapark’s gender ideology regarding men and masculinity is found in two articles and an electronic document related to their *Daniëlkonferensie* (Daniel conference) held from 14-16 March 2008. Figures 5 and 6 show two articles which serve to advertise the Daniel conference in *Nuwe Dimensie* magazine. The first article (Figure 5) explains that the Daniel conference is derived from the Esther conferences (discussed in 2.3.2 below) and a general call for South Africa to turn back to God. The Daniel conference fashions this call exclusively for men. The first paragraph of the article sketches the perceived dire South African situation by referring to, as translated: “crime, murder, abortion, divorce, HIV/AIDS, moral degeneration, famine, financial crises and loss of employment”. This citation of disaster factors is common in the crisis in masculinity hypothesis, which promotes the idea that men and masculinity are in a state of crisis, also in South Africa, owing to various social, political and economic factors.



Figure 5: Moreletapark “Suid-Afrika, draai terug na die God van Daniël!” (South Africa, turn back to the God of Daniel!) feature article in *Nuwe Dimensie* magazine, December 2007/ January 2008. (De Villiers 2007/2008:5).



Figure 6: Moreletapark “Daniël-konferensie vir mans wat 'n verskil wil maak” (Daniel conference for men who want to make a difference) feature article in *Nuwe Dimensie* magazine, February 2008. (De Villiers 2008:5).

The Biblical figure of Daniel is strongly related to Christian masculinity through these two articles. Similar to the tone of the Esther conferences, a certain measure of nationalist sentiment is present in Moreletapark’s appropriation of the story of Daniel. According to Biblical lore, as representatives of Jewish nobility, Daniel and three of his friends were held captive in Babylonia and were trained as advisors to the court. Despite their Babylonian education, Daniel and his friends never forsook their Jewish beliefs and customs, for which they were persecuted, but survived miraculously. Daniel’s steadfastness, in this regard, is highlighted in the first article, as the author asserts future hope for the dismal South African situation and, as translated, stresses Daniel’s: “non-negotiable loyalty and dependence on God”. Masculine headship and authority are also foregrounded in the first article with this statement, when translated: “We are convinced that the Lord is calling up the men of South Africa now to a Daniel conference, to meet the God of Daniel and to take authority over their families and over South Africa”. This sentiment is echoed in a similar statement in the second article (Figure 6), translated as: “The call is for *you* as man: come attend the Daniel conference and take authority over the future of your family and South

Africa. Come become the difference you want to see in your family, our country and in the world”. Male superiority in both public and private settings is thus promoted. An electronic document providing an account of the Daniel conference (Shields 2008), received with data sampling from Moreletapark and attached as Appendix 5, makes a similar claim in this regard, which reads, when translated:

The solution for South Africa is not set in a couple of men in political, economic or military positions of power, but that every father, as head of his family, will be converted and will accept God Triune, as his only saviour and sanctifier. Family structures and unconditional obedience to Him [God] is non-negotiable.

The abovementioned document also places the burden of national redemption squarely on men’s shoulders with the following statement, as translated: “The solution for this country’s problems lies in the men of South Africa’s ability to turn themselves back to God, to admit we were wrong and to become unconditionally obedient to Him [God] ... The men in this country must let the kingdom of God relive”.

kerksondemure’s *Adam Bediening* (Adam Ministry) has similar activities and ideologies as *Mannebediening*. A bookmark containing general information about the ministry states, when translated, the following: “The Adam Ministry of kerksondemure equips men (with the necessary skills) to live out our God-given role as King, Priest and Prophet visibly in our homes, church and in the world. (society/community). [sic] Our ministry focuses on various different facets of manhood”. This text contains strong traces of Christian male headship ideology, which is central in Christian gender ideology and is further investigated in Chapters Three and Four. It is interesting that kerksondemure attributes the role(s) of king, priest and prophet to men, as these roles are attributed to Jesus in the Bible, and not to all men. Reference to the male role(s) of king, priest and prophet is also made in the “*Hoekom ‘n Manne bediening?*” (Why a men’s ministry document) discussed above. One, therefore, again sees a problematic conflation of manliness with godliness and authority – a common practice in Christian culture. The excerpt above also stresses men’s roles as influencers, not only in their immediate context, but also in the public world. This stands in contrast to the mostly private and domestic roles reserved for women in the churches in this study, as discussed in the following section. The rest of the bookmark contains contact details of men responsible for various functions or activities in the ministry similar to that of the *Mannebediening* at Moreletapark, such as Adam camps, Father-child camps, and Adam breakfasts. The *Adam Bediening*’s activities are discussed in Chapter Three as Figure 27.

Doxa Deo's men's ministry does not have a specific name, unlike its women's ministry. Some of this ministry's material is discussed in Chapter Three as Figures 12 and 13. Like the *Adam Bediening* bookmark discussed above, these figures stress men's careers and success in the public world. Doxa Deo's gender ideology is also hinted at in an article in *focus* magazine (discussed in Chapter Four as Figure 67) entitled, "*Manne 'n perfekte afdruk*" (Men a perfect imprint) (Krüger 2008:24). The article is about a series of early morning men's meetings held at Doxa Deo's Brooklyn campus attended by about 250 men. The author, Jehan Krüger, uses masculinised terms to describe the men's spiritual experience, such as "*Gideonsbende*" (Gideon gang). He also emphasises heroism in Christian men, arguably a practice made popular by Christian self-help author John Eldredge (2001) discussed in Chapter Three. Masculine authority is also highlighted in this article in the following statement, as translated: "He [God] calls each of us to be a brave hero; to reach the highest highs and to act and speak with authority". Proclamations of feminine authority are nowhere to be found in the data of this study. As is the case in Moreletapark and *kerksondemure's* ideology regarding men, this article also associates masculinity with Christ, as men are called a "perfekte afdruk" (a perfect imprint) of Jesus, their prototype, which is a mystery to mirror (Krüger 2008:24). The article also refers to men's marital and financial problems, linking them with both the private realm of marriage and the public realm of breadwinning (see Chapter Three).

### 2. 3. 2 *Women's ministries*

Similar to Moreletapark's *Mannebediening*, the *Vrouebediening* (Women's Ministry) also has its own webpage on the church's website (Vrouebediening 2008). The following is stated about the women's ministry, when translated:

The *Vrouebediening* is for all the women of the congregation and wider.

We have various opportunities throughout the year at which women are built up spiritually, socialise together and glorify and praise God's name. There is something for everyone!

#### Our Vision

Spirit-filled women who, in dependence on God, live out their creation purpose in their marriages, families, communities and the world.

#### Our Mission

Create opportunities where the Holy Spirit can set women free, can equip and inspire them in order to live out their creation purpose in their marriages, families, communities and the world.

#### Our activities

Quarterly mass meetings – women's festivals where ministry opportunities are created (700+ women).

Camps: where women can be sequestered to receive teaching, experience God and minister to one another with prophecies, counseling and love (±220 women per camp).

Participation of as many women as possible in weekly Bible study groups. Different groups cater for women with young children, also for those who wish to attend without their children.

An intercession team which prays for the activities of the *Vrouebediening*, the country and for all women in need. This team is divided into prayer groups that have regular prayer events.

Women's Mornings where current issues are discussed / where spiritual ministry is served.

In the above information on the Moreletapark *Vrouebediening*, spirituality and social relationships are stressed. Spirituality is brought even more to the fore in that women are envisioned to be filled with the Holy Spirit and through the women's intercession<sup>5</sup> and prayer teams. An essential female creation purpose is also referred to (indicating the

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<sup>5</sup> In Christian belief intercession is praying which is done on behalf of someone or something else.

gendered nature of Christian calling, as is also the case in the other churches' women's ministry material), which must be lived out for the benefit of husbands, children, communities and the world. Women are thus established as servants of others, using their gifts and talents not for themselves, but for those around them. As also with *Doxa Deo* and *kerksondemure*, gender specific camps, meetings and Bible studies are hosted, pointing to the idea that Christian men and women practice their faith in dissimilar ways.

In terms of the Bible study groups it is indicated that particular allowances are made for women with young children, insinuating that women are mainly responsible for infant child care. This close association between women and primary childcare is common in the data from all three churches. In the information on the *Vrouebediening* webpage, it is mentioned that the ministry wants to create opportunities for the Holy Spirit to set women free, but this freedom is, paradoxically, not an individualised freedom – as envisaged by the women's liberation movement – but a freedom whereby service and self-sacrifice to others are implied.

A further hint at the gender ideology connected to Moreletapark's women's ministry and a reference to the connection between femininity and nationalism<sup>6</sup> is found in a letter to women from Moreletapark's *Vrouebediening* about the *Ester Konferensies* (Esther Conferences) of 2007 (Figure 7). Presumably the Ester Conference(s) is the female counterpart of Moreletapark's Daniel Conference. The letter invites women to national Esther Conferences held in several districts in South Africa after the success of the first conference in March 2007 in Pretoria. The Biblical tale of Esther is often cited as an example of Christian femininity in Christian teaching because it places prominence on the importance of female beauty, as well as female self-sacrifice for the nation.<sup>7</sup> The tale of Esther involves a Jewish virgin, Esther, being chosen from a number of possible women to marry the Persian king, Ahasuerus. Esther is described to have been very beautiful and managed to captivate the king, who then chose her as his new wife, after expelling his first wife for disobedience. Because Esther enjoyed so much favour with the king, she later managed to successfully prevent the genocide of her people, the Jews.

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on the relationship between gender and nationalism in the Afrikaner context, see McClintock (1993).

<sup>7</sup> Esther had to approach the king out of turn, an offence punishable by death, in order to invite him to a banquet where he was successfully reminded that Esther's Jewish cousin, Mordecai, had saved him from an assassination attempt. This led the king to honour Mordecai and bestow rights on the Jews, by which they could protect themselves against their enemies.





Figure 7: Moreletapark “Ester Konferensie 2007” (Esther Conference 2007) letter.

The story of Esther implies that women can make a difference through their beauty, captivating nature and self-sacrifice for the benefit of their nation. It is this theme with which the Esther Conference(s) is imbued. On the letterhead in Figure 7, the slogan under “Ester Konferensie 2007” reads: “Gekroon vir die Koning ter wille van jou volk” (Crowned for the King for the sake of your Nation). One assumes that “king” in this context refers to God. The letter suggests that women should be crowned and become Christian servants for the sake of South Africa. Although the whole of South Africa is referred to in this regard, the Afrikaner nationalist term “volk” (nation) is used, instead of the less-politically laden word “nasion” (nation).

In this letter, women are again strongly associated with spirituality as “a shift in the spiritual dimension” is referred to. The connection between spirituality and femininity is further investigated in Chapter Four. In the letter Jesus is conceptualised as women’s first love in this letter, linking women to Jesus on a romantic level. Other feminised Christian references are also present in the letter. Women are said to be “clothed in Jesus” when

they leave the conference, invoking the image of women in white dresses discussed in Chapter Four. Reference is also made to women being crowned as Queen Esther was, in order to apply the favour they enjoy with the King [God], to the benefit of the people whom they stand in for. The issue of Afrikaner nationalism is of concern here, as the question begs: For whom do white Afrikaner women stand in for? Surely the Afrikaner people are implied in this regard, deduced from the fact that Esther stood in for her ethnicity, the Jews, in the Biblical story to which this letter owes its theme. These themes are also represented in a feature article (Figure 8) in Moreletapark's *Nuwe Dimensie* (New Dimension) magazine, which describes the Jewish Purim festival, which celebrates Ester's story and Jewish deliverance from genocide.



**Sendingnuus**

## Purim - Die fees van Ester

Ester 9:20-32  
deur Marisa Maree

**D**ie Jode gedenk in Maart-  
maand die oorwinning en  
uitkoms wat God vir Israel  
gegee het oor Haman se bose plan om  
die Jode uit te wis. Die twee dae-lange  
fees word gekenmerk deur uitbundige  
blydskap, rus en die gee van geskenke.  
Purim is die meervoud van Pur, wat  
"lot" beteken, wat dui op Haman se  
poging om met die lot te bepaal in  
watter maand die ses miljoen Jode in  
die Persiese ryk van koning Ahasveros  
doodgemaak sou word.

Tydens 'n groot fees was die mooie  
koningin Vasti onwillig om op versoek  
voor die koning se gaste te verskyn.  
God gebruik haar ongehoorsaamheid  
om een van die grusaamste aanslagte in  
die geskiedenis teen sy volk af te weer.  
Vasti se wegwag maak plek vir 'n nuwe,  
meer beeldskone bruid, Ester, wat deur  
God in 'n uiters goddelose, maar baie  
invloedryke omgewing geplaas word.

Ester se invloedseer strek so ver as  
haar man, Ahasveros, se koninkryk:  
Oor 127 provinsies, van Indië tot by  
Ethiopië. Hier, te midde van 'n vreemde  
volk, taal en kultuur, lê sy haar lewe  
neer om redding te bewerk vir haar  
volk. Sy waag dit om die koning te vra  
om haar volk te spaar!

God nooi jou vandag uit: "Vra My, en Ek  
gee volke vir jou as elendom, die hele  
aarde as jou besitting." Ons Koning se  
heerskappy strek oor die hele aarde  
en so ook ons outoriteit en  
bemagtiging in Hom. Sal jy  
dit waag om die Koning  
te vra vir die redding  
van 'n nasie? Sal jy  
self die oplossing  
word deur  
die Koning te  
gaan verteen-  
woordig in 'n  
vreemde land  
en kultuur?  
Wil jy nie vir  
God vra en  
vertrou dat  
Hy groot en  
magtige dinge  
sal doen deur jou  
sleer van invloed by  
jou werk en op ander  
terreine waar jy elke dag  
beweeg nie?

In 480 vC het die vyand deur Haman 'n  
aanslag geloods om ses miljoen Jode uit  
te wis. Sy aanslag het eeuë later geslaag

tydens die regime van Hitler waarin  
ses miljoen Jode gruwelik uitgemoor  
is. Vandag staan die getal Jode in Israel  
weereens naby die ses miljoen kerf.

Die vyand het nog nooit sy  
wapens neergelê nie en  
Iran dreig Israel tans  
met 'n kernoorlog.

In Psalm 122:6  
sê Dawid: "Bid  
dat Jerusalem  
vrede mag  
hê, dat hulle  
wat hom  
liefhet, rustig  
mag woon."  
Net die Prins  
van Vrede kan  
ware, innerlike  
vrede vir elke  
Jood individueel  
asook vir Israel as 'n  
volk bring. Mag die Here jou  
lei en oorvloedige liefde skenk wanneer  
jy intree vir hierdie volk en vir ons sen-  
delinge daar!

*Luister, dogter, luister  
goed: neem afskeid  
van u volk en u fami-  
lie, want u skoonheid  
bekoor die koning. U  
behoort aan hom, u  
moet hom eer.*

*Psalm 45:11,12*

14 **NUWE DIMENSIE** NG Gemeente Moreletapark

Figure 8: Moreletapark "Purim - Die fees van Ester" (Purim – The festival of Esther) feature article in *Nuwe Dimensie* magazine, March 2007. (Maree 2007:14).

An article which reports on National Women’s day of 9 August as well as the National Esther conference of 2007, entitled: “*die sluier is gelig*” (the veil is lifted) (Figure 9), appears in Moreletapark’s *Op pad* (En route) magazine. On the right side of the article’s layout three photographs are shown of people praying at an event. In the bottom left corner of the layout, a female figure is shown with closed eyes, raising her face upwards. The tone of the article is similar to that of the Esther Conference letter (Figure 7). In the opening paragraph, the author makes the following statement, as translated: “Women’s Day, 9 August 2008, was different to other Women’s Days. This year women did not celebrate their rights, but their relationship with Christ” (Meyer 2008:3). This statement betrays an obvious, though unmotivated, aversion to the celebration of women’s rights.



Figure 9: Moreletapark “*die sluier is gelig*” (the veil is lifted) feature article in *Op pad* magazine, September 2008. (Meyer 2008:3).

A year programme for kerksondemure's *Vonkelvroue*<sup>8</sup> (Sparkle Women) was collected during data sampling (analysed in Chapter Four as Figure 53). The section on the right of the *Vonkelvroue* programme displays general information about the ministry, which warrants discussion here. The *Vonkelvroue* logo is portrayed as superimposed over these images and the phrase “*in aksie*” (in action) appears under the logo in a strip of pink, reading, together with the logo, “*Vonkelvroue in aksie*” (Sparkle women in action). In the bottom two thirds the ministry's vision and mission statements are provided, offering a glimpse of kerksondemure's gender ideology regarding women. When translated this section reads as the following:

*Vonkelvroue in Action*<sup>9</sup> is kerksondemure's [*sic*] women's organisation which takes hands together [*sic*] to offer various opportunities throughout the year to women of the congregation and area and to grow together spiritually and to enjoy womanhood.

Here is our vision and mission which form the point of departure for every event that we organise:

Our Vision. To reach out to women in a creative manner in order to empower them spiritually and emotionally, while glorifying God's name. We, therefore, want to make a difference in their lives and want to bring about life change.

Our Mission. To make God a reality in the lives of our women, to reach them through the use of our gifts and talents. (But this alone in prayer, on our knees and in His [God's] power.)

These statements about the *Vonkelvroue* ministry share many commonalities with website information for Moreletapark's *Vrouebediening* discussed before. An emphasis is placed on spiritual growth, as well as spiritual and emotional empowerment of women (achieved through relationships with one another), which again connects women to spirituality and emotionality. One also notices essentialist hints at the uniqueness of womanhood and the idea that women should use their gifts and talents in a creative way for the good of others. From these statements, it is clear that the main action which the ministry busies itself with is that of organising and hosting events, as is also apparent from their calendar on the left side of this figure. It is, therefore, also implied that their gifts and talents mentioned, would be employed to successfully run events. Women are thus typecast into domestic roles in the church, and service is prominently connected to femininity in this regard. The “action”

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<sup>8</sup> The women's ministries' names are problematised in Chapter Four.

<sup>9</sup> This phrase indicates that the full title of the kerksondemure women's ministry is “*Vonkelvroue in Action*” as opposed to merely “*Vonkelvroue*”. This is, however, one of only two uses (see also Figure 53) in the data collected for this study of this full title and it stands in opposition to the name reflected as “*Vonkelvroue*” on the logo (see Figure 52).

which is proposed in the *Vonkelvroue* material is, therefore, different from the “action” implied in the *Adam Bediening* material, which entails attending breakfasts (not necessarily cooking them), worshipping and camping, as can be seen on their programme in Figure 27.

No general information similar to that regarding *Vrouebediening* and *Vonkelvroue* considered above was available on Doxa Deo’s Flourish ministry when the data sample was drawn. Flourish ministry does, however, produce a large amount of visual material, which is analysed in Chapter Four. The exact flavour of Doxa Deo’s ideology is, however, illuminated by an article entitled “And God Created Woman ...” (Appendix 6), which I received from their communications official during data collection for this study. The article was written by a woman named Carol-Anne van Loggerenberg, who is responsible for the financial management of the church, together with her husband, Muller van Loggerenberg. The article’s main argument is that women are endowed with unique spiritual gifts. In this article, Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:1) makes the following statement:

God wants to liberate women in a way that releases them into their full purpose – without undermining their original design. True submission is often understood by men and women. Women do not need another liberation movement, they need to allow Christ to transform their lives and restore their creation purpose. We need to surrender to Him. Instead of trying to prove yourself (“God, let me show you what I can do”), let God show you what He can do through you.

Apart from this statement’s open disdain for the women’s liberation movement, it implies that women have an original design for a specific creation purpose, into which they must be restored. The essentialist and biological determinist undertones of this statement are quite obvious and it implies that a Christian person’s destiny or calling on earth is gendered according to his or her biological sex. It is interesting to note that this emphasis on creation purpose is not present in Doxa Deo’s men’s ministry, or in those of the other churches. It is almost as if the male creation purpose of headship and breadwinning, discussed in Chapter Three, is taken for granted, to such an extent, it does not even need mentioning.

The essentially female, unique gifts which Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:1-2) believes women are endowed with are influence, emotions and spirituality. She struggles to provide Biblical, or even logical, justification for why these gifts are essentially feminine. In terms of influence, Proverbs 31 is cited, and the influence a woman is gifted with, from this

example, is not in the public sphere, but in the domestic sphere. A woman's timidity, generosity, willingness to serve and submission to her husband are especially stressed by Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:1-2). One finds it difficult to understand what type of influence is implied in this regard, as a woman's passivity and servitude is emphasised in this article. It is also strongly inferred that women are supposed to use their gifts and talents, which in some cases are implied to be essentially feminine, to the benefit of others and not themselves – an idea which stands in direct opposition to the active public career life and individual pursuits emphasised in Doxa Deo's men's ministry materials. These ideas are genealogically connected to the ideology of the *volksmoeder* (mother of the nation) pertinent in Afrikaner culture (see Chapter Four).

In terms of the so-called feminine gift of emotionality, Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:1) fails to provide any Biblical evidence which can substantiate her claim that women are necessarily gifted with emotion, but seems to depart from a purely cultural stereotypical belief that women are more emotional than men. Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:1) warns that women should not abuse their gift of emotionality by losing control of their tongues, whereby another cultural stereotype is implicated, namely that women are more prone to gossip than men. Such behavioural warnings are not aimed at men in the churches' material.

The final female gift which Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:1-2) mentions is that of spirituality. Here the church is personified as a woman, which is not out of the ordinary in Christian metaphor considering that Jesus describes the church as His bride in the Bible. She seems to take this notion rather literally and attempts to imply that this means that women are gifted spiritually. Van Loggerenberg ([sa]:2) fails to provide scriptural justification for her belief that women are necessarily gifted with spirituality and provides the following un-referenced quotation as substantiation for her claims: "Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness". Although the article is rife with essentialism and sentimentality, it does support the notion in this study, elaborated on in Chapter Four, that physically attractive female figures are employed to signify spirituality. From Van Loggerenberg's article, it appears that the belief that women are more spiritual than men, although Biblically unfounded, has some purchase in Christian culture.

This chapter functioned as background for the visual data analysis that follows in Chapters Three and Four. The three churches involved in this study were considered from an

operational and visual cultural perspective. Each church showed itself to have a formidable impact owing to its size, membership numbers, estates and command of resources. It was justified as to why all three of the churches can be seen as corporate churches and are therefore suitable for a study of this nature as they produce sufficient communication for analysis. A discussion of the phenomenon of gendered branding of ministries in the three churches was also offered. This discussion serves as an introduction to issues of Christian gender ideology, which is theorised in more detail in Chapter Three. In the next chapter, the findings of semiotic analyses of the visual communication of these churches are discussed in order to describe and critique their gender representation practices from a theoretical point of view.