“The Need for Circumcised Men”

The Quest for Transformed Masculinities in African Christianity in the Context of the HIV epidemic

“De behoefte aan besneden mannen”

De zoektocht naar een transformatie van masculiniteit in Afrikaans christendom in de context van de HIV epidemie
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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Words can circumcise, did you know that?

Thando Mgqolozana[1]

[1] Thando Mgqolozana, *A Man Who is not a Man*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press 2009, 115.

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PREFACE

The thesis you are about to read is the result of the research project *Intersecting Religion, Masculinity and HIV&AIDS*. This project was initiated in 2007 by Centre IIMO of Utrecht University in a close collaboration with the Dutch faith-based organisations for development cooperation ICCO, Kerk in Actie and Prisma. The idea of the project was born out of the research for the master's thesis I wrote in 2006 on issues of gender, HIV and AIDS in the work of African women theologians. One of the conclusions at the time was that the issue of men and masculinities was in urgent need of further analysis and reflection. Indeed, in the second part of the first decade of the 21st century this issue has appeared on the agenda of theology and Christianity in Africa. This development is outlined and discussed in the present thesis.

The interested reader may wonder how a Dutch student of theology comes to study issues of HIV and AIDS, gender and masculinities in the context of African Christianity. Much could be said about this question, but let me be brief. While studying theology I increasingly felt the desire to relate the abstract academic discussions to issues that matter in real life. I shared this feeling with my lecturer in world Christianity (who now turns out to be one of my promoters) while discussing topics for my master's thesis. By then she was already known for sending her students to Africa, so I could have known that the same would happen to me. A couple of months later I found myself in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, studying with Beverley Haddad, Isabel Phiri and Fulata Moyo, three women theologians deeply engaged in the theological response to issues of gender and HIV, whose work formed the subject of my thesis. The rest is history. Engaging with issues that "matter in real life", and from there revaluing and enjoying more abstract academic discussions as well, in the last couple of years I have been motivated by the statement made by several African theologians, being that "the body of Christ has AIDS". In my understanding, the metaphor of the body of Christ with AIDS invites our postcolonial world into solidarity in view of the global HIV pandemic.[1] One way of expressing this solidarity is academic collaboration and engagement. From that background, my motivation and inspiration for doing this research and writing this thesis can be understood.

At the outset of this thesis, I would like to acknowledge that although the text on these pages has been written by myself, nothing could have been written without the help of others. It is often said that writing a dissertation is a lonely endeavour, and somehow that is true. However, it seems that so many people are aware of that, that the individual researcher and writer actually receives much support. At least that has been my experience over the last three years. I say thanks, therefore, to all who in one way or another have supported me: through their interest in my work, their

[1] Cf. A.S. van Klinken, 'When the Body of Christ has AIDS. A Theological Metaphor for Global Solidarity in Light of HIV and AIDS' in *International Journal of Public Theology* 4:4 (2010), 446-465.

encouragement and/or their welcome distraction of my mind. Let me say thanks to some people in particular.

My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisors and promoters, the Professors Martha Frederiks and Anne-Marie Korte. As from the master's thesis I wrote in 2006, I have been under their supervision. They have believed in me, sometimes more than I did myself, and have encouraged me in this project from the very beginning. In the process of the research, they have contributed significantly both to the research itself and to the motivation and spirit of me as a researcher. Thanks for being more than supervisors, as both of you have inspired me and will continue to do so. I consider it a privilege to have you as my *Doktor-Mutters*. Martha, thanks for encouraging me to work across geographical boundaries and for shaping a global theological mind. Anne-Marie, thanks for always stimulating my thinking and for shaping a critical systematic theological and theoretical mind.

I am very thankful to Professor Ezra Chitando, who kindly agreed to be involved in this project as a third promoter. Without a doubt he is the expert on the topic that is central to this thesis (and as a consequence his work is both frequently quoted and critically discussed). The fact that he encouraged me to engage critically with his work and the work of other African theologians already characterises his personality. In spite of his busy schedule and frequent travelling, he has always found time to make constructive comments on my texts. Thanks Ezra, for engaging my thoughts and considering me a dialogue partner. I have particularly good memories of our discussion in Harare's famous Book Café in July 2009!

With Chitando I also thank other African scholars in religion and theology whom I have come to know and with whom I have dialogued with over the last years. I say thanks to Dr. Beverley Haddad who introduced me to topics of gender, HIV and religion during my studies in Pietermaritzburg in 2006 and who invited me to become part of CHART (the Collaborative of HIV and AIDS in Religion and Theology, an initiative of the School of Religion and Theology in the University of KwaZulu-Natal); to Professor Isabel Phiri who introduced me to African women's theology during my studies in Pietermaritzburg; to Dr. Fulata Moyo for our stimulating discussions on issues of gender, sexuality and masculinity; to Dr. Nyambura Njoroge of EHAIA (the World Council of Churches program on HIV and AIDS) for her critical interest in this study; and to Dr. Ragies Masiiwa Gunda for being a dialogue partner and friend.

When this research was just an initial idea, the organisations ICCO, Kerk in Actie and Prisma already showed their interest and, at a later stage, decided to co-fund it. Without their funding, the project probably would not have been realised. I thank these organisations, especially Willeke Kempkes, Darija Kupers and Lisette van der Wel, for their support as well as for their ongoing interest in the results of this study. I also say thank to Dr. Jaap Breetvelt who has worked with Kerk in Actie on issues of theology, HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, for introducing me to this field of research. My gratitude also goes to the foundations that have supported this research with smaller grants for research trips, participation in conferences, and for printing and publishing this thesis: Stichting Aanpakken, Afrika Stimuleringsfonds Universiteit

Utrecht, Catharina Halkes Fonds, Doopsgezinde Zending, Hendrik Muller Vaderlands Fonds, J.E. Jurriaanse Stichting, Ridderlijke Duitsche Orde – Balije van Utrecht, Verenigde Utrechtse Theologische Fondsen and Stichting Zonneweelde.

As a part of this research, case studies have been conducted in two churches in Lusaka. I am very grateful to Bishop Joshua H.K. Banda who is the senior pastor of Northmead Assembly of God, and Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo who at that time was the priest in charge of Regiment parish, who allowed me to do research in their congregations. Even more, they were very welcoming to me and were more than willing to participate in the research themselves. I thank the church members and other people I met in both churches, for being open to me and sharing their opinions and stories, including those concerning intimate parts of their lives.

This research has been conducted within Utrecht University's Department of Religious studies and Theology. I thank the department for offering me a position as an AIO (PhD fellow) during these three years, and the colleagues who made me feel at home. Particular thanks to the fellow AIOs on the 13th floor of the W.C. van Unnik building, for sharing – for a longer or shorter period, and more or less intensive – our roads: Anne-Mareike, Annemeik, Arwin, Inge, Ingeborg, Izaak, Joantine, Marieke, Martin, Niek and Trudelien. Here I express thanks especially to Nienke Pruiksma, who has been my room mate for three years. Anyone who knows the size of the room can imagine that in this period we got to know each other quite well. Nienke, sharing our daily ups and downs you have become more than a colleague. I will remember (and hope to enjoy in the years to come) your enthusiasm, commitment and friendship. In addition to Nienke and Martha I also thank the other colleagues at the Centre IIMO: Freek Bakker, Jeannette Boere and Lucien van Liere. Thanks to your good fellowship (and the Gutenberg Espressobar) I generally preferred to work at the Uithof rather than at home. Particular thanks go to Peter van Rijn, librarian of the IIMO collection in Utrecht University Library, for helping me in my search for materials. I also thank the emeritus professors associated with IIMO, Anton Houtepen, Jan Jongeneel and Karel Steenbrink, who regularly showed their interest and made me feeling part of the IIMO tradition or, as we call it occasionally, the IIMO family.

Finally, I say thanks to my relatives and friends for their interest in my work and especially for reminding me that there is more in life than work. In particular, I would like to thank my parents who have supported me in my studies over the years and always show their interest. Last of all, thanks to Casper – who over the past three years has allowed me to work most of the time but wanted me to relax from time to time as well – for being a companion in life.

What remains is to wish the reader an interesting reading experience which provides critical and constructive insight in issues of religion, masculinities and HIV. It is my hope that this study will be of help to academics as well as practitioners addressing these issues, and may contribute to an adequate response to the challenges of gender and HIV facing our world.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. THE NEED FOR "CIRCUMCISED" MEN

'There is a need for men that are circumcised.' This statement was made during a youth meeting in Northmead Assembly of God (Lusaka, Zambia), one of the case studies presented in this thesis. During the meeting the preacher called for a new generation of young people truly committed to the Christian values, a generation of 'men and women of morality'. Then, particularly addressing the young men in the room, he stated that what is needed today are circumcised men. The preacher employed the image of male circumcision to illustrate how a young Christian man is supposed to behave: able to control his sexuality, to say 'no' to temptations and to wait with sex until marriage. In the course of the fieldwork that was conducted as part of the present research, I came to understand why he, and the church leadership in general, considered it vital for men to be "circumcised": not only to urge men to live lives that would be pleasant to God, but also to combat HIV and AIDS and other social problems.

In recent years, male circumcision – according to the cultural anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu the rite of institution of masculinity par excellence[1] – has been advocated as an adequate prevention strategy to the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. This is informed by evidence suggesting that the circumcision of the foreskin would efficaciously reduce the sexual transmission of the virus. However, this prevention strategy is controversial. Not only because the evidence of its effect is questioned, but especially because of the human rights aspects involved. Male circumcision, according to critics, violates the integrity of the body. The quotation given above indicates that, apart from bodily circumcision, another kind of male circumcision is also imaginable: a symbolic or discursive circumcision of men. In the words of Paul in the New Testament letter to the Romans, this is a "circumcision of the heart" (Rom. 2,29). As the case studies will show, this is not just imaginable but is practised in some local churches as a religious prevention strategy to respond to the reality of HIV. To be clear, the title of this thesis, *"The Need for Circumcised Men"*, takes male circumcision only as a metaphor, though a very apt metaphor, for the issue under discussion. However, this metaphorical circumcision of men, even though only a discursive practice, also gives rise to controversy. It is precisely this controversy that is explored in the present thesis.

The question at stake is *what* needs to be circumcised in relation to men in the context of the HIV epidemic and beyond. To elaborate on the metaphor: What needs to be "cut off"? Broadly speaking, two different answers are provided. The preacher at the youth meeting quoted above aims at a circumcision of men's energies and sexual urges, as these bring temptations that men can hardly resist. This points to a strategy that approaches men as individual moral subjects, teaches them certain moral values

[1] P. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2001, 24-25.

in order to realise change in men's behaviour and lifestyle. This strategy is not specific for the preacher, but is practised, be it in different ways, in both of the case studies conducted in local churches as part of the present research. According to these churches, irresponsible lifestyles and immoral behaviour are the key cause of the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS[2] and also give rise to other social problems. Another strategy is proposed by a number of African theologians, whose work is also studied in the present research. According to these theologians, men need to be cut off not just from their energies and urges, but also from their patriarchal power and privileges. This points to a structural approach that analyses men as gendered subjects who are positioned in powered and unequal gender relations. For these theologians, gender inequality is one of the fundamental structures that underlies and maintains the HIV epidemic. Thus, though both the theologians and the churches correspond in their perception that something needs to happen with men, they differ in their opinion of what needs to happen, what needs to be "cut off".

Apart from the meaning of "cutting-off", circumcision has also the meaning of "uncovering" and "opening".[3] This can be related to the alternative vision of manhood that is to be realised through the symbolic circumcision. What does the ideal man look like, after the metaphorical circumcision of the foreskin of immorality or patriarchy? The churches aim at a new "generation of men" who are morally upright and who take responsibility for their lives and the lives of others, especially for their marriage and family. The theologians express their hope for men who are committed to the ideal of gender justice, who fully respect women as equal human beings and who search for partnership and mutuality in their marriage.

The metaphor of circumcision leads to the question that is at the heart of the present study: African theologians and local churches both seek to realise change among men, but they have different analyses of the problem at stake and have diverging visions of the road to take. It is precisely these convergences and divergences between the theologians and the churches that are explored and discussed in this thesis. However, before undertaking this major task, the current chapter aims to introduce the reader to some preliminary issues. The first question the reader may

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[2] Following the UNAIDS guidelines, in this thesis I generally use the term 'HIV' or 'HIV epidemic'. Only when specifically referring to AIDS as the disease caused by HIV will I use the term 'AIDS' or 'HIV and AIDS'.

[3] Literally, the glans penis and the urethral opening are uncovered. In various religious traditions this also has a symbolic meaning. The physical opening would symbolically correspond with an opening to God or to the divine realm. For example see Graham Ward, 'Uncovering the Corona: A Theology of Circumcision' in G.J. Brooke (ed.), *The Birth of Jesus. Biblical and Theological Reflections*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark 2000, 35-44. In African traditional religion, where male circumcision is practised among various groups, there is a similar meaning which is symbolically related to the blood. According to John Mbiti: 'The shedding of his blood into the ground binds [a man] mystically to the living-dead who are symbolically living in the ground, or are reached at least through the pouring of libation on to the ground. It is the blood of new birth.' See J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (2 ed.), Oxford: Heineman Educational Publishers 1989, 120.

grapple with is why men need to be "circumcised" at all. As suggested above, this has something to do with the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. The next section, §1.2, explores how the epidemic has given rise to the felt need to change men, or in more academic terms, to the quest for a transformation of masculinities. Subsequently, §1.3 defines the particular scope and central question of the present research. §1.4 positions the research in the discipline of religious studies, specifically in the study fields of world Christianity and religion and gender. This section further presents some theoretical and methodological considerations, including the questions regarding a Western scholar studying delicate issues such as gender, masculinities and HIV in the context of African Christianity. §1.5 introduces the context of Zambia, where case studies in two local churches in Lusaka have been conducted as part of this study. The present chapter concludes in §1.6 with a brief overview of the content of the thesis.

1.2. Setting the Scene: HIV, Masculinities and Religion

This section provides an outline of how the recent quest for a transformation of masculinities has arisen from the reality of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. By briefly surveying the discussions on the HIV epidemic and its intersections with issues of gender, masculinities and religion, the topic of the present study is put into a broader context. Along with the survey, some of the specific interests of this study are highlighted.

HIV as a Gendered Epidemic

The HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa has reinforced a critical interest in men and masculinities, both in organisations that seek to combat HIV and among academic scholars who seek to explain the spread and impact of the epidemic in Africa. This interest is informed by the understanding of the epidemic as a 'gendered phenomenon'. With this term, scholars and activist have underscored that HIV in sub-Saharan Africa disproportionately affects women and girls – in terms of infection rates, but also in terms of the stigmatisation faced by those who are HIV positive, as well as the demand of care for relatives as a result of AIDS. The gendered face of HIV in Africa is illustrated in a recent UNAIDS report saying that women account for approximately 60% of the estimated HIV infections.[4] Hence, the vulnerability of women has become a major concern in responses to and studies of HIV in Africa. Though physiological aspects play a role, this vulnerability is explained predominantly by social, cultural and economic factors. The concept of gender is used as a key analytical concept to investigate these factors.[5] It does not only take into account the norms, roles and positions that increase women's risks to HIV, but also investigates these as part and

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[4] *AIDS Epidemic Update*, Geneva: UNAIDS 2009, 22.

[5] Cf. G.R. Gupta, 'Gender, Sexuality, and HIV/AIDS: The What, the Why, and the How. Plenary Address, XIIIth International AIDS Conference' (Durban, International Center for Research on Women, 12 July 2000), 1-8; *Gender and HIV/AIDS: Taking Stock of Research and Programmes*, Geneva: UNAIDS 1999; M. de Bruyn and others, *Facing the Challenges of HIV/AIDS/STDs: A Gender-Based Response*, Amsterdam, Harare and Geneva: KIT, SAfAIDS and WHO 1995.

parcel of the powered relationships between men and women. There is a consensus among scholars and activists that these relationships generally express and are embedded in 'structural gender inequalities', both in intimate spheres and in society at large.[6] In view of the sexual transmission of HIV in Africa – which is generally believed to be predominantly heterosexual[7] –, much attention is paid to how this inequality impacts sexual relations. In the words of social scientist Carolyn Baylies, in these relations women have a 'relative passivity' and 'are often expected to give but not to receive pleasure', while men have the power of 'sexual decision making and initiative' and are allowed 'greater sexual mobility both prior to and after marriage'.[8]

More recently, some scholars have criticised the representation of women as vulnerable, powerless, dependent and subordinate as being too monolithic. They call attention to the differentiation in and variability of sexual and gender relations, and to the agency of women in gender and sexual relations.[9] This differentiation indeed is crucial in order to prevent generalising and simplifying approaches to the intersections of gender, sexuality and HIV. Thus, gender has become, and functions to date, as a major concept in the analysis and understanding of the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, but the intersections of gender and HIV appear to be far more complex than is often suggested.[10]

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[6] J. Boesten and N.K. Poku, 'Gender, Inequalities and HIV/AIDS' in J. Boesten and N.K. Poku (eds.), *Gender and HIV/AIDS. Critical Perspectives from the Developing World*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate 2009, 2. The authors have a broader geographical scope than Africa but indicate that the African HIV epidemic is an example par excellence of the feminisation of HIV (p. 6).

[7] For a critical discussion on the widespread assumption of almost exclusive heterosexual transmission of HIV and the consequent neglect of possible homosexual transmission in both African and Western discourses on and approaches to HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, see M. Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS*, Athens: Ohio University Press 2008. Though Epprecht admits that 'few Africans south of the Sahara even today would identify as homosexual, bisexual, lesbian, gay, queer, or any of the other terms coined in the West to signify a more or less individual orientation', he argues that 'many people who do not so identify nonetheless sometimes, and sometimes even predominantly, have sex with people of the same sex' (4). Hence he critically examines the origins and history of the widespread idea of a singular, strict heterosexual "African sexuality".

[8] C. Baylies, 'Perspectives on Gender and AIDS in Africa' in C. Baylies and J. Bujra (eds.), *AIDS, Sexuality and Gender in Africa: Collective Strategies and Struggles in Tanzania and Zambia*, London: Routledge 2000, 7-8.

[9] For instance, see H. Dilger and J. Offe, 'Making the Difference? Structure, Agency and Culture in Anthropological Research on Gender and Aids in Africa' in *Curare* 28:2-3 (2005); D. Epstein and others, 'Gender and HIV/AIDS in Africa South of the Sahara: Interventions, Activism, Identities' in *Transformation. Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 54 (2004), 1-16.

[10] It should be underlined that gender is a major concept among many other concepts and perspectives that are used to explain the HIV pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. So-called multi-sectoral approaches are employed by scholars today, to take into account the multiple explanatory factors (medical, sexual, historical, socio-economic etc.) that determine Africa's

Masculinities Enter the Scene

From the initial concern with women, studies on gender and HIV from about the year 2000 have also come to involve men in their analyses. Scholars have realised that women's vulnerability is reinforced by the behaviours of men and by norms related to masculinity which, in the end, also put men themselves at risk.[11] Again, there is a tendency towards monolithic representations, now of men: where women are said to be powerless, men are associated with domination and control. This easily results in blaming discourses. For example, in an early publication on men and HIV, the publicist Martin Foreman stated that 'without men there would be no AIDS epidemic. …In short, men determine the path of the disease.'[12] Such approaches have been criticised for not being helpful in involving men in addressing the issues concerned, and for not taking into account that individual men's behaviours are informed by constructions of gender that are a product of social, cultural and economic factors in a given context.[13] Scholars have employed the concept of masculinity to investigate this social construction of male gender identity and of men's position in gender relations. However, men are not a homogenous group. In order to account for the variability and differentiation in gender constructions, masculinity is increasingly understood as a plural concept, which is in line with sociological approaches to the study of masculinity.[14] Various masculinit*ies* may co-exist in a given context. However, some will be more popular than others. The popular, most influential and prevailing version

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vulnerability to the disease. Cf. S. Craddock, 'Beyond Epidemiology: Locating AIDS in Africa' in E. Kalipeni and others (eds.), *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Beyond Epidemiology*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 2004, 1-10 (but see the volume as a whole).

[11] See G. Barker and C. Ricardo, *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict and Violence*, Washington: World Bank 2005, 37-42; J. Bujra, 'Targeting Men for a Change: AIDS Discourse and Activism in Africa' in F. Cleaver (ed.), *Masculinities Matter! Men, Gender and Development*, London: Zed Books 2002, 209-234; *Men and AIDS: A Gendered Approach*, Geneva: UNAIDS 2000.

[12] M. Foreman (ed.), *AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility?*, London: Panos and Zed Books Ltd 1999, ix. This volume was the outcome of a research project initiated by the London-based Panos institute on men and HIV and AIDS.

[13] For example, see P. Mane and P. Aggleton, 'Gender and HIV/AIDS: What do Men have to do with it?' in *Current Sociology* 49:6 (2001), 27-29.

[14] Cf. R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (2 ed.), Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press 2005. The theoretical framework provided by Connell has been highly influential for the study of masculinities in African contexts, as appears from L. Ouzgane and R. Morrell, 'African Masculinities: An Introduction' in L. Ouzgane and R. Morrell (eds.), *African Masculinities. Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2005, 7-8; S. Miescher and L.A. Lindsay, 'Introduction: Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa' in L.A. Lindsay and S. Miescher (eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann 2003, 6-7; R. Morrell, 'The Times of Change. Men and Masculinity in South Africa' in R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, Pietermaritzburg and London: University of Natal Press and Zed Books Ltd 2001, 6-9.

of masculinity is often referred to as "hegemonic masculinity".[15] The hegemonic ideals of masculinity are often contested in literature on gender, masculinities and HIV, because of their implications for HIV. For instance, see Anthony Simpson's observation from his anthropological research among a cohort of men in Zambia:

> At the core of the prevailing hegemonic version of masculinity was the demonstration of male potency in sexual conquest. While there *were* exceptions, throughout childhood and adolescence (as indeed in adulthood) sexuality for many men was a space to create and restore masculinity.[16]

Apart from sexual conquest and multiple sexual partnerships, hegemonic masculinity is often associated with a reluctance to use condoms, with male domination over women and with sexual and other forms of violence to women and children.[17] Clearly, these aspects of hegemonic masculinity are highly critical, especially in the context of HIV, as they put both men and women at greater risk to HIV.[18] It is against this background that UNAIDS, the United Nations programme on HIV and AIDS, has stated: 'Given the urgency of curbing HIV rates … it is important to challenge harmful concepts of masculinity, including the way adult men look on risk and sexuality and how boys are socialised to become men.'[19]

Where hegemonic masculinity generally is thought of as implicated with the HIV epidemic in various ways, the idea of masculinities as a plural implies that more can be

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[15] The concept of hegemonic masculinity originates from Connell's theory on the hierarchical relations between the various masculinities that coexist in a given society. Apart from a hegemonic type, Connell distinguishes between subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities which all relate in different ways to the masculinity that is hegemonic at that time and in that context. See Connell, *Masculinities*, 76-81.

[16] A. Simpson, *Boys to Men in the Shadow of AIDS: Masculinities and HIV Risk in Zambia*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2009, 8.

[17] For example, see R. Pattman, 'Researching and Working with Boys and Young Men in Southern Africa in the Context of HIV/Aids: A Radical Approach' in T. Shefer and others (eds.), *From Boys to Men. Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, Lansdowne: UCT Press 2007, 33-49; R. Sathiparsad, 'Masculinities in the Era of HIV/Aids: The Perspectives of Rural Male Zulu Youth' in T. Shefer and others (eds.), *From Boys to Men. Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, Lansdowne: UCT Press 2007, 181-194; T. Shefer, K. Ratele, A. Strebel and N. Shabalala and others, 'Masculinities in South Africa. A Critical Review of Contemporary Literature on Men's Sexuality' in D. Gibson and A. Hardon (eds.), *Rethinking Masculinities, Violence and AIDS*, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis 2005, 73-86.

[18] Apart from HIV risks, scholars increasingly realise that hegemonic masculinity is not only problematic to women, but also sets certain norms that are challenging to men. The pressure on men to conform to these standards may be enormous (cf. G. Lindegger and J. Maxwell, 'Teenage Masculinity: The Double Bind of Conformity to Hegemonic Standards' in T. Shefer and others (eds.), *From Boys to Men. Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society*, Lansdowne: UCT Press 2007, 94-111). This is significant as it illustrates that hegemonic masculinity is not fully embodied by most men but yet sets the ideal that men generally strive for and which assigns them with certain privileges, responsibilities and norms.

[19] *Men and AIDS: A Gendered Approach*, 7.

said about men and masculinities. Indeed, the concept of masculinities as a social construct and the related notions of a differentiation among men and a variability of gender constructions, are used to open up a different perspective. As Purmina Mane and Peter Aggleton put this:

> If masculinities are multiple, for example, then some versions may be more useful than others in promoting greater gender equality and improved sexual health. If masculinities are actively constructed, then it may be possible to create more gender-equitable versions of them. Finally, if masculinities are dynamic, over time, shifts away from less helpful versions of masculinity that emphasize dominance and aggression may be possible.[20]

In view of the HIV epidemic, this theoretical perspective brings some significant insights. Firstly, it opens up space for active gender politics: what is constructed can also be actively deconstructed and reconstructed. In other words, there is a possibility to realise change among men and to engage in a transformation of masculinities. Indeed, HIV intervention strategies have engaged in this space and seek to work with men, not only with regard to HIV prevention but also in a broader project of a transformation in gender relations.[21] Related to this is a second insight, being the notion of agency of individual men. The idea that masculinity is not a static, monolithic characteristic naturally defining "manhood", but that there are several co-existing and competing masculinities, implies that to a certain extent men do have agency to configure and reconfigure their identity and performance as men.[22] Without this agency, it would not make sense to 'target for a change' in African contexts of HIV and beyond.[23] Thirdly, when men can change and masculinities can be transformed, at an analytical level attention is to be paid to the changes that actually occur in the configuration of masculinities. Robert Morrell, a scholar in the forefront of the study of masculinities in southern Africa, points to the challenge for scholars 'to identify what forces operate to effect change in masculinities, when, where and how such changes occur, and what their effects are.'[24] This is an important question with regard to African masculinities in the context of HIV, as the epidemic has mobilised forces that impact on masculinities.[25]

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[20] Mane and Aggleton, *Gender and HIV/AIDS: What do Men have to do with it?*, 32.

[21] Cf. Bujra, *Targeting Men for a Change: AIDS Discourse and Activism in Africa*, 209-234.

[22] Cf. D.S. Gutterman, 'Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity' in S.M. Whitehead and F.J. Barrett (eds.), *The Masculinities Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press 2001, 60-61.

[23] Bujra, *Targeting Men for a Change: AIDS Discourse and Activism in Africa*, 209-234.

[24] Morrell, *The Times of Change: Men and Masculinity in South Africa*, 7.

[25] For example, see Simpson, *Boys to Men in the Shadow of AIDS. Masculinities and HIV Risk in Zambia*, especially chapter 8: 'Responses to Campaigns'. In this study Simpson investigates, among other things, the various ways in which a group of Zambian men relate to the hegemonic ideal of the "real man" while being faced with the devastating consequences of AIDS and with the messages of HIV awareness and prevention campaigns.

These three insights concerning politics, agency and analysis are highly relevant to the present study and its interest in the intersection of religion, masculinities and HIV. Analytically, the question is how religion is a force operating to effect certain changes in masculinities, and how these changes and their effects have to be evaluated. With regard to active gender politics, the question is whether religious communities, institutions and organisations, as a result of the HIV epidemic, have initiated a strategy to bring about change among men and in masculinities. Applied to the issue of agency, the question is whether and how religion impacts men's agency in relation to hegemonic and alternative ideals of masculinity. These questions are at the background of this thesis and will be discussed more explicitly in the concluding chapter.

Intersecting Religion, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic

The questions raised in the previous section point to the intersection of religion, masculinities and HIV, an emerging topic in academic research on religion and HIV.[26] This intersection is manifold and complex and is embedded in the broader intersection of religion, gender and the HIV epidemic. Generally, there is a tendency to highlight the problematic role of religion with regard to gender, masculinities and HIV. Religion is not considered a force for transformation operating to effect constructive change, but rather a force maintaining the status quo of gender inequality and hegemonic conceptions of masculinity. Exploring the intersection of religion, masculinities and HIV below, I will however point out that the role of religion is more complex, because "religion" – just like gender and masculinity – is not a monolithic concept or phenomenon. This raises some critical questions which are at the background of the present study.

It is widely acknowledged that religion, due to its influence in African societies both in the past and today, is a major factor in the construction of gender in Africa.[27] In the light of the observed feminisation of the HIV epidemic, scholars have pointed to religion as a factor that reinforces the vulnerability of women. One of the major arguments is that religion – be it indigenous African religion, Christianity or Islam – tends to promote a gender ideology that maintains and legitimises gender inequalities which, as mentioned above, are considered critical to the spread of HIV among women and the impact of AIDS on their lives.[28] As two social scientists put it, the problem is

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[26] That this is a new topic is illustrated, for example, by the fact that it is mentioned only marginally (and is not explored) in the volume of F. Becker and F.W. Geissler (eds.), *Aids and Religious Practice*, Leiden: Brill 2009.

[27] For a brief survey, see A. Cornwall, 'Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa' in A. Cornwall (ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa*, London: The International African Institute 2005, 9-11.

[28] For instance, see L.K. Fuller, *African Women's Unique Vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS: Communication Perspectives and Promises*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2008, esp. 81-85; M. Marshall and N. Taylor, 'Tackling HIV and AIDS with Faith-Based Communities: Learning from Attitudes on Gender Relations and Sexual Rights within Local Evangelical Churches in Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, and South Africa' in *Gender and Development* 14:3 (2006), 363-374.

with 'male dominance' and with the 'patriarchal construction of marriage and family' that is upheld by religion and which 'under present circumstances could only lead to female powerlessness and death.'[29] Particularly with regard to men and masculinities it is argued that religious teachings uphold and reinforce a notion of male supremacy. An example of this is provided by Simpson from his research among former students:

> The young men regularly cited the Book of Genesis where God creates Adam *first* as evidence of male superiority, explaining that in this instance Christianity and "tradition" were as one. Maleness was automatically deserving of respect. As in so much of everyday Zambian life, precedence was all-important and there was no doubt that Eve, the woman, came second.[30]

Thus religion – in this case the Bible – functions as a legitimisation of male superiority over women. This is considered critical as it maintains the asymmetry in gender relations that leaves women vulnerable to HIV.

That religions give rise to patriarchal masculinities is often mentioned as a primary problematic intersection of religion, masculinities and HIV. However it is a somewhat ambiguous issue, not only because the link with HIV is indirect, but especially because religion is used rather eclectically. The men in Simpson's study hardly attend religious services or other religious meetings, but they *make use of* religion, both Christianity and traditional religion, to buttress their claims of male superiority.[31] In this context, Ezra Chitando (whose work will be discussed in the next chapter on African theology) even speaks about the *abuse* of religious and cultural resources by men.[32] The eclectic way in which men deal with religion is illustrated in a preliminary study by Mike Anane among men in Ghana. Admitting that both the Bible and the Qur'an accord women secondary status to men but at the same time underscore the need for mutual respect, Anane observes: 'Yet the fact that their religion urges mutual respect between the sexes is forgotten by many Christians and Muslims, and there is frequently a discrepancy between scriptural teachings on relations between the sexes and the way that many people, particularly men, interpret those teachings.'[33] The question then arises as to how religious teachings understand the notion of male supremacy, how it is understood by men involved in religious

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For an account on gender, AIDS and Islam (but not specifically in Africa), see C. Koh, 'Gender Justice, Islam and AIDS' in F. Esack and S. Chiddy (eds.), *Islam and AIDS. Between Scorn, Pity and Justice*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications 2009, 88-104.

[29] M. Mbilinyi and N. Kaihula, 'Sinners and Outsiders: The Drama of AIDS in Rungwe' in C. Baylies and J. Bujra (eds.), *AIDS, Sexuality and Gender in Africa: Collective Strategies and Struggles in Tanzania and Zambia*, London: Routledge 2000, 78 and 94.

[30] Simpson, *Boys to Men in the Shadow of AIDS. Masculinities and HIV Risk in Zambia*, 149.

[31] Cf. ibid., 15-16.

[32] E. Chitando, 'Religious Ethics, HIV and AIDS and Masculinities in Southern Africa' in R. Nicolson (ed.), *Persons in Community: African Ethics in a Global Culture*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press 2008, 53.

[33] M. Anane, 'The Soul is Willing: Religion, Men and HIV/AIDS in Ghana' in M. Foreman (ed.), *AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility?*, London: Zed Books 1999, 83.

communities, and how this relates to hegemonic understandings of masculinity. Do religious notions of male superiority always coincide with hegemonic masculinity and work out negatively in the context of HIV, or is the relationship more complex?

Another critical intersection that is often mentioned is the role of religion in male sexuality. It is said that dominant versions of masculinity encourage men to achieve manhood through sexual performance and prevent men from using condoms. The role of religion in all this is again somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, some scholars suggest that beliefs from African traditional religions inform the hegemonic ideals, by associating manhood with virility and by emphasising the importance for men to transmit "the vital force of life".[34] Furthermore, the rejection of condoms by many Christian and Muslim religious leaders would facilitate men to live up to hegemonic ideals regarding male sexuality in a way that is destructive in the light of HIV. On the other hand, it is likely that Christianity and Islam, and in a certain way also African indigenous religions, with their relatively strict moral codes that largely prohibit sex before and outside marriage, contest and diverge from hegemonic ideals of masculinity exactly in the area of sexuality. The religions promote chastity, self-control and responsibility rather than sexual conquest. However, the question is whether such religious teachings, which are potentially preventive in the face of HIV, have any effect upon men's sexual decision-making. Several studies suggest that this effect cannot be presumed, but depends on the level of religious involvement and the type of religious affiliation.[35] For example, the men involved in Simpson's study all identify as Christians and are members of Christian churches, but yet he found that this was no reliable predictor of sexual activity. He presents Pentecostal men as the only exception: 'They told me that the discipline of regular attendance at church and cell meetings, combined with Bible study, the acknowledgement of their prior sinfulness, and the encouragement of church members sustained them in their decision to forego extramarital sex.'[36] Whether this is specific to Pentecostal men is not clear, as the other men involved in Simpson's study do not attend church regularly: they may be

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[34] For example, see P. Dover, 'Gender and Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village' in L. Ouzgane and R. Morrell (eds.), *African Masculinities. Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2005, 182-185. See also L. Magesa, 'Recognizing the Reality of African Religion in Tanzania' in J.F. Keenan (ed.), *Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention*, New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group 2005, 76-83. The phrase "the vital force of life" is derived from L. Magesa, *African Religion. the Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1997, 115-159.

[35] See, for instance, J. Trinitapoli and M.D. Regnerus, 'Religion and HIV Risk Behaviors among Married Men: Initial Results from a Study in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45:4 (2006), 505-528; V. Agadjanian, 'Gender, Religious Involvement, and HIV/AIDS Prevention in Mozambique' in *Social Science and Medicine* 61:7 (2005), 1529-1539; R.C. Garner, 'Safe Sects? Dynamic Religion and AIDS in South Africa' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38:1 (2000), 41-69.

[36] Simpson, *Boys to Men in the Shadow of AIDS. Masculinities and HIV Risk in Zambia*, 169.

church members but are not church-goers.[37] A hypothesis could be that active participation in religious communities more generally increases the impact of religious teachings on sexuality among men.[38]

With regard to the issue of both male supremacy and male sexuality, crucial questions are whether and how religions contest hegemonic ideals of masculinity, what alternatives they propose, and how this impacts on men. These questions inform the present study. By investigating them, the study does not want to reiterate the generalising representation of religion as maintaining or reinforcing a monolithic problematic masculinity. As appears from the section above, in the study of gender and masculinities in relation to HIV, increasingly attention is called to differentiation in, and variability of constructions of gender and masculinity. The concept of masculinity as a social construct and the subsequent notion of masculinities as a plural, draw attention to the complex ways in which religious discourses interplay with configurations of masculinity in the context of HIV. Without ignoring the problematic role religions may play with regard to gender, masculinities and HIV, the present study has a particular interest in its constructive role. Is religion helpful in realising change among men? Does religion offer alternatives to hegemonic types of masculinity that are problematic in view of HIV? Do religious institutions actively engage in a project of transforming masculinities? These questions are crucial, as in Africa religion is a major factor in processes of change and transformation, personal and hence also social and political.[39] While investigating questions like these, the present study does not deal with religion in general, but focuses on Christianity. What, then, is the precise research question that is central to this thesis?

1.3. THE SCOPE AND ENQUIRY OF THE STUDY

As may be clear from the general survey above, the intersections of religion, masculinities and HIV are complex and manifold. In order to limit the scope of this study, the focus – still quite broad – will be on African Christianity. Furthermore, the specific interest is not in the problem of (hegemonic) masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic, but in religious strategies to overcome these. The strategies are investigated at two different levels, representing different types of discourse, in African Christianity: the level of local Christian churches in Zambia, and the level of African Christian theology.

It is possible that the choice for case studies in local churches does not need much explanation. Though other approaches can be imagined, it seems logical to look at churches when one intends to investigate the (re)construction of masculinities in

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[37] Ibid., 3. In the light of Simpson's observation that very few men regularly attended church, it is not clear from what evidence he concludes that active church membership is not a predictor of sexual activity except for Pentecostals (cf. 169).

[38] For example, see Trinitapoli and Regnerus, *Religion and HIV Risk Behaviors among Married Men: Initial Results from a Study in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa*, 520.

[39] Cf. S. Ellis and G. ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*, New York: Oxford University Press 2004, 163-176.

the context of African Christianity. As institutionalised forms of African Christianity that comprise a substantial part of the population of many African countries, churches are well positioned to influence people's behaviour and to impact on communities – either positively or negatively. Case studies enable detailed investigation of the strategies employed in Christian faith communities to realise change among men and to transform masculinities. Two case studies have been conducted as part of this research, in a Catholic parish and a Pentecostal church in Lusaka (Zambia) respectively. These are presented in this thesis.

Apart from the case studies in local churches, the present study also investigates the discussion on masculinities and HIV among African theologians. They have contributed significantly to open up the field of studies in which the present study engages. They provide not only a critical analysis of prevalent masculinities but also a vision for the transformation of masculinities in view of the HIV epidemic. Issues of gender and HIV and AIDS have been central in discussions among African theologians for the last decade. Recently the particular issue of masculinities has also been tackled in these discussions. The significance of these African theological debates to the present study is twofold. Firstly, the theologians working on these issues contribute to the interdisciplinary study of religion, gender, masculinities and HIV. Their contribution is often ignored by scholars who engage in the same field of studies but from other disciplines. In the present study, I aim to take seriously the significant contribution of African scholars in religion and theology. From my point of view, it is unacceptable to study masculinities in local churches against the background of the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa while ignoring the analyses of those scholars who have actually opened up this field of studies. Secondly, apart from studying the intersection of religion, masculinities and HIV, African theologians somehow are part of this intersection themselves because of the *theological* dimension of their work. Theology can be considered a particular type of religious discourse. This is certainly the case with African theology which, as will be explained below, understands itself as an engaged Christian reflexive praxis.[40] Thus, while investigating African theologians' work on masculinities and HIV as a religious discourse, the quest is for the theological dimension in their work: How do they theologise gender and masculinities? What religious resources are mobilised to envision alternative masculinities? How do they think about the role of churches in a transformation of masculinities?

The present study's dual focus on masculinities in African theological discussions and in local churches enables comparison and interrogation of the approach to masculinities of theologians and churches respectively. Precisely this critical evaluative discussion of the theologians' analyses and vision vis-à-vis local church praxis is central

[40] In the context of this thesis, the term "African theology" refers to African *Christian* theology. As Diana Stinton observes, 'the phrase "African theology" is widely assumed to refer to African Christian theology, so that the two terms are used interchangeably within the field of African Christianity.' See D.B. Stinton, 'Africa, East and West' in J. Parratt (ed.), *An Introduction to Third World Theologies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004, 107.

to the research question of the study. This question and its following sub-questions have been formulated as follows:

> How do African theologians and local churches address and transform men and masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic, what are the convergences and divergences in their analyses of and visions for masculinities, and what do these imply for the further study of and engagement with masculinities in African Christianity?
>
> - How do African theologians theoretically and theologically analyse, reflect upon, and envision masculinities in view of HIV and AIDS?
> - How do local Zambian churches* practically and theologically address, contest, (re)define and seek to transform masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic?
> - What are the convergences and divergences in the analyses of and visions for masculinities provided by the theologians and found in the local churches?
> - What questions arise from the preceding analyses for the further study of and engagement with masculinities in African Christianity, and how can these questions be addressed?
>
> * The question concerning local churches will be investigated in the context of Lusaka (Zambia), by means of case studies in two particular Christian faith communities, being a Roman Catholic parish and a Pentecostal church.

The dual focus on African theologians and on local churches raises the question of the relation between these distinct discourses that are both part of African Christianity. This question is briefly discussed in the next section, which outlines the theoretical rationale of the research. This section also pays attention to the position of the researcher in relation to the research – a question that is imperative for a project such as this, where a white Western educated student investigates masculinities in African churches and in African theological debates in the context of HIV.

1.4. Disciplinary, Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Having outlined the broad field of religion, masculinities and HIV, and having defined the specific scope and question of the present study, this section pays attention to some disciplinary, theoretical and methodological issues. Studies on religion, masculinities and HIV can be conducted within several academic disciplines, using different methodological approaches. The present study is positioned in the field of religious studies and particularly uses a theological analytical approach.[41] Within

[41] The present study considers theology and religious studies not as separate disciplines but rather takes theology as part of religious studies. Here theology is considered as one

religious studies, it engages with two specific fields of research: the study of world Christianity (specifically African Christianity), and the study of religion and gender (specifically masculinities and religion).

The Study of World Christianity: African Christianity

Investigating the work of African theologians and the praxis in local Zambian churches, the present study engages in the study of African Christianity as part of the broader study of world Christianity. This emerging sub-discipline in theology and religious studies has its historical roots in missiology, ecumenics and world religions. It investigates the various discourses and practices of Christianity as a world religion, or in the words of Dale Irvin, 'the contemporary global configurations of the Christian religion in all their complexities.'[42] The emergence of this field of studies is informed by the increasing awareness in Western academia of the actual non-Western character of Christianity in our contemporary world, due to the oft-mentioned shift of Christianity to the "global South".[43] In the study of world Christianity attention is paid to a wide range of issues, from liturgy to politics, from indigenous cultures to migration and globalisation, from the use of the Bible to interreligious relations. Put simply, the central question is how Christian traditions, identities and practices are (re)shaped in the changing social, cultural and religious contexts in the modern world, and how Christianity impacts on these contexts.

Among the key issues is the topic of gender: how are gender identities and gender relations shaped and reshaped by the various types of Christianity in the world, in relation to the traditions, developments and challenges concerning gender in specific contexts? Broadly referring to the regions of Latin America, Africa and Asia, Philip Jenkins observes that 'the rise of Christianity has, in an amazingly short time, effected dramatic changes in gender attitudes. In the long run, the greatest change might be the new emphasis on faithful monogamous marriage and on new concepts of

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approach among others to the study of religion. For a discussion of the relationship between theology and religious studies and an argument for an integrated understanding of both, see D.F. Ford, 'Theology' in J.R. Hinnells (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (2nd ed.), London: Routledge 2010, 93-110. Characteristic of a theological approach to the study of religion, in this case African Christianity, is the focus on and critical interest in the theological meanings and claims of religious beliefs and practices. Or, as Frank Whaling puts it, 'part of the theological approach to the study of religion is to make available to scholars an accurate and clear account of the conceptual frameworks of different traditions, bearing in mind that the role and purpose of concepts and of theology differs from tradition to tradition.' See F. Whaling, 'Theological Approaches' in P. Connolly (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of Religion*, London and New York: Cassell 1999, 237.

[42] D.T. Irvin, 'World Christianity: An Introduction' in *The Journal of World Christianity* 1:1 (2008), 1.

[43] For example, see L. Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing 2003; P. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, New York: Oxford University Press 2002; A.F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2002.

masculinity'.[44] This gender dynamic in world Christianity, particularly the emergence of alternative concepts of masculinity, is the specific area of interest of the present study. Investigating this topic, the geographical focus is on the African region.

In the study of world Christianity, Africa is considered a significant continent, not only because it contains a large proportion of the world's Christian population, but also because as a consequence it is increasingly reshaping world Christianity itself and setting the global Christian theological agenda. In the eloquent words of missiologist Andrew Walls, African Christianity can be regarded as 'a major component of contemporary *representative* Christianity, the standard Christianity of the present age, a demonstration model of its character' and even as 'potentially the *representative* Christianity of the twenty-first century' (emphasis original, AvK).[45] This means, among other things, that developments in African Christianity are significant to the understanding of world Christianity as a whole.

The present study deals with contemporary African Christianity, or Christianit*ies*,[46] and explores some of the most recent developments and emerging issues, being issues of gender and particularly the quest for a transformation of masculinities which has arisen as a result of the HIV epidemic. While investigating African Christianities, this study particularly focuses on two specific types of African Christian discourse: African theology and local Christian churches in Zambia. To be clear, this means that I take both "African theology" (actually: theolog*ies*[47]) and "African churches" as manifestations of "African Christianity". Of course, both represent distinct types of African Christian discourse. It is precisely by bringing both discourses together that the present study hopes to take a step forward in the study of African Christianity as far as issues of gender, masculinities and HIV are concerned. This raises the question of how both discourses relate to each other – a question that is especially crucial in light of the main inquiry of the present thesis, which seeks to compare and interrogate both discursive bodies in the light of each other.

African Theology and Local Churches

The present thesis seeks to analyse and compare the discourses on masculinities of African theologians and in local churches. The term 'African theologians' is used to

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[44] P. Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*, New York: Oxford University Press 2006, 165.

[45] Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, 85. See also K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa. The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1995.

[46] Because of the diversity of Christian traditions present on the African continent, some scholars prefer to speak of African Christianities as a plural. For example, see P. Kollman, 'Classifying African Christianities: Past, Present and Future (Part One)' in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 40:1 (2010), 3-32. This concept acknowledges, according to Kollman, that 'Africa probably houses a larger variety of manifestations of Christianity than any other continent' (4). In the present thesis, the singular and plural forms are used interchangeably.

[47] As much as there is diversity in African Christianity, there is also diversity in African theology (see chapter 2).

refer to theologians (including scholars in religious and biblical studies whose work reflects a theological engagement) trained and mostly working in academic settings, and who are committed to the project of African theology (see chapter 2). In the thesis, the discourse represented by these theologians is opposed to the discourses in local churches represented, among other factors, by "church theologians". Though the distinction between these two categories is somewhat problematic, it is useful as it reveals a critical space between various levels of African Christian discourse.[48]

African churches can be considered as primary manifestations of African Christianity in an institutionalised form. Scholars distinguish several categories of African churches, such as mainline and independent, Catholic and Protestant, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic.[49] The diverse palette of African churches demonstrates the different and complex ways in which Christianity is shaped in postcolonial African contexts in our globalising world – and the perspective of world Christianity makes it possible to take into account the global relations in which local African churches are embedded. The two case studies conducted as part of this research, a Roman Catholic parish and a Pentecostal church, illustrate two of the many positions on this palette: one of a faith community that is part of a worldwide and hierarchically organised church whose administrative centre is in Europe and which in Africa has engaged in a process of "inculturation", and one of an independent local Zambian church associated with the transnational movement of the Assemblies of God, which has its roots in early 20th century North American Pentecostalism.

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[48] It is a somewhat problematic distinction, at least for two reasons. First, the pastors and priests in African churches (church theologians) can also be considered as "African theologians". Second, the practitioners of what in this thesis is called "African theology" generally are involved in and thus also are part of churches. In some cases they are even pastor, priest, religious sister or bishop themselves. The distinction is further complicated by the claim of African women theologians that they "are church" (cf. I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2005). Yet these women theologians, like the African male theologians discussed in this thesis, tend to be very critical of institutional churches. Most of them are trained and currently work in academic settings rather than in church settings, and this enables them to engage critically with Christianity as represented by churches and church leaders. It is precisely this critical space between "African theologians" on the one hand, and local churches and their leaders ("church theologians") on the other hand, that is explored in the present thesis.

[49] In the context of this thesis I do not introduce and explore these various categories of African churches. For an historical account of churches in Africa, see J. Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa. An African Church History* (2 ed.), Nairobi: Paulines Publications 1998 and also the accounts of particular categories that are provided in O.U. Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005. For an introduction to African independent, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic churches, see O.U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism. An Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press 2008; A.H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century*, Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press 2001.

How, then, does "African theology" relate to African Christianity as it is represented at the level of local churches? To begin with, it needs to be said that African theology understands itself as a Christian enterprise. In the words of Kwame Bediako, it is 'an endeavour to demonstrate the true character of African Christian identity'.[50] In doing so, the various strands of African theology seek to engage with African religious and cultural traditions (inculturation theology) and/or with the challenges of African societies today (liberation and reconstruction theology).[51] Though a Christian enterprise, African theology gives rise to a particular type of African Christian discourse: an academic, or at least a scholarly reflective discourse.[52] As such, it engages critically with African Christianity as it is represented by, and practised in African churches. According to Tinyiko Maluleke, African theology has a "church-enabling task". He comments that it is increasingly realised that this includes a critical edge. As he puts it, African theology seeks not just to be 'at the service of the church in Africa' but also to enable 'the church to be both prophetic and self-critical'.[53] As will be shown in the next chapter, the critical edge of African theology towards African churches concerns – among other things – issues of gender (though the African theologians who are concerned with issues of gender are as critical of fellow African

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[50] K. Bediako, *Theology and Identity. The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*, Akropong-Akuapem: Regnum 1992, 3.

[51] Cf. B. Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1992. Inculturation, liberation and reconstruction are the major paradigms in African theology. Inculturation theology seeks to engage with Africa's cultural-religious heritage, and African liberation (and more recently reconstruction) theology with the actual social context of African societies today. For an introduction, see E. Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1993. With regard to reconstruction theology, see J.N.K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers 1995. A fourth major paradigm can be mentioned, that of African women's theology. African women theologians largely engage in a type of liberation theology but also employ the concepts of inculturation and reconstruction (cf. M.A. Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press 2001). For a more detailed account of African (women's) theology, especially with regard to its discussion of gender and masculinities, see chapter 2.

[52] According to Klaus Hock, African theology is a 'vibrant pulsation of African Christianity in the sphere of academic discourses.' (K. Hock, 'Appropriated Vibrancy. 'Immediacy' as a Formative Element in African Theologies' in K. Koschorke (ed.), *African Identities and World Christianity in the Twentieth Century*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2005, 124). However, African theology as a whole is not an academic enterprise in the narrow sense of the word. It is taught at and develops from both state and Christian universities but also emerges from seminaries, church-related institutions and so on. It is, however, characterised by a certain level of analysis and reflection.

[53] T.S. Maluleke, 'Half a Century of African Christian Theologies: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-First Century' in O.U. Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005, 474-475.

theologians as they are of African churches[54]). It is this critical space between the discourses of "African theology" and "African churches" that is revealed and explored in the present study. It will appear that the African theologians under discussion pose critical questions to churches with regard to issues of gender, masculinities and HIV. This calls for a closer examination of the discourse and praxis of local churches. Vice-versa, the study of local churches may raise questions that are critical to the analyses and reflections provided by the theologians.

A last preliminary remark is that I do not claim that the African theologians discussed in this thesis are representative of "African theology" at large, or that the two case studies in Zambian churches are representative of African Christianity in general. With respect to the theologians, the next chapter will show that only a group (though quite a prominent group) of African theologians is concerned with issues of gender and has recently addressed the topic of masculinities. With regard to the churches, the thesis presents two case studies in churches from different traditions, as samples rather than as representations of the whole of institutionalised African Christianity.

A Theological Approach to African Christianity

As mentioned above, this study is located, in terms of academic disciplines, in the field of religious studies and mainly engages in a theological approach. What does this mean for the way the present research on African Christianity is undertaken?

World Christianity can be understood as a series of local theologies.[55] This notion refers not only to the many contextual theologies that are developed by professional theologians in all parts of the world, but also to the theologies that can be found in local communities of faith that shape Christianity in specific ways within their respective social-cultural contexts. A theological approach to world Christianity, then, is particularly interested in these – often implicit and not systematically articulated – theologies that provide the conceptual framework in which Christian identities are shaped. It seeks to make explicit and critically analyse the deeply rooted theological concepts and lines of thought in local Christian discourses, and to interpret these in relation to local socio-cultural contexts as well as to wider theological traditions in world Christianity. This analytical theological approach is characteristic of the present study in its investigation of the discourses of African theologians and in the case-study churches. Concretely, it means that discourses on masculinity are analysed as part of the wider theological discourse, and then prove, for example, to be informed by perceptions of God and Jesus Christ, understandings of creation and the church,

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[54] This can be illustrated, for example, with the fact that Mercy Oduyoye phrases her critique of African (male) theology for ignoring the category of gender as part of an argument in a book chapter entitled 'Calling the church to account'. See M.A. Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1995, 180.

[55] Cf. R.J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1985, 32-33. Schreiter refers to the Christian tradition as a series of local theologies, but this term applies to contemporary world Christianity as well.

specific ways of biblical interpretation and particular understandings of the relation between gospel and culture.

In European academia, an emerging theological approach to the study of world Christianity is known as intercultural theology.[56] Theoretically and methodologically, this sub-discipline is still developing its scope. The basic insight of intercultural theology, as Walter Hollenweger, who coined the term, points out, is that all theologies are contextually conditioned.[57] That is to say that theologies are involved in ongoing processes of contact, conflict and exchange with their social-cultural environment. The theological approach applied in the present study takes this insight fully into account, as is indicated by the notion of world Christianity as a series of local theologies. Yet this study cannot be labelled as an intercultural theological study in the strict sense of the word. The project of intercultural theology is often understood to include a theological dialogue between various contextual theologies to realise, in the words of Robert Schreiter, "a new Catholicity" in world Christianity.[58] That is not the intention of this study, however. My objective here is to analyse theologically, rather than to theologise (i.e. to engage in theological reflection) myself.[59] Being aware that analysis is always an interpretative activity, I do not claim that an analytical-theological approach is objective (if possible at all). Yet I try to analyse as much as possible with the concepts emerging from the particular local theological discourse.[60] This may raise questions about the role of the researcher in the analysis and interpretation, which are

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[56] For a brief survey and discussion of this development, see V. Küster, 'Towards an Intercultural Theology: Paradigm Shifts in Missiology, Ecumenics, and Comparative Religion' in V. Mortensen (ed.), *Theology and the Religions: a Dialogue*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing 2003, 171-184. Apart from "intercultural theology" other terms are also used, such as cross-cultural or inter-contextual theology. These have specific meanings, but the terms correspond in their understanding of theology as contextually conditioned and in their interest in dialogue between various contextual theologies.

[57] W. Hollenweger, 'Intercultural Theology: Some Remarks on the Term' in M. Frederiks, M. Dijkstra and A. Houtepen (eds.), *Towards an Intercultural Theology. Essays in Honour of J.A.B. Jongeneel*, Zoetermeer: Meinema 2003, 90.

[58] Cf. R.J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity. Theology between the Global and the Local*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1997. Likewise, Volker Küster contends that '[e]very contextual theology needs to meet the challenge of the ecumenical forum of this global community. ... This *criterion of dialogue* necessarily presupposes the development of an intercultural theology.' See V. Küster, *A Protestant Theology of Passion: Korean Minjung Theology Revisited*, Leiden: Brill 2010, 8.

[59] However, the boundaries between both activities are not always clear (or I do not interpret them strictly), so occasionally I will give critical theological comments or make constructive theological suggestions.

[60] As Lamin Sanneh puts it, in world Christianity interpretation takes place 'by a plurality of models of inculturation in line with the variety of local idioms and practices.' Sanneh makes this statement to criticise approaches where (Western) scholars interpret and evaluate world Christianity by their own theological and academic standards. See L. Sanneh, *Whose Religion in Christianity?*, 35.

discussed later in this chapter. Before that, however, attention is to be paid to the second field of studies in which the present research engages.

The Study of Religion and Gender: Masculinities and Religion

With its focus on men and masculinities in local churches and in African theological debates, the present study engages in the study of men, masculinities and religion. This is a relatively recent field of studies which emerged from and is part of the larger body of gender studies in religion and theology. The study of religion and gender critically investigates how sexual difference is interpreted, and hence is used as a principle of social ordering, in religious discourses and practices. It is informed by the awareness that religion in various and complex ways plays a role in the construction of gender. As put by Elizabeth Castelli: 'As soon as the divine is analogised to the human realm, gender emerges as a problem of both difference and power.'[61]

For a long time, the study of religion and gender has focused almost exclusively on women. This was out of a feminist concern with women being marginalised by prevailing perceptions of gender in many religious traditions. Scholars increasingly realised, however, that the concept of gender needed to be broadened. In 1995 Ursula King, for example, underscored the importance 'to consider not only the construction of femininity but also that of masculinity, especially as far as it is grounded in specific religious teachings, and to analyse it critically.'[62] In the meantime, indeed the study of men and the way they are gendered by perceptions of masculinity has become an emerging sub-field in studies of religion and gender.[63] It is even included in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, under the lemma of 'men's studies in religion' where it is described as follows:

> As a new field of scholarly inquiry, it reflects upon and analyzes the complex connections between men and religion, building upon gender studies, feminist theory and criticism … Methodologically men's studies in religion is an open field; its object of inquiry is "men" as gendered beings in relation to religion.[64]

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[61] E.A. Castelli, 'Women, Gender, Religion: Troubling Categories and Transforming Knowledge' in E.A. Castelli (ed.), *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*, New York: Palgrave 2001, 4.

[62] U. King, 'Introduction: Gender and the Study of Religion' in U. king (ed.), *Religion and Gender*, Oxford and Malden: Blackwell Publishers 1995, 5.

[63] This development was marked in 1996 with the publication of two volumes in this area: S.B. Boyd, W.M. Longwood and M.W. Muesse (eds.), *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Pres 1996, and B. Krondorfer (ed.), *Men's Bodies, Men's Gods: Male Identities in a (Post-) Christian Culture*, New York and London: New York University Press 1996.

[64] B. Krondorfer and P. Culbertson, 'Men's Studies in Religion' in L. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2nd ed.), Detroit and New York: Macmillan 2005, 5861-5862. As yet there is no uniform name for this recently emerging and still developing sub-discipline. Mostly it is referred to as 'Men's studies in religion', as in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. This was also the name of the section in the American Academy of Religion covering this sub-discipline. However, recently the group has renamed itself 'Men, Masculinities and Religions Group'.

The latter comment in this quotation is important: men are studied as *gendered* beings. Parallel to Simone de Beauvoir's well-known statement that one is not born a woman but becomes one, which has been foundational to feminist analysis and women's studies, the basic perception in academic men's studies is that "one is not born a man but is made one".[65] Theoretically this points to the distinction between the categories of "sex" and "gender", which is central in social constructionist approaches to gender studies (opposite to essentialist approaches).[66] Hence, the study of men, masculinities and religion – just like the broader, secular field of men's studies and masculinity theory – generally distinguishes between "maleness" and "masculinity", with the former referring to a biological category and the latter to the social and cultural construct. Masculinity is viewed as 'a social construction that varies by culture and by historical periods. As socio-cultural constructs rather than a biological inevitability, masculinities are inextricably connected with the economic, political, social, psychological, and religious dimensions of human life.'[67]

Krondorfer has recently argued in favour of adding the adjective 'critical' and speaks of 'Critical men's studies in religion' (see below). In this thesis, I generally use the term 'Study of men, masculinities and religion', as I want to include the theoretical concept of masculinities. As will become clear in this paragraph, I follow Krondorfer in his understanding of the field of studies as a critical discipline. So now and then I will include this in my reference to the field of study, though in chapter 6 I will also problematise the critical scope of the sub-discipline. Furthermore, I refer to religion in the singular, in order to emphasise the focus on religion as a broad and diverse phenomenon, something that presumes the existence of various religions.

[65] Significantly, in some particular feminist understandings, the concept of gender only applies to women. For example, Rosi Braidotti (with reference to Simone de Beauvoir) has stated that 'men, as the empirical referent of the masculine, cannot be said to have a gender; rather, they are expected to carry the Phallus – which is something different.' Braidotti's argument is that to say that men just like women are gendered, implies that both are constituted in symmetrical ways. In her opinion this misses the 'feminist point of masculine domination', according to which 'the masculine and the feminine are in a structurally dissymmetrical position'. See Rosi Braidotti in Judith Butler, 'Feminism in any other Name' (interview with Rosi Braidotti) in *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 6/2-3 (1994), 38. In spite of the concerns expressed by Braidotti, a couple of years later another feminist thinker could state that 'feminist-infected masculinity studies have reached consensus about some recently troubling issues. Chief among these is the initial insight that masculinity, too, is a gender and therefore that men and women have undergone historical and cultural processes of gender formation that distribute power and privilege unevenly.' See J.K. Gardiner, 'Introduction' in J.K. Gardiner, *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory*, New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press 2002, 11.

[66] Cf. R. Alsop, A. Fitzsimons and K. Lennon, *Theorizing Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press 2002, 64-93.

[67] S.B. Boyd, W.M. Longwood and M.W. Muesse, 'Men, Masculinity and the Study of Religion' in S.B. Boyd, W.M. Longwood and M.W. Muesse (eds.), *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press 1996, xiv.

Elaborating on the concept of masculinity, masculinity theory provides two insights that are also used in the study of men, masculinities and religion. First, being organised and produced socially, masculinity is not something static but dynamic. Rather than speaking about masculinity as a 'configuration', Connell therefore speaks about 'a process of configuring'.[68] Second, because men, depending on their specific context and position are gendered in different ways, masculinity is not a single monolithic category but appears as a plural: *masculinities*. Multiple masculinities can occur in a given society at a given time, but generally one type will be most dominant, often referred to as "hegemonic masculinity".[69] Crucial questions, then, are: how different masculinities relate to each other; how they change with time and social developments; and how men actually shape their gender identities while being faced with various and changing discourses and ideals concerning masculinity.

Intersecting Masculinities and Religion

The study of men, masculinities and religion seeks to investigate the intersection of religion and masculinities. As Stephen Boyd points out, two questions are central: '[H]ow men's gender identities shape the religions men create and practice, and how religions construct and shape men's gender identities.'[70] The latter question is the focus of the present study: How does religion impact upon and interplay with the ongoing process of the construction of masculinities?

Stephen Boyd, Merle Longwood and Mark Muesse identify some areas in which religion – they specifically refer to Christianity and Judaism – may support or resist masculinities: through images of the divine, theological anthropology, ethics and myth and ritual.[71] In addition I would explicitly mention the role of sacred texts. Some examples might clarify these areas of investigation. With regard to images of the divine, feminist critics have argued that symbols such as the metaphor of God as "our father in heaven" and Jesus Christ as the "Son of God", legitimise the domination of men over women in Christianity.[72] Men's studies in religion may examine how theological symbols such as these legitimise male domination, but may also investigate other possible effects. It could be, for example, that the idea of God as a father provides Christian men with a model of fatherhood and effects agency (either destructive or constructive) among men as fathers. Concerning theological anthropology, the question is what lines of thought inform certain religious ideologies of masculinity. Religious anthropologies and gender ideologies are often rooted in a

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[68] Connell, *Masculinities*, 72.

[69] See note 15.

[70] S.B. Boyd, 'Trajectories in Men's Studies in Religion: Theories, Methodologies, and Issues' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 266.

[71] S.B. Boyd, W.M. Longwood and M.W. Muesse, 'Where do we go from here? Some Concluding Remarks' in S.B. Boyd, W.M. Longwood and M.W. Muesse (eds.), *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press 1996, 286ff.

[72] Cf. R. Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk. Towards a Feminist Theology*, Boston: Beacon Press 1983.

theological account of creation – and it is here that myths and sacred texts also come in. A question raised by scholars of men, masculinities and religion is: what does the concept of creation bring to bear on the understanding of gender and the ideas about masculinity?[73] The issues mentioned here only give an indication of the many questions raised to explore the intersections of religion and masculinities, both from historical and contemporary perspectives.

Apart from the analytical question as to the role that religions play in the construction of masculinities, in the study of men, masculinities and religion a more constructive or political question is also raised: What resources from religious traditions can be employed for a reconstruction or transformation of masculinities? For example, biblical texts have been searched for images of masculinity that could be helpful to develop "progressive" masculinities among African American men.[74] The life of Mohammed has been taken as a model to transform Islamic masculinities.[75] However, it has been argued by Michael Clark that men's studies in religion generally tend to engage in deconstructive rather than constructive approaches. His explanation of this is significant: scholars would be 'generally so afraid that systematically proscriptive or prescriptive work will be seen as reverting to authoritative male privilege' with the result that they 'have not engaged enough in *constructive* theology.'[76] Both the tendency to deconstruct masculinities and the observed reservation to engage in more constructive approaches can be understood from the critical edges that characterise the study of men, masculinities and religion

Critical Edges: Patriarchy and Heteronormativity

As mentioned in a quotation above, the academic study of men, masculinities and religion builds upon gender studies and feminist theory. Its historical precedents are in feminist scholarship in religion and theology. This is illustrated by Björn Krondorfer's reader *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism*, which opens with a piece

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[73] For example, Graham Ward comments that an anthropology and gender ideology rooted in creation tends to underscore sexual difference and gives rise to essentialist perceptions of masculinity as opposite to femininity. Ward notes the risk of a 'masculinist theology'. In order to avoid this, he proposes an anthropology rooted in Christology rather than in creation. A Christological anthropology, in his opinion, goes beyond sexual difference and draws attention to the multiple ways in which human beings construct gender and sexual identities. G. Ward, 'Theology and Masculinity' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 281-286. See also G. Ward, 'There is no Sexual Difference' in G. Loughlin (ed.), *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell 2007, 76-85.

[74] Cf. G.L. Byron, 'Images of Masculinity in the Pauline Epistles: Resources for Constructing Progressive Black Masculinities, Or Not?' in A.D. Mutua (ed.), *Progressive Black Masculinities*, New York: Routledge 2006, 101-120.

[75] See T. Godsey, 'The Muslim Man and AIDS: Negotiating Spaces for New Conceptualizations of Masculinity' in F. Esack and S. Chiddy (eds.), *Islam and AIDS. Between Scorn, Pity and Justice*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications 2009, 119-136.

[76] J.M. Clark, 'A Gay Men's Wish List for the Future of Men's Studies in Religion' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 270.

from Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*. Though Krondorfer realises that Daly 'would not want her work to be understood as a stepping-stone toward a study of *men* and religion', in his opinion her trenchant critique of patriarchal religion has challenged men to explain their position and privileges, which has given rise to a (self)critical investigation of men, masculinities and religion.[77] It is for this reason that Krondorfer proposes to define the sub-discipline with the adjective 'critical'. Explaining this, he says:

> By calling the new field 'critical men's studies in religion', I wish to emphasize that bringing gender consciousness to the analysis and interpretation of men in relation to all aspects of religion is indispensable; otherwise, we might just slip back into a long tradition of reiterations of male dominance within the sphere of religion. In other words, 'critical men's studies in religion' exhibits not only a reflective and empathetic stance toward men as individual and communal beings trying to make sense of their lives within the different demands put upon them by society and religion, but it must also engage these issues with critical sensitivity and scholarly discipline in the context of gender-unjust systems.[78]

The "gender-unjust systems" mentioned here, point first of all to patriarchy as it is subtly or overtly manifested in many religious traditions. To have patriarchy as a major topic under critique, as Martin Fischer points out, implies a critical approach to power in the complex relationships between men and women.[79] This indicates the pro-feminist engagement that is characteristic of the study of men, masculinities and religion. Garth Gasimu Baker-Fletcher strongly underlines this feminist approach and the subsequent opposition and deconstruction of patriarchy when he defines the objective of the sub-discipline:

> Insofar as the discipline of men's studies in religion does not deal with the historical project of patriarchy as its central and fundamental problematic, it fails as a critical theory. … As long as men's studies has not taken seriously feminist/womanist/*mujerista* critiques of male sexism and systematic global patriarchy, it can easily fall prey to the powerful co-opting energies of normative traditionalist ideals of masculinity.[80]

Hence, Baker-Fletcher argues for a critical and deconstructive approach to masculinities, which recognises the equality and rights of women and seeks to liberate women *and men* from patriarchy in order to promote their common humanity.

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[77] B. Krondorfer (ed.), *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism. A Critical Reader*, London: SCM Press 2009.

[78] B. Krondorfer, 'Introduction' in B. Krondorfer (ed.), *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism. A Critical Reader*, London: SCM Press 2009, xvii.

[79] M. Fischer, *Männermacht und Männerleid. Kritische Theologische Männerforschung in Kontext Genderperspektivierter Theologie als Beitrag zu einer Gleichstellung der Geschlechter*, Göttingen: Edition Ruprecht, 15.

[80] G.K. Baker-Fletcher, 'Critical Theory, Deconstruction and Liberation?' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 277.

Apart from patriarchy, heterosexism and homophobia are also mentioned by Krondorfer as part of the gender-unjust systems contested in the critical study of men, masculinities and religion.[81] In his perception, scholars engaged in the field of studies generally agree 'that a critique of the heterosexual-normative framing of religious and theological issues is necessary, and that a vision of full equality of all humans is desired'.[82] This critical edge is captured by Michael Clark's saying that the sub-discipline is not only pro-feminist but also gay-affirmative.[83] To conclude, the emerging study of men, masculinities and religion is characterised by a critical sensitivity both to patriarchy and heteronormativity. This clearly sets the parameters and defines the analytical framework as well as the political edges of the sub-discipline.

The present study follows the definition of men's studies in religion as a critical activity. It approaches the African Christian discourses on men and masculinity with a critical sensitivity. This sensitivity primarily concerns patriarchy– a concept originating from classic Western feminist theory. However, it is precisely this concept that has become increasingly controversial in recent years.[84] The critique, as offered by gender theorists such as Judith Butler, is that the classic feminist understanding of patriarchy is monolithic and does not take into account the different ways in which gender relations are shaped in cross-cultural contexts.[85] Furthermore, postcolonial criticism

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[81] Krondorfer, *Introduction*, xvii.

[82] B. Krondorfer, 'Who's Afraid of Gay Theology? Men's Studies, Gay Scholars, and Heterosexual Silence' in B. Krondorfer (ed.), *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism. A Critical Reader*, London: SCM Press 2009, 427 (was previously published before in *Theology and Sexuality* 13:3 (2007), 257-274). In spite of this general agreement, Krondorfer observes a 'gay/straight dichotomy' in the sub-discipline. He observes and denounces the silence of heterosexual scholars of men, masculinities and religion on gay men's studies in religion and theology. Having examined some explanations of the "heterosexual silence", he calls for a greater partnership of heterosexual and gay scholars to explore together the field of critical studies of men, masculinities and religion. For responses to Krondorfer's account see *Theology and Sexuality* 14/1 (2008).

[83] Clark, *A Gay Men's Wish List for the Future of Men's Studies in Religion*, 270.

[84] As feminist theologians Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood observe: 'The definition of patriarchy may be subjected today to more controversies than ever expected.' See M. Althaus-Reid and L. Isherwood, *Controversies in Feminist Theologies*, London: SCM Press 2007, 8.

[85] See J. Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (2 ed.), London and New York: Routledge 2006, 48. Here Butler states: 'The very notion of patriarchy has threatened to become a universalizing concept that overrides or reduces distinct articulations of gender asymmetry in different cultural contexts.' For an argument about the insufficiency and misapplication of Western feminist concepts such as patriarchy (but also the concept of "women") in African cultural contexts, see O. Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1997, esp. 15-17. Oyewumi criticises African feminists who uncritically label "African culture" as patriarchal, thus employing Western concepts and categories on African contexts where gender, according to Oyewumi, was (and partly still is) organised in completely different ways from the West. Where Oyewumi criticises Western gender theory for employing concepts

teaches that the concept of patriarchy, when used to analyse gender in African contexts, runs the risk of reinforcing and reproducing colonial and essentialist representations of African men as dominant and oppressive, and of African women as powerless and subordinate.[86] Additionally, it is not clear how the massive concept of patriarchy relates to the conceptualisation of multiple masculinities.[87] It is against this background that the present study is somewhat reticent to employ the concept of patriarchy in its investigation of men and masculinities. Its 'critical sensitivity to patriarchy', then, refers to an interest in the various and complex ways in which gender is ordered and power is distributed in the discourses on masculinity under investigation – an interest that is imperative in light of the intersections of gender and HIV, as is outlined above – rather than that it presumes a fixed asymmetrical structure of power in gender relations called "patriarchy".

The present study also adopts the so-called critical sensitivity to heteronormativity that characterises the study of men, masculinities and religion. To be clear, this does not mean that it has an explicit interest in or focus on the issue of homosexuality. The research is on masculinities rather than on homosexuality. However, investigating the discourses on masculinity of African theologians and in the local churches, the study is sensitive to how masculinities are defined sexually in these discourses: are there explicit or implicit assumptions of heterosexuality, significant silences on homosexuality and/or overt expressions of homophobia?

To employ these critical edges might be somewhat problematic. The risk is that African Christian discourses are evaluated with Western norms concerning gender and sexuality. To correct this perception, I would like to emphasise that the sensitivities mentioned above do indeed function as analytical "sense organs" rather than as normative evaluative tools. Yet the risk observed points to a fundamental issue concerning the project undertaken in this research, where a western scholar investigates African Christianity on delicate issues such as gender, masculinities and HIV. This issue will be discussed in the next paragraph.

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that are not relevant to African contexts, recently Saba Mahmood has critiqued Western approaches to gender for applying its liberal political ideals (with normative assumptions such as freedom and autonomy) to other cultural and religious contexts. As becomes clear in this thesis, the critique of Oyewumi (see chapter 2) and Mahmood (see chapter 6) can also be applied to the African theologians discussed in the thesis, as generally they uncritically adopt classic feminist approaches to gender, employing its concepts and striving for its political ideals.

[86] E.g. see S. Arnfred, 'Re-Thinking Sexualities in Africa: Introduction' in S. Arnfred (ed.), *Re-Thinking Sexualities in Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrika Institutet 2004, 11-12. For a critical discussion of the colonial production of these gendered representations, see for example Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, esp. chapter 4: 'Colonizing Bodies and Minds: Gender and Colonialism'.

[87] There is a strong tendency in masculinity theory to consider men and masculinities generally as implicated with and as perpetrators of patriarchy. See, for example, the concept of "the patriarchal dividend" in the work of Connell, or the notion of "masculine domination" in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (cf. Connell, *Masculinities*, 79, 82; Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*).

The "Western" Scholar and the Study of "African" Christianity

As a white European male scholar conducting the present study I am aware of the burden of history of Western academic engagement with the African continent in general and with the study of religion in Africa in particular. Postcolonial critics have denounced the cultural hegemony from the "West" in the production of knowledge about the oriental "other" and the representation of the "other" in the colonial period. Referring to Edward Said who is such a critic, postcolonial theologian Kwok Pui-Lan states that Said's work 'issues a clarion call to [Western] Christian theologians and scholars in Christianity' because it was the Christian "West" that was implicated with the production and reproduction of negative images of colonial subjects.[88] Africa is no exception here: not only the history, but also the study of Christianity in Africa has been characterised by Western hegemony and negative representations of the African "other", her culture and religion.[89] Residues of this Western academic hegemony and colonial attitude in the production of knowledge about Africa are found up to the present time, for example when Western scholars of religion in Africa tend to ignore the work of African scholars working in the same area and on similar issues[90], or when a Western researcher of African theology takes a superior position and shows disrespect to the very theologians she/he is researching.[91] There is a danger to go to the other extreme, with the Western scholar not being allowed to conduct research in Africa and on African subjects or to engage critically with the work of African scholars. In my opinion this is, indeed, an extreme position and one that is not necessary. Having a critical postcolonial sensitivity does not mean ignoring the other and withdrawing

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[88] P.-L. Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 2005, 3.

[89] Cf. E.P. Antonio, 'Introduction: Inculturation and Postcolonial Discourse' in E.P. Antonio (ed.), *Inculturation and Postcolonial Discourse in African Theology*, New York: Peter Lang 2006, 9-11; P.-L. Kwok, 'Mercy Amba Oduyoye and African Women's Theology' in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20:1 (2004), 7-8; M.W. Dube, 'Postcoloniality, Feminist Spaces, and Religion' in L.E. Donaldson and P.-L. Kwok, (eds.), *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Religious Discourse*, New York: Routledge 2002, 100-120. Jane Soothill even comments: 'Of all the nations and cultures that constitute "the rest" (as opposed to the West) in postcolonial discourse, Africa perhaps stands alone as "the Other" par excellence of the Western world; not least because it seems to persist in a state of otherness in a way that "the Orient" does not.' See J.E. Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, Leiden: Brill 2007, 21.

[90] Ezra Chitando, in his review of a volume of anthropological scholars on religion and HIV in Africa, critically points to this residue. He comments that the book demonstrates a failure or even a refusal of the editors and authors to refer to and interact with publications of African scholars in religion and theology on issues of religion and HIV and AIDS, which is 'academically unforgivable'. See E. Chitando, 'Review of F. Becker and P.W. Geissler (eds.), *Aids and Religious Practice in Africa*, Leiden: Brill 2009' in *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 39:3 (2010), 290.

[91] An example of this is given by M.A. Oduyoye, 'Gender and Theology in Africa Today' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 8:2 (2002), 36-37.

into one's own context – which would ignore the fact that local contexts are increasingly interconnected in our globalising world. It rather challenges us to enter into what Anselm Min has phrased so eloquently as "a solidarity of others".[92] Here, people respect each other's otherness and yet realise that they are related and interdependent. In my understanding, this provides a basis for an academic project such as the present research. What, then, does this mean for the methodological approach of this study? Let me highlight two major implications.

Firstly, from the realisation of Western hegemony in the production of knowledge about "non-Western" subjects, it seems impossible for me to investigate religion, masculinities and HIV in Africa without taking into account the groundbreaking work of African scholars in religion and theology in this area. At the same time, I am aware that I am not a participant in their project of "African theology", simply because I am not an African theologian. My subject position is different and consequently also my academic perspective and approach. Taking this seriously, in the present thesis I will first examine the work of African theologians on issues of gender, masculinities and HIV, as much as possible o*n their own terms*. Therefore, chapter 2 introduces and outlines at length their theoretical and theological perspectives on the issue under discussion. Only at a second stage will I engage critically with their work, based on my observations of the issues which have our shared concern, bringing in my academic perspective more explicitly (chapters 5 and 6). Though one Western scholar has found it difficult to engage in a critical dialogue with African women theologians, my experience in the process of this research has been different.[93] For example, Musa Dube, an African theologian with a critical postcolonial sensitivity par excellence, has welcomed my work as well as the work of other Western scholars. She takes it as a sign of recognition of the work of African scholars in religion and theology in the global academic discourse.[94] Undertaking this research, I have been challenged by several African theological scholars to develop my *critical* engagement with their work. These are indications that it is indeed possible to engage in a space of academic discussion while respecting each other's different backgrounds and positions. It is in this space that in the final chapters of this thesis I offer a critique of the way African theological scholars analyse and reflect on masculinities, and propose an alternative approach.

Secondly, with regard to the case studies in local churches that are part of the present study, a critical postcolonial sensitivity makes one aware of the problem of

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[92] A.K. Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World: A Postmodern Theology After Postmodernism*, New York: T. & T. Clark Publishers 2004.

[93] It has been Carrie Pemberton's experience from her research on African women theologians that it is 'exceedingly difficult' to engage in a critical dialogue with these theologians. She explains this from the 'form of African existentialism' to which these theologians, in her opinion, are committed – without, however, explaining this. Cf. C. Pemberton, *Circle Thinking: African Women Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill 2003, 5.

[94] M.W. Dube, 'In the Circle of Life: African Women Theologians' Engagement with HIV and AIDS' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 199.

"seeing self through others". This points to the phenomenon denounced by postcolonial critics, that the other is only conceived in terms of the self – generally as a counter-image of the self. Applying this to the study of African Christianity, Jane Soothill comments that 'in analyses of non-Western expressions of Christianity there is a tendency to assess the beliefs and practices of "others" in terms of their similarity to or difference from the beliefs and practices of our Western Christian "selves".'[95] Though the study of world Christianity is fully aware of Christianity not being a Western religion but having multiple faces, and though it realises that this raises challenges for the Western scholar studying other types of Christianity, there is little methodological reflection on doing cross-cultural research. Soothill, herself an anthropologist studying gender in Charismatic churches in Ghana, learns from cultural anthropologists who reflect on Western scholarship of the cultures of others. Hence she mentions it as crucial to examine the churches in her research 'on their own terms and within a local context that takes seriously the religious world-views of believers; rather, that is, than with reference to a normative, Western-derived construction of what Christianity is or ought to be.'[96] This sounds very sympathetic but is, in my opinion, somewhat problematic because it seems to neglect the role of the researcher.

Of course, the task is to examine African Christian churches on their own terms and in their own social, cultural and theological context. The present study seeks to do so in its analysis of the discourses in the churches of the case studies. However, it is the researcher who introduces the analytical tools and a specific sensitivity to certain issues. It is also the researcher who, simply by his or her presence and his or her specific interests and questions, will trigger certain responses in fieldwork, and thus somehow "creates" the very discourse she/he is investigating. Most obviously this is the case with interviews but it may also apply to other materials. Therefore, rather than claiming objectivity, the researcher is to account for his or her subjectivity. In other words, being aware of the risk of "seeing self through others", it has also to be acknowledged that the other cannot be seen otherwise than through one's own eyes. To be clear, the present study does not intend to evaluate the churches (nor African theology) from a normative perception of a "true" (Western) Christianity. To be sure, I have certain perceptions of what the Christian faith is about but, trained as I am in contextual theologies and world Christianity, I will not employ these perceptions methodologically. I am rather interested in the various ways individuals and communities claim and shape their Christian identities. Yet when examining and analysing the discourses in local churches, specifically with regard to the issues of gender and masculinities that are central to this study, I introduce my own theoretical perspectives, analytical tools and sensitivities – which have been accounted for above.

One may understand that doing cross-cultural research in world Christianity on relatively controversial issues, such as the present study on masculinity and HIV in African Christianity, brings with it certain challenges to the researcher. To give one

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[95] Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, 24.

[96] Ibid., 24.

example, as mentioned above the study of men, masculinities and religion has critical edges to patriarchy and heteronormativity. However, how should such a critical sensitivity guide the researcher when she/he analyses religious discourses on masculinity as in the case studies of this thesis, which are indeed patriarchal and heteronormative? This question becomes even more imperative when the researcher, out of a postcolonial sensitivity, does not want to examine and evaluate the beliefs and perceptions of African Christians by certain Western criteria. In the course of this study I have learned from the anthropologist Saba Mahmood how feelings of discomfort with patriarchal religious discourses in non-Western contexts can also be dealt with in a self-critical way and can come to question the normative assumptions of the Western researcher.[97] This does not necessarily take away the feelings of discomfort with these discourses, but it allows analysing the discourses more or less "on their own terms".

To conclude, undertaking the present research into African theology and local churches in Zambia, a critical postcolonial sensitivity helps to make me aware of myself as a subject in this research. I am an outsider not only with reference to the churches of the case studies but also with regard to the major academic discourse I am relating to, namely African theology. Coming from a different background and being trained academically in a specific way, I introduce my questions and sensitivities, my methods of analysis and a framework of reflection. This certainly impacts on the way I undertake this research and the questions I raise. Among other things, it has resulted in the approach of the research, being to investigate and compare the way African theologians and local churches address and seek to transform masculinities *in relation to each other*. Furthermore, the awareness of my position has resulted in the objective of the present study being rather limited: I do not aim to contribute directly to the debate on masculinities in African theology, but rather do I aim to analyse and clarify this debate and to question some of its concepts and presuppositions from a detailed empirical study of the praxis in some local churches. Only in the last chapter, I suggest a direction in which some of the questions that have been raised can be dealt with.
In this way, I do indeed hope to contribute to the study of masculinities in African theology as well as to the study of African and world Christianity and the study of men, masculinities and religion.

1.5. CASE STUDIES IN LOCAL CHURCHES IN ZAMBIA

It has become clear that the present study, in its investigation of masculinities in African Christianities in the context of the HIV epidemic, has a double focus on African theology and on local churches. The rationale for this approach as well as the theoretical considerations has been explored above. The present section focuses more in detail on the part of the research conducted through case studies in the local churches. It explains how the case studies have been selected and conducted.

[97] See S. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2005. A more elaborate discussion on this issue is provided in chapter 6 of this thesis.

However, to begin with, the wider context in which these churches are found, namely Zambia, is introduced.

The Context of Zambia

Why Zambia?

When selecting a country to conduct case studies, the first criterion was the presence and impact of HIV. This is because the HIV epidemic informs the present study's interest in masculinities. Evidently, the centre of gravity of the HIV pandemic in Africa is on the southern part of the continent. A second criterion was the presence and impact of Christianity, as the present study's interest is in *Christian* masculinities. In addition, I searched for a country that is Anglophone and has a stable social and political atmosphere that enables one to conduct research. Several countries in southern Africa were considered serious options, among which was Zambia. The final choice for this country was rather random. As an English-speaking country with a severe HIV epidemic and a vital presence of Christianity, Zambia was a relevant location of research. It even appeared – and has turned out – to be a pleasant location, due to the country's peaceful population and friendly atmosphere. Within Zambia, I have opted to focus on the capital city, Lusaka, for several reasons: HIV is considered to be especially an urban disease[98], Zambia (like Africa in general) is experiencing rapid urbanisation, and urban areas are specifically interesting as melting pots of "culture" and "modernity" with subsequent dynamics of gender.

Brief Introduction to Zambia

The Republic of Zambia is located in Southern-Central Africa. In 1964 the country, until that time known as Northern Rhodesia, gained independence from British colonial rule. From that time the country has been faced with many of the socio-economic problems faced by postcolonial African nations, such as economic decline, foreign debts, inflation, unemployment and poverty. However, in contrast to several other African countries, politically Zambia has remained relatively stable and peaceful.[99] This can be considered a major achievement, especially in light of the great diversity of

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[98] Generally HIV prevalence tends to be higher in urban areas than in rural areas. With regard to Zambia, it is indicated that in urban settings prevalence rates are twice as high compared with rural areas (see *AIDS Epidemic Update*, Geneva: UNAIDS 2007, 17).

[99] For a brief outline of the history of postcolonial Zambia, see J.B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola, 'Introduction' in J.B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, Many Histories. Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia*, Leiden: Brill 2008, 1-13 (see also the various accounts on specific issues in this volume).

ethnic groups populating the country.[100] Apparently, the post-independence politics of mixing these groups and creating a "Zambian" identity has been successful, helped by urbanisation and the promotion of English as the official language.[101]

HIV and AIDS in Zambia

One of the major challenges faced by Zambia in the postcolonial era, apart from economic troubles, is the HIV epidemic. Since the first official diagnosis of AIDS in the first half of the 1980s[102], the numbers of HIV infections have increased heavily. According to the latest country analysis provided by UNAIDS, the HIV prevalence rate among adults (15-49 years) is about 15%. The gendered face of the epidemic is demonstrated by infection rates among women being 5% higher than men (18 vs. 13%). The UNAIDS report concludes that 'AIDS is the most serious threat to the development agenda in Zambia.'[103] After an initial silence, the Zambian government has actively sought to address HIV, though hampered by a continuous lack of financial resources. The sociologists and HIV researchers Carolyn Baylies and Janet Bujra observe a shift in the focus of the Zambian HIV policy in the 1990s, from a narrow focus on risky sexual behaviour to a broader focus on 'vulnerability as situated in relations of power and access to resources.'[104] As part of this shift, gender became highlighted as a factor of major importance. Currently the National AIDS Council, which coordinates the Zambian response to the epidemic, advocates a multi-sectoral approach to HIV, and one of its guiding principles is that gender equity and HIV issues are co-related. This relation is understood as follows:

> Gender issues that perpetuate the dominance of male interests and lack of self assertiveness on the part of women in sexual relations put both men and women at risk. Women are taught to never refuse their husbands sex regardless of the number of extra-marital partners he may have or his non-willingness to use condoms.[105]

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[100] The Zambian government uses a classification of Zambian tribes which counts seventy-three ethnic groups. For a brief survey of these groups, see G.C. Bond, 'Zambia. Peoples and Cultures' in J. Middleton (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Africa South of the Sahara. Part IV*, New York: Scribner's Sons 1997, 414-417.

[101] Anthropologists indicate that ethnicity is a factor of decreasing importance for personal identity and the organisation of social life. For example, see J. Davison, *Gender, Lineage, and Ethnicity in Southern Africa*, Boulder: Westview Press 1997, 153-155; K.T. Hansen, *Keeping House in Lusaka*, New York: Columbia University Press 1997, 114ff.

[102] There is discussion about the first diagnosis in Zambia, but it is dated 1984 or 1985. See J. Bujra and C. Baylies, 'Responses to the AIDS Epidemic in Tanzania and Zambia' in C. Baylies and J. Bujra (eds.), *AIDS, Sexuality and Gender in Africa: Collective Strategies and Struggles in Tanzania and Zambia*, London: Routledge 2000, 57, note 3.

[103] *Zambia - Country Situation*, Geneva: UNAIDS 2008, 1.

[104] Bujra and Baylies, *Responses to the AIDS Epidemic in Tanzania and Zambia*, 32.

[105] *National HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework 2006-2010*, Lusaka: National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2006, 14.

This quotation indicates quite a generalising understanding of gender with monolithic representations of the categories of men versus women, that echoes the Western "gender-and-development" discourse. It calls for a closer look at gender in all its complexities in present-day Zambia.

Gender in Present-Day Zambia

Historically, there is not one homogenous traditional "Zambian" configuration of gender. As mentioned above, Zambia has a rich ethnic-cultural diversity, and historically the various groups have different kinship systems, being matrilineal, patrilineal or mixed. The traditional gendered organization of kinship, marriage and family life in the various groups is a question for ethnographic research. What matters here, is the diversity in this area among the various groups. Furthermore, colonial history, missionary Christianity, the money economy, urbanisation, modernisation and suchlike have all impacted on traditional configurations of gender in communities that are now part of modern Zambia.[106] Nowadays the Zambian government and numerous non-governmental organizations seek to promote "gender equality", not in the least as a result of the HIV epidemic. Clearly, rather than something static and monolithic, gender in present-day Zambia is dynamic and diverse. Gender is involved in processes of change that do not occur synchronically, and which impact differently upon different parts of the country (e.g. urban versus rural), different socio-economic classes and age categories. Both progressive and reactionary forces are involved in this dynamic in which gender identities and gender relations are configured and constantly reconfigured.

What has just been said for gender in general, also applies to masculinities in particular. In the last century, the traditional roles and positions of men in marriage, the family and the community, just like the cultural-religious meanings attached to "manhood", have been subjected to change, are contested, re-affirmed and thus involved in a constant process of negotiation and configuration. Additionally, the above outlined recent contestation of men and hegemonic versions of masculinity in African contexts of HIV is also relevant to the Zambian context.[107]

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[106] Several studies deal with these developments, from different perspectives with different interests. For example, see T. Rasing, *The Bush Burnt, the Stones Remain: Female Initiation Rites in Urban Zambia*, Munster etc.: Lit Verlag 2002, esp. 78-125; A. Schlyter, 'Youth, Gender and Living Conditions in George Compound in Lusaka' in M. Mapetla, A. Larsson and A. Schlyter (eds.), *Changing Gender Relations in Southern Africa. Issues of Urban Life*, Roma: The Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS), National University of Lesotho 1998, 286-308; Davison, *Gender, Lineage, and Ethnicity in Southern Africa*; Hansen, *Keeping House in Lusaka*, 16-17 and 98-103.

[107] For accounts on men and masculinities in contemporary Zambia especially in relation to HIV and AIDS, see Simpson, *Boys to Men in the Shadow of AIDS. Masculinities and HIV Risk in Zambia*; P. Dover, A Man of Power: Gender and HIV/AIDS in Zambia (PhD, Uppsala University 2001); M. Foreman, T. Scalway and M.I. Miti, *Men and HIV in Zambia*, Lusaka: PANOS Southern Africa & UNAIDS Zambia 2000.

All this forms the background to the present study. Though many factors interplay with the dynamics of gender and masculinities in present-day Zambia, in this thesis the focus is on the role of religion. More particularly, the question is how Christian churches relate to and interrogate these dynamics. How do they define and promote a Christian ideal of "manhood" against the background of unstable and changing masculinities in society, specifically in view of HIV? However, before turning to the case study churches, first a brief general account on Christianity in Zambia is provided.

Christianity in Zambia

As a result of colonial government and missionary activity, Christianity from the second half of the 19th century onwards has become a major religion in Zambia.[108] Though indigenous religion is still influential and though Islam is recently increasing its popularity, Zambians predominantly identify as Christian.[109] Elizabeth Colson notes that from independence the idea has grown that 'to be Zambian means to be a Christian'.[110] Apparently, in the postcolonial era Christianity has become an integral part of the Zambian identity – something that even is recorded in the constitutional preamble, which presents Zambia as a "Christian nation".[111]

Present-day Zambian Christianity knows great diversity. The Christian churches in the country often are categorised by the three so-called "mother bodies" that bring churches together and represent them in public affairs. These umbrella organisations are the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) mainly for the mainline Protestant churches, the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) representing the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) in which Evangelical and some Pentecostal churches collaborate. In 2001 a fourth "mother body" joined the scene, being the Independent Churches Organisation of Zambia (ICOZ), which

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[108] For a survey of the history of missionary Christianity in Zambia, see B.S. Chuba, *A History of Early Christian Missions and Church Unity in Zambia*, Ndola: Mission Press 2005.

[109] To give an indication, according to the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, in the year 2000 about 82% of the population was Christian (D.B. Barrett, G.T. Kurian and T.M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World. Part 1: The World by Countries: Religionists, Churches, Ministries* (2 ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001, 817). The Zambian scholar of religion Austin Cheyeka gives 87%, which he derives from the 2000 nation-wide census (A.M. Cheyeka, 'Towards a History of the Charismatic Churches in Post-Colonial Zambia' in J.B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, Many Histories. Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia*, Leiden: Brill 2008, 146).

[110] E. Colson, *Tonga Religious Life in the Twentieth Century*, Lusaka: Bookworld 2006, 249.

[111] For the background to this declaration, see I.A. Phiri, 'President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia: The Christian Nation and Democracy' in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33:4 (2003), 401-428. For a discussion of the public and political role of Christianity in postcolonial Zambia, see P. Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers 1998, 181-245.

represents a number of Charismatic or neo-Pentecostal churches.[112] The first three organisations collaborate on several issues concerning Zambian society. A noteworthy historical example is their joint statement on HIV and AIDS, which was published as early as 1988.[113]

In recent decades, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have been gaining ground in Zambia, as all over the African continent. [114] They are prominently present in the media and in the public sphere in a city like Lusaka. At the same time, the influence and vitality of the "mainline" churches is not to be underestimated.[115] It is for this reason that the present study has opted for case studies in a Pentecostal church and in a Roman-Catholic parish.

Case Studies

A substantial part of the research presented in this thesis consists of case studies in two Christian churches in Lusaka, Zambia. The central question here is how these churches practically and theologically address, contest, (re)define, and seek to transform masculinities against the background of the HIV epidemic. Such a question can only be explored through qualitative research, and this explains the option for case studies. Case study research does not aim to give a representative account of the issues under investigation, but to provide detailed understanding of these issues from

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[112] This organisation is mentioned by Cheyeka, *Towards a History of the Charismatic Churches in Post-Colonial Zambia*, 147.

[113] See 'Choose to Live. Reflections on the AIDS Crisis from the Christian Churches in Zambia' (January 1988), published in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003.

[114] Cf. Cheyeka, *Towards a History of the Charismatic Churches in Post-Colonial Zambia*, 144-163 and A.M. Cheyeka, 'Charismatic Churches and their Impact on Mainline Churches in Zambia' in *Journal of Humanitie*s 5 (2005), 54-71. For a general account of this development in African Christianity, see Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* and B. Meyer, 'Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches' in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004), 447-474.

[115] There is a tendency among scholars to focus on Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity as the most vibrant part of African Christianity. However, as Ogbu Kalu mentions with regard to Pentecostal Christianity, 'The astonishing growth in Africa must be understood within the larger perspective that all religious forms are growing; much of the population has not been bitten by the charismatic bug. … The Roman Catholic Church remains the largest Christian body in most of Africa.' (Kalu, *African Pentecostalism. an Introduction*, 5.) This comment can also be applied to Zambia. Indeed, Pentecostal churches are popular and vibrant, but they are said to be especially an urban phenomenon and to attract particularly people from the middle class (see Cheyeka, *Towards a History of the Charismatic Churches in Post-Colonial Zambia*, 153). In other words, in the rural areas and among the lower classes, Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church attract many adherents. Furthermore, the public-political role of these churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church, is significant (cf. Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, 188, 225ff).

a few cases, which will shed some new light on the subject in general.[116] Case studies allow for in-depth research on Christian masculinities and how they are (re)constructed in church communities. The case studies themselves are presented in the chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis. The present paragraph accounts for the selection of the churches in which case studies have been conducted, and for the methods that have been employed to collect and analyse the data.

Selection of the Churches

Though case studies do not pretend to be representative, yet the basic selection principle was to choose churches that reflect some of the diversity of Christianity in Zambia, and in Africa in general. As outlined above, in Zambia this diversity is reflected in the four "mother bodies" that bring together churches in a particular tradition. However, to conduct case studies in four churches, one for each organisation, did not appear realistic in the given time. It was only feasible to conduct case studies in two churches. These were selected within the two major (and somewhat problematic) categories that can be distinguished in Zambian Christianity: "mainline" and Pentecostal churches. Among the mainline churches, the option was for the largest denomination, the Roman Catholic Church.

Among the many Pentecostal and Catholic churches in Lusaka, two cases have been selected after some orientation and consultation. With regard to a Pentecostal church, the final choice was for Northmead Assembly of God Church. This is a congregation which is prominently present in Lusaka (and which through its radio and TV programmes reaches the whole country), and with a senior pastor who is well-known in the city and far beyond. With regard to a Roman-Catholic parish, the option was for St Charles Lwanga Church of Regiment parish, which is one of the oldest and more prominent parishes in Lusaka. Both churches turned out to be significant because of their relative prominence, their active response to issues of HIV and AIDS, their concern with issues of marriage and the family and the men's groups that are active in both churches. Furthermore, and not least, as a researcher I was welcomed by the church leadership of both churches, and I found a welcoming atmosphere in both communities.

The Research

The actual fieldwork in both churches was conducted over more than five months, spread over two periods (September-November 2008 and June-August 2009). The two fieldwork periods enabled me to alternate data collection with data analysis. That allowed me to focus and revise the questions of inquiry, and to explore the issues that arose from a first analysis of the materials. Carrying out the case studies, I took part in the church life as a participant observer, presenting myself as a student conducting research on issues of gender and HIV in the church. Prior to that, I had sought and received permission to conduct research in the respective churches from the senior

[116] See B. Flyvbjerg, 'Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research' in C. Seale and others (eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice*, London: Sage Publications 2004, 420-434.

pastor of Northmead Assembly of God and the parish priest of Regiment parish. In both churches I regularly attended Sunday services, youth meetings, meetings of the men's fellowship, wedding services, meetings for married couples, conferences and workshops on HIV and AIDS, Bible studies, prayer meetings and other events. Apart from attending the formal church activities, I spent a substantial amount of time at church, informally socialising and conversing with church members and pastors. Furthermore, as people got to know me, I was invited by some to their homes or spent time with them elsewhere. From these meetings and conversations I made notes. At times I recorded sermons or speeches in meetings and services. Additionally, I collected a great deal of written and electronic materials in both churches, such as newsletters, booklets, magazines, and – in case of Northmead Assembly of God – DVDs with sermons on specific themes.

Another body of data collected during the case studies consisted of interviews with a number of church members and church leaders, conducted after a period of getting acquainted with both churches and having established relationships. About forty-five semi-structured, explorative interviews were conducted, with church members of various ages, predominantly men but also a number of women, and with a number of pastors and priests in the churches as well as with a few officials in organisations related to the churches. All interviewees were informed about the interest and scope of the research, and agreed that the interviews could be used for research purposes. Though only one interviewee requested anonymity, I have opted to refer to all interviewees with fictive names except for those interviewed in their function as pastor or priest in the church.[117] With regard to the selection of church members for the interviews: in most cases it concerned people I had come to know during the research; in a few cases I asked a pastor or priest to suggest names when I was looking for someone with a particular background. Neither in the selection of respondents, nor in the analysis of the interviews was the factor of ethnicity taken into account.[118]

The interviews as well as the other materials collected during the fieldwork form the body of data on which the research is based. These data have been subjected to a critical analysis, making use of software for qualitative data analysis, MAXQDA. The chapters on the case studies in the present thesis (chapter 3 and 4) are drawn from this analysis. They include both the formal and informal discourses on men and masculinity in the churches. Both are crucial to explore the major question of how men

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[117] The latter were interviewed as formal representatives of their respective churches about the views and practices of the church they represent, and they agreed that they could be quoted by name. It would not only be difficult to refer to them anonymously (for example, because there is only one parish priest in Regiment parish), but also undesirable because in their case it matters who is speaking (for example, the bishop or a youth pastor in Northmead Assembly of God).

[118] As mentioned in note 101, anthropologists consider ethnicity to be a factor of decreasing importance in urban Zambia. Moreover, the interest of the present study is not in ethnic-cultural particularities but in Christian discourses on masculinity.

and masculinities in the churches are addressed, contested, redefined and transformed against the background of HIV. It draws from the present study's interest and the subsequent type of research that the data collected provide insight into how masculinities are represented discursively rather than how they are performed in reality.[119] However, by including the voices of men about their own male identities and experiences, the present study not only gives insight into the churches' ideals of masculinity but also into how male church members understand and evaluate themselves in relation to these ideals. Furthermore, the voices of women about their perceptions of men and masculinity have been included, not only because they contribute to the construction of masculinities as much as men do, but also because they observe and experience how men actually live up to the ideals of masculinity promoted in the church.[120]

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[119] The present study understands "discourse" in Foucauldian terms, as not only expressing and reflecting but also constituting and constructing social realities through language. Discourses contain powerful messages that form and shape and make sense of the social world, and enable the subject (individual) to position and identify himself/herself in and in relation to this world. Hence, theories of gender and discourse focus on the discursive construction of gender, or on gender *as* discourse. With regard to masculinities, Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett state that 'masculinities exists as discourse – dominant and subordinated ways of thinking, talking and acting as males, and as such provide the very means by which males 'become' men.' (S. Whitehead and F.J. Barrett, 'The Sociology of Masculinity' in S. Whitehead and F.J. Barrett (eds.), *The Masculinities Reader*, Malden and Cambridge: Polity 2001, 21). In the present study, I distinguish between formal and informal discourses. With regard to formal discourses – such as preaching, (pre)marital teaching, and publications on offer in the church – it is clear that these, through setting ideals, claiming certain truths and promoting specific norms construct a discursive masculinity that enables male church members to develop their identities as Christian men. However, these men are faced with other and competing discourses, and they make sense of this through their own "informal" discourse which not just reflects but is a way to construct their male identity.

[120] Matthew Gutmann underscores the importance of including women's experiences with, and ideas about men in research on masculinities, because 'masculinities develop and transform and have little meaning except in relation to women and female identities and practices in all their similar diversity and complexity.' See M.C. Gutmann, 'Trafficking in Men: The Anthropology of Masculinity' in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997), 400. The present study agrees with Gutmann's perception and therefore interviews were conducted with women about men and masculinity. Yet I opted to conduct interviews predominantly with men. The reason for this is that in the literature on religion, gender and HIV a lot is said *about* men and the problems put by masculinities, often in generalising and blaming ways (cf. Mane and Aggleton, *Gender and HIV/AIDS: What do Men have to do with it?*, 27-28), while the voices of men themselves are hardly included and the complexities and differentiation of masculinities are barely taken into account.

1.6. OVERVIEW

The structure of this thesis corresponds with the research questions formulated above. The discourses on masculinities in African theology and in the local churches are first discussed separately and then are intersected and brought together into discussion.

The present introductory chapter is followed by chapter 2, which focuses on African theology. The chapter investigates the first sub-question of the research inquiry: How do African theologians theoretically and theologically analyse, reflect upon, and envision masculinities in view of HIV? In order to put this question into context, the chapter does not simply focus on the recent debate on masculinities among some African theologians, but takes a broader scope on gender and HIV in African theology.

Having explored African theology as one type of African Christian discourse, the following two chapters focus on African Christianity as manifested in local churches. Two case studies are presented: the Roman Catholic Regiment parish (chapter 3) and the Pentecostal Northmead Assembly of God (chapter 4). The chapters offer a detailed account of Catholic and Pentecostal masculinity in contemporary Zambia as constructed in local faith communities. In doing so, they explore the second sub-question of the research: How do local churches practically and theologically address, contest, (re)define and seek to transform masculinities against the background of HIV? Before focusing on particular questions concerning masculinities, each chapter opens with an introduction to the church under discussion and pays attention to issues of HIV and AIDS in that church.

Chapter 5 brings the lines of the previous chapters together and seeks to intersect and discuss them in a critical but constructive way. The chapter deals with the third sub-question, concerning the convergences and divergences in the analyses of, and visions for masculinities provided by the theologians and found in the churches. Firstly, the case studies are critically compared with each other. Secondly, the case studies are critically compared with the approach to masculinities of the African theologians. Thirdly, drawing from this comparative analysis, some critical questions are put to the theologians as well as to the churches.

The latter step already engages the fourth sub-question, about the issues that arise from the preceding analysis of the discourses on masculinity of the theologians and in the churches. This question also asks for a constructive proposal: how can the observed critical issues, crucial for the further study of masculinities in African Christianity, be dealt with? Such a proposal is put forward in the concluding chapter, which thus does not simply present a conclusion but aims to make a theoretical contribution to the study of masculinities in African Christianity in the context of the HIV epidemic and beyond.

2. FROM PATRIARCHY TO GENDER JUSTICE: AFRICAN THEOLOGIANS' APPROACH TO MASCULINITIES IN THE HIV AND AIDS ERA

African men are what they are because of their socialization into patriarchy, a sense of being the dominant sex and persons to whom service is owed. … The new relations between women and men that have to be created, begin with the acknowledgement of our common humanity and the equality of women and men and the practicing of the same.
Mercy Amba Oduyoye[1]

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an outline has been given of the way men and hegemonic masculinities in African contexts have become contested as a result of the HIV epidemic. The main interest of this study is how African theologians and local churches engage with this issue. The present chapter begins to explore this question, focusing on African theologians. How do they analyse, reflect upon and envisage masculinities in the context of the epidemic? More precisely, (how) do they address, contest, (re)define and seek to transform prevalent masculinities which, in their understanding, are critical to HIV? While exploring these questions, specific attention is paid to the theoretical and theological concepts employed by the theologians to analyse masculinities and to envisage transformation. Furthermore, a particular interest is in how the theologians perceive the role of Christian churches in relation to masculinities in the context of HIV. This interest is crucial in the light of the project undertaken in the present study, as finally the reflections of the theologians will be compared to the praxis in local churches.

Actually, the topic of masculinities emerged only recently in African theological discussions. Just a few theologians engage with the issue, and materials are relatively scarce. The present chapter could therefore be very short. However, the recent emergence of the topic cannot be understood in isolation from the wider engagement of African theologians with issues of gender as well as with the HIV epidemic. Therefore, the chapter first provides an extensive introduction to issues of gender in African theology and to the engagement with the HIV epidemic in African theology respectively. The study of gender in African theology is introduced in §2.2. This field of studies has been initiated by African women theologians, but in recent times some male theologians have also engaged in reflections on this theme. Specific attention is paid here to the concepts of gender, patriarchy and gender justice, as these make up the conceptual framework in which masculinities are currently analysed and evaluated

[1] M.A. Oduyoye, 'Acting to Construct Africa: The Agency by Women' in R. van Eijk and J. van Lin (eds.), *Africans Reconstructing Africa*, Nijmegen: Theologische Faculteit KU-Nijmegen 1997, 38.

by a number of theologians. Section §2.3 explores how African theologians have responded to the HIV epidemic. The specific interest is in the gender-based response provided by African women theologians as part of an emerging HIV liberation theology. As will become clear, the HIV epidemic has reinforced the critical analysis of gender and the call for a transformation of gender relations in African theology. This has brought the issue of masculinities to the forefront of theological debates. The question, then, as to how masculinities are discussed by African theologians in the context of the HIV epidemic is dealt with in §2.4.

The present chapter is based on an analysis of a wide range of publications by African theologians. These theologians come from different parts of the continent and from different Christian traditions. They correspond, however, in their commitment to take African social and cultural realities as the starting point of their theological analysis and reflection.

2.2. THE STUDY OF GENDER IN AFRICAN THEOLOGY

African Women's Theology

Issues of gender entered the scene of African theology thanks to the efforts of African women theologians. African theology emerged in the 1960s as an enterprise almost exclusively of male theologians.[2] They intended to develop a theology with an African face. However, as Mercy Amba Oduyoye comments, they did not speak about women's issues and therefore actually presented a theology with an African male face.[3] According to Oduyoye it was important for women's voices to join the choir called African theology, because women's experiences are different from men's:

> What Third World theology says to Western theology is that other voices must be heard because experiences vary. It is this same word that African women say to African men theologians. We live on the same continent and belong to the one Church, but the reality is that there are many Africas – the Africa of the rich and the Africa of the poor, the Africa of men who command and that of women who obey is experienced differently.[4]

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[2] For example, see B. Bujo and J.I. Muya (eds.), *African Theology: The Contribution of the Pioneers*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2003; B. Bujo and J.I. Muya (eds.), *African Theology: The Contribution of the Pioneers (Part 2)*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2006. Not one woman theologian is presented in these volumes, suggesting that all pioneers in African theology are male. Even though some women scholars may have been involved in the initial stage of African theology, the specific experiences of women were not taken into account as a category of analysis and reflection.

[3] M.A. Oduyoye, 'The Roots of African Christian Feminism' in J.S. Pobee and C.F. Hallencreutz (eds.), *Variations in Christian Theology in Africa*, Nairobi: Uzima Press 1979, 33.

[4] M.A. Oduyoye, 'The Search for a Two-Winged Theology. Women's Participation in the Development of Theology in Africa. The Inaugural Address' in M.A. Oduyoye and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Talitha, Qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians*, Ibadan: Daystar Press 1990, 41.

In order to correct the misperception of male theologians that they can theologise for women, and in order to promote the contribution of women to the development of African theology, Oduyoye has been in the forefront of developing African women's theology.[5] In 1989 the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians was founded, uniting women from all over the African continent and from several religious traditions (but predominantly Christian), and creating a space to theologise from women's experiences.[6] Thanks to the Circle, women theologians have become a major voice in African theology. It is even said that where other forms of African theology – such as African liberation theology, inculturation theology and black Southern African theology – are struggling to survive, African women's theology has become 'by far the most vibrant trend in African theology.'[7]

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[5] Among African women theologians there is an ongoing debate on naming their work. Oduyoye in her early publications uses the term "feminist theology" unreservedly, just like some other prominent Circle members do, for example Musa Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro (cf. M.W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, St. Louis: Chalice Press 2000; M.R.A. Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics. An African Perspective*, London: Sheffield Academic Press 2002; M.A. Oduyoye, 'Feminist Theology in an African Perspective' in G. Gibellini (ed.), *Paths of African Theology*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 1994, 166-181; M.A. Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing. Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 1986). Other Circle members, however, have shown a reticence to label their work as feminist because of the association of feminism with Western white middle-class women's issues. Several alternative names have been suggested, but the most common one is the term African women's theology (or theologies). On the issue of naming the work of African women theologians, see I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar, 'Introduction: "Treading Softly but Firmly"' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion and Health. Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, New York: Orbis Books 2006, 3-4.

[6] The history and objectives of the Circle have been well documented. For accounts by African women theologians themselves, see M.R.A. Kanyoro, 'Beads and Strands. Threading More Beads in the Story of the Circle' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion, and Health. Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 2006, 19-42; N.J. Njoroge, 'A New Way of Facilitating Leadership: Lessons from African Women Theologians' in O.U. Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005, 446-468; I.A. Phiri, 'Doing Theology in Community. The Case of African Women Theologians in the 1990s' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 99 (1997), 68-76; M.R.A. Kanyoro, 'African Women's Quest for Justice: A Review of African Women's Theology' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 2:2 (1996), 5-18; M.A. Oduyoye, 'The Circle' in M.A. Oduyoye and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Talitha, Qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians*, Ibadan: Daystar Press 1990, 1-26. For accounts on African women theology by scholars outside the Circle, see M.T. Frederiks, 'Theologies of Anowa's Daughters: An African Women's Discourse' in F. Wijsen (ed.), *Global Christianity: Contested Claims*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2007, 177-197; P.-L. Kwok, 'Mercy Amba Oduyoye and African Women's Theology' in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20:1 (2004), 7-22; C. Pemberton, *Circle Thinking: African Women Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill 2003.

[7] E. Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 31.

Women's Experiences and the Quest for Liberation

When African women theologians seek to bring women's experiences into theology, the question arises of what the particular experiences of women are. As the above quote from Oduyoye indicates, the difference in men's and women's experience is understood as a difference in position and power: men are in command, and women are to obey. This, of course, is a generalising picture. However, though these theologians acknowledge that the experiences of African women vary according to their specific location in terms of class, race, culture, nationality and religion, it is believed that they all experience in one way or another sexism and patriarchal oppression.[8] Therefore, as Isabel Phiri says, 'African women theologians are united in voicing their views against patriarchy.'[9] The major concern of these theologians is that the humanity of women is not fully respected but rather threatened by the patriarchy that in their opinion characterises most African societies, cultures and religions. Hence, they critically address the various forms of subordination and oppression that women face in socio-economic, socio-political, cultural and religious realities.

African women theologians do not only address but also seek to transform the critical realities that are oppressing to women. They call on African women to arise from realities that threaten their life and dignity.[10] Clearly, for these theologians the study of gender in religion and culture is not just an analytical scholarly endeavour but also a feminist activist enterprise. In the words of Oduyoye, it 'is not just a new line in the academic industry, but a perspective that requires analysis leading to action that will orientate people and communities toward justice.'[11] Overviewing the work of the Circle, Sarojini Nadar and Isabel Phiri point out that 'our work is framed by an ideology and concern for the liberation of women'.[12] This liberation project for women is not a goal in itself but aims at the fullness of life for all of humanity, women and men together.

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[8] Because of the diversity of women's experiences, sometimes the plural form "African women theologies" is used. See I.A. Phiri, 'Southern Africa' in J. Parrat (ed.), *An Introduction to Third World Theologies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004, 152.

[9] I.A. Phiri, 'Major Challenges for African Women Theologians in Theological Education (1989-2008)' in *International Review of Mission* 98:1 (2009), 106.

[10] The gospel story of Mark 5,21-43 where Jesus calls the daughter of Jairus from death with the words 'Talitha cumi' or 'little girl, arise' has become paradigmatic for the project of women's liberation in African women's theology. Cf. M.W. Dube, 'Talitha Cum! Calling the Girl-Child and Women to Life in the HIV/AIDS & Globalization Era' in I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2003, 71-93; M.A. Oduyoye and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1992; M.A. Oduyoye and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Talitha, Qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians*, Ibadan: Daystar Press 1990.

[11] M.A. Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1995, 89.

[12] Phiri and Nadar, *Introduction: "Treading Softly but Firmly"*, 5.

Critique of African (male) Theology

It is from the starting point of women's experiences, and from the goal of women's liberation, that African women theologians critically relate to the two major strands in African (male) theology: liberation and inculturation theology.[13] With regard to African liberation theology, it is said that in the analysis of structures of injustice it ignores the category of gender.[14] Thus, according to this critique, African male liberation theologians are concerned with the economic oppression of postcolonial Africa and with oppression in terms of colour in South Africa during the Apartheid era, but do not take into account the position and concerns of women specifically. Yet women, as African women theologians point out time and again, are actually 'at the bottom of the heap when it comes to oppression and exploitation'.[15] Therefore it is the so-called 'trilogy of race, class and gender' that is central in African women's liberation theology.[16]

With regard to inculturation theology, the critique is that this theology tends to approach culture uncritically. It is said that African inculturation theologians seek to reclaim and affirm African culture, but are not sensitive to its patriarchal traditions, which marginalise and oppress women.[17] African women theologians, on the other hand, employ a gender-sensitive hermeneutics and call for a 'critical solidarity' with African cultural traditions.[18] As Musimbi Kanyoro puts it: '[W]e make the claim that inculturation is not sufficient unless the cultures we reclaim are analyzed and are deemed worthy in terms of justice and support for life and the dignity of women is ascertained.'[19]

It is clear that African women theologians have opened up the field of African theology by bringing in women's experiences. Hence they have challenged male

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[13] For an introduction to both types of African theology, see E. Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1993. Apart from liberation and inculturation theology, a third paradigm has emerged in the 1990s, being reconstruction theology (see for instance J.N.K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers 1995). The critique of women theologians on male theologians engaged in liberation and inculturation theology seems also applicable to those engaged in reconstruction theology: that they largely ignore issues of gender and neglect women's experiences.

[14] Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 180.

[15] N.J. Njoroge, *Kiama Kia Ngo: An African Christian Feminist Ethic of Resistance and Transformation*, Accra: Legon Theological Studies 2000, 130.

[16] Phiri and Nadar, *Introduction: "Treading Softly but Firmly"*, 4-6.

[17] Cf. M. Mutambara, 'African Women Theologies Critique Inculturation' in E.P. Antonio (ed.), *Inculturation and Postcolonial Discourse in African Theology*, New York: Peter Lang 2006, 173-191.

[18] Phiri and Nadar, *Introduction: "Treading Softly but Firmly"*, 8. See also M.A. Oduyoye, 'African Culture and the Gospel. Inculturation from an African Woman's Perspective' in M.A. Oduyoye and H.M. Vroom (eds.), *One Gospel - Many Cultures: Case Studies and Reflections on Cross-Cultural Theology*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2003, 39-61.

[19] Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics. An African Perspective*, 26.

scholars to take women's experience in African cultures, religions and societies seriously and to develop a theology that is liberating to men and women together. How, then, have male theologians responded to this? Are gender issues mainstreamed in today's African theology?

Male Theologians Joining In?

Generally, African women theologians have been very critical about the reception of their work by their male colleagues. The overall feeling is that among African male theologians there is a 'theological unwillingness to deal with women's issues and concerns', as Philomena Mwaura phrases it.[20] This observation is supported by Tinyiko Maluleke, one of the few African men in theology who are in dialogue and collaboration with African women theologians. According to his assessment, African male theology started as a creative, engaged and prophetic project but is left "bewildered and confused" by developments in its own context, such as the end of Apartheid, globalisation, and the emergence of questions concerning gender and human rights. From this background, Maluleke explains the "inability" of African male theologians to engage in dialogue with women theologians and to engage with the issues they raise.[21] However, Maluleke also indicates that it is not only an inability, but also an unwillingness to do so:

> [B]y and large African Theology has been at peace with the patriarchy inherited from both Western and African cultures. The logic of patriarchy has been so internalized that even when dealing with similar issues of dehumanization, oppression and exclusion, African theologians have not been able to make the connections. Ideologically and spiritually, therefore, African theology has remained largely beholden to the supremacist ideas when it comes to gender relations.[22]

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[20] P.N. Mwaura, 'Gender Mainstreaming in African Theology. An African Women's Perspective' in *Voices from the Third World* 24:1 (2001), 166. Recently this critique has been formulated by Musa Dube who denounces the relactuance of African male theologians to acknowledge, engage and dialogue with African women theologians' work, especially with regard to issues of HIV and AIDS. See M.W. Dube, 'HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 193.

[21] T.S. Maluleke, 'African "Ruths", Ruthless Africas: Reflections of an African Mordechai' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *Other Ways of Reading. African Women and the Bible*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2001, 237-251. For an elaborate assessment of African male theology and its response to African women's theology, see also T.S. Maluleke, 'The 'Smoke Screens' Called Black and African Liberation Theologies - the Challenge of African Women Theology' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 3:2 (1997), 39-63.

[22] T.S. Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy* (Paper for the Evil of Patriarchy Conference, Cape Town, 6 March 2009), http://www.iam.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258&Itemid=99 (accessed 3 March 2010). See also M.A. Oduyoye, 'The Impact of Women's Theology on the Development of Dialogue in EATWOT' in *Voices from the Third World* XIV:1 (1996), 20 and 28.

Though this seems to apply to most African male theologians, a number of scholars have been challenged by African women theologians and have come to deal seriously with issues of gender. They share the concern about the oppression of women and have committed themselves more or less explicitly to the ideal of a new community of women and men together. Examples are Simon Maimela who struggles to be a Christian in a patriarchal society[23], Laurenti Magesa who calls for the full inclusion of women in the church's ministry and who supports the theological project of women's liberation and the realisation of gender justice[24], the late John Mary Walligo who sought to promote the equality of women and men[25] and Tinyiko Maluleke who denounces violence against women and seeks to overcome patriarchy[26]. Referring to these contributions, Phiri in her evaluative account of thirty years of African women's theology observes that there is a 'serious and deliberate critical engagement' from a number of African male theologians with the issues raised by women theologians.[27]

Indeed there are some indications that gender issues are being mainstreamed slowly but surely in African theology. However the engagement of the above-mentioned male theologians with gender issues is actually an engagement with *women's* issues, arising from their sensitivity to the concerns expressed by African women theologians. Thus, nowadays issues such as sexual and domestic violence against women and other overt manifestations of "gender injustice" are critically addressed by several male theologians. But a real thorough and self-critical analysis of patriarchy, with a particular focus on the position of men and the construction of masculinities in patriarchal gender systems, is hardly provided by male theologians. Maluleke stated in 1997 that male theologians cannot simply join African women theologians but must first become "born again". By this he meant that African men theologians 'have yet to consciously problematize, deeply reflect and *agonise* over their role and status both as perpetrators and beneficiaries of patriarchy.'[28] Up to the present, however, the in-depth reflection he calls for is still in its infancy, in spite of the awareness of Maluleke and others of the critical dimensions of patriarchy. It is a very

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[23] S. Maimela, 'Seeking to be Christian in Patriarchal Society' in *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa* 9:2 (1995), 27-42.

[24] L. Magesa, 'The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the 21st Century' in N.W. Ndung'u and P.N. Mwaura (eds.), *Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa. Theological Reflections of the 21st Century*, Nairobi: Paulines 2005, 88-101; L. Magesa, 'Christology, African Women and Ministry' in *African Ecclesial Review* 38:2 (1996), 66-88.

[25] J.M. Walligo, *Struggle for Equality. Women and Empowerment in Uganda*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications 2002.

[26] T.S. Maluleke and S. Nadar, 'Breaking the Covenant of Violence against Women' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 114 (2002), 5-17; Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy*.

[27] Phiri, *Major Challenges for African Women Theologians in Theological Education (1989-2008)*, 116.

[28] Maluleke, *The 'Smoke Screens' Called Black and African Liberation Theologies - the Challenge of African Women Theology*, 42.

recent development that issues concerning men and masculinities are discussed openly and explored critically by a few African male scholars in religion and theology, but – as will be explored later – an HIV epidemic was needed to initiate this.

Central Concepts: Gender, Patriarchy and Gender Justice

Central to the discussions in African theology initiated by women theologians are three major concepts: gender, patriarchy and gender justice. As will become clear later in this chapter, these concepts are also crucial to the recent discussions on masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic. How, then, are these concepts understood theoretically and theologically?

Gender

From their concern with women's issues, African women theologians have adopted the theoretical concept of gender as an analytical tool. The concept enables them to analyse and understand women's experiences of oppression not just as *women's* issues but also as an issue in the relationship between men and women. This relationship is understood in terms of power, and it is exactly the powered dimension of the relation between men and women that is central to gender studies in African theology. For example, Musa Dube points out that '[a]t the centre of gender relations is the concept of power and powerlessness. The problem is that gender disempowers half of humanity – women.'[29] From this perception, African women theologians have developed a critical hermeneutics of gender that analyses the powered processes that construe the identities of and relations between men and women. They employ and apply this hermeneutics to African culture and biblical Scripture and to the social, political, economical and religious realities of today's world. According to Musimbi Kanyoro in her study on African women theologians' hermeneutics,

> Gender analysis takes into account ways in which roles, attitudes, values and relationships regarding women and men are constructed by societies all over the world. The concepts and practices of equality and discrimination determined by social, economic, religious and cultural factors lie at the heart of gender-sensitive perspectives. Theological engagement with gender issues seeks to expose harm and injustices that are in society and are extended to Scripture and the teachings and practices of the Church through culture.[30]

As this quotation indicates, gender is understood theoretically from a social constructivist perspective. This stance is informed by the observation that gender relations and gender roles differ between societies and cultures and thus, apparently, are social and cultural specific constructs. The analytical task women theologians have set themselves is to analyse this configuration of gender, especially in relation to religion and culture. Therefore they make a distinction between sex and gender.

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[29] M.W. Dube, 'Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 88.

[30] Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics. An African Perspective*, 17.

Where the category of sex is considered as a biological given, the category of gender is regarded as a variable construct. As Mwaura phrases it, 'gender is that people are *born* female and male, but *learn* (italics mine, AvK) to be girls and boys who grow into women and men.'[31]

Social constructionism is also adopted because of its political advantages. These are mentioned by Dube when she outlines the consequences of perceiving gender as a social construct. For her, it means that 'gender (1) is not natural, (2) is not divine, (3) has to do with social relationships of women and men, and (4) can be reconstructed and transformed by the society, for since it is culturally constructed it can be socially deconstructed.'[32] This perception enables opposition to those who consider the roles of men and women and a certain order in gender relations as fixed because of biology, creation or tradition. It also opens up the possibility of change. If gender is a construct, it not only can be deconstructed but also *re*constructed. African theologians involved in the study of gender engage in this theoretical space for social transformation and call upon the church and society to join them. As Oduyoye concludes: 'Recognizing and becoming sensitive to gender in theology leads to a theology that is liberative, that does not remain theoretical but demands ethical choices that will empower the transformation of relationships that have been damaged by sexism and misogynistic attitudes.'[33]

Patriarchy

As gender is understood as a concept of power, the concern of African women theologians (and of some male colleagues) is that power is unequally distributed in gender relations, with women generally excluded from and subjected to the power held by men. It is this reality of asymmetry in gender relations, manifested and maintained in numerous practices and beliefs, which is captured by these theologians with the concept of patriarchy.

Etymologically, "patriarchy" means the rule of the father. Hence, Phiri defines it as 'a father-ruled structure where all power and authority rests in the hands of the male head of the family.'[34] Kanyoro indicates a broader understanding of patriarchy, as in her opinion it does not just mean the rule of the father or the rule of males in general, but points to 'an unjust hierarchical and dualistic ordering of life which discriminates against women.'[35] The primary concern of the theologians is with patriarchy as a cultural and religious ideology of gender, which assigns power and authority to men and legitimates a hierarchy in gender relations. In the words of

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[31] Mwaura, *Gender Mainstreaming in African Theology. An African Women's Perspective*, 168.

[32] Dube, *Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues*, 86.

[33] M.A. Oduyoye, 'Gender and Theology in Africa Today' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 8:2 (2002), 43.

[34] I.A. Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM 1997, 12.

[35] Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics. An African Perspective*, 17 n. 10.

Maluleke, patriarchy is an ideology that 'speaks of the supremacy of the male.'[36] Women, on the other hand, are looked upon as inferior beings subordinated to men, as African women theologians point out time and again. Their concern is that the ideology of patriarchy is materialised in social, economic and political structures which benefit men and do not respect women as equal human beings. Though it is recognised that women's experiences vary within patriarchal settings and that some women may have some privilege and power, it is believed that ultimately 'women in all patriarchal cultures are perceived to have inferior status compared to men.'[37]

With regard to patriarchy as an ideology, the theologians under discussion have investigated the cultural and religious ideas that inform and maintain the patriarchal system. They have generally labelled African culture and traditional religion as patriarchal. However, a central thesis in their work is that Western colonial government and missionary Christianity have introduced a far more 'monolithic patriarchy' in which 'male and female are rigidly opposed to each other'.[38] At best, Christianity came as a "mixed blessing" for African women, as Phiri points out: on the one hand Christianity opposed some cultural practices that were harmful to women, but on the other hand it imposed other oppressions and denied women's full humanity.[39] Writing about patriarchal gender ideology, Oduyoye clearly states that 'the church in Africa continues to use the Hebrew Scriptures and the Epistles of St. Paul to reinforce the norms of traditional religion and culture.'[40] A concrete example is the idea of male headship in marriage and the family, which is often legitimated from African culture as well as the Bible, but which is rejected by women theologians because its symbolises and reaffirms the asymmetry in gender relations.[41]

It will be clear that patriarchy is firmly opposed by African women theologians and those male theologians who have joined their endeavours. It is considered the root cause of the many evils African women are faced with in the home, the church and the community. Patriarchal ideology has been rejected in firm theological language. For instance, Mwaura refers to patriarchy as a sin, and Maimela declares it to be an "idolatrous god" because it contradicts the 'central message of the Christian faith', being the dignity of life of all humanity.[42] Hence these theologians call for a transformation of gender relations beyond patriarchy, towards a reality described as "gender justice".

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[36] Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy*.

[37] Mwaura, *Gender Mainstreaming in African Theology. An African Women's Perspective*, 171.

[38] Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 157.

[39] Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, 48-80.

[40] Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 174.

[41] Cf. R.N. Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, Enugu: Snaap Press 2001, 144-145.

[42] Mwaura, *Gender Mainstreaming in African Theology. An African Women's Perspective*, 175; Maimela, *Seeking to be Christian in Patriarchal Society*, 31.

Gender Justice

The African theologians under discussion do not accept patriarchy as a given but envisage a new kind of gender relations to be realised in the family, the church, the community and society at large. They use different concepts to qualify and name the new gender arrangement that is to be realised. Writing specifically about marriage, Rosemary Uchem proposes 'an equal-partnership model' of gender relations, which in practice would mean that leadership is shared rather than hierarchical.[43] Likewise, Fulata Moyo qualifies the marital relationship with the notions of mutuality and companionship.[44] Two other scholars, Isabel Phiri and Nyambura Njoroge, envision a new and liberated community of men and women in the church and the society.[45] They understand this community as fully recognising the human dignity of women, allowing the full participation of women, and as sharing of authority between men and women. Sharing authority assumes a sense of equality of men and women, and indeed the concept of gender equality often appears in publications and is central, for example, in the work of Musa Dube and John Mary Walligo.[46] The meaning of proposed concepts such as equality, partnership, mutuality and others is hardly elaborated upon. It is difficult, therefore, to compare them and to see whether the theologians share exactly the same vision for a transformation of gender relations. There are some indications of differences of opinion on the issue of what equality of the sexes exactly means and how radical a transformation of gender relations should be.[47] This does not detract, however, from the shared concern with the oppression and marginalisation of women and the joint effort to overcome these realities and to realise more balanced relations between the sexes.

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[43] Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, 228.

[44] F.L. Moyo, 'Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2005, 134-135.

[45] Njoroge, *Kiama Kia Ngo: An African Christian Feminist Ethic of Resistance and Transformation*, 156-156; Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, chapter 6.

[46] See Walligo, *Struggle for Equality. Women and Empowerment in Uganda*; M.W. Dube, 'Grant Me Justice: Female and Male Equality in the New Testament' in *Journal of Religion and Theology in Namibia* 3 (2001), 82-115.

[47] Significant are the critical questions raised by Laurenti Magesa to African women theologians. Though Magesa shows sympathy to the project of African women theology, he expresses his concern that women theologians in their arguments for gender equality tend to neglect the differences between the sexes. For Magesa, gender equality means that woman and man share an 'equal human dignity', but this does not abolish the 'innate sexual qualities which God has endowed each sex'. For a project of gender transformation this means, according to Magesa, that 'the true meaning of motherhood', which 'lies in the ability to nurture life' should not be jettisoned 'in the name of woman's liberation'. Magesa, *The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the 21st Century*, 100-101.

It is theologically significant that the men and women theologians under discussion correspond in their understanding that gender is ultimately an issue of justice. Again, the precise meaning of the concept of gender justice for the social relations between men and women remains somewhat vague. Yet the concept is crucial because of its ethical-theological connotation. As Phiri puts it:

> Gender justice means promoting the humanity of both women and men in the church and using their gifts as revealed by God. Any form of discrimination and oppression mars the image of God in creation and humanity, for God is a God of justice and the practice of Christianity is supposed to reflect the justice of God.[48]

In this argument, gender justice is based theologically on the understanding of God. Indeed, Phiri says that gender justice 'has its origins in our concept of God.'[49] This makes the quest for gender justice so urgent for these theologians and, in their opinion, for the church and the mission of the church. Because of the deeply theological connotations, in the words of Magesa, justice in gender relations is a "Christian imperative" and an "an integral part" of living the gospel.[50] What, then, are the precise theological backgrounds of the vision of gender justice so passionately advocated by these theologians?

In the quotation above, Phiri states that 'God is a God of justice'. This is in line with the broader movement of liberation theology African women theologians associate with. As much as God according to classic Latin American liberation theology has a "preferential option for the poor", according to African theologians concerned with issues of gender God opts for women because they are oppressed and marginalised.[51] Mwaura puts forwards this understanding when she states: 'God is depicted in the Bible as not the creator or validator of existing hierarchical and oppressive social order, but one who liberates us from it, the one who opens up a community of equals where there is "no slave, nor free, no Jew or Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus."[52] Applied to gender issues, this understanding of God informs a rejection of patriarchy and a quest for women's liberation. Additionally, African women theologians have developed a more particular line of thought on God and gender justice that starts from the concept of God in African traditional religions. The explicit female as well as the gender-neutral and inclusive images of God in these religions and its myths are reclaimed.[53] Hence the patriarchal God who, in Oduyoye's

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[48] I.A. Phiri, 'Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 8:2 (2002), 77.

[49] Ibid., 79.

[50] Magesa, *The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the 21st Century*, 101

[51] Cf. Maimela, *Seeking to be Christian in Patriarchal Society*, 27-42 who for his argument against patriarchy explicitly engages in the wider liberation theological discourse.

[52] Mwaura, *Gender Mainstreaming in African Theology. An African Women's Perspective*, 176.

[53] See ibid., 174; M.A. Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press 2001, 39-50; R. Teteki Abbey, 'Rediscovering Ataa Naa Nyonmo - the Father Mother God' in N.J. Njoroge and M.W. Dube (eds.), *Talitha Cum! Theologies of African Women*,

words, is "enthroned" in Africa under the influence of Christianity and Islam, is opposed and replaced by images of God that affirm the equality and dignity of women and men together.[54]

Besides the traditional African creation myths, African theologians also use the biblical creation accounts to explore their theology of gender justice.[55] They re-read and re-visit the Genesis creation stories with a critical hermeneutic in order to overcome the traditional patriarchal interpretation that women are second in the "order of creation".[56] A notion that is recovered and affirmed in this reading is that humankind is equally created in the image of God as male and female (cf. Gen. 1:27). Numerous are the references to this verse in the work of African women theologians, in order for them to claim the full humanity, dignity and equality of women in relation to men. The concept of gender justice, then, is based theologically not only on the understanding of God but also on the anthropological notion that men and women are created in the image of God. Actually both lines of thought are closely related, as is apparent from Kanyoro's statement: 'Women, as well as men, are made in the divine image of God and therefore any pattern of discrimination, domination or oppression is contrary to God's justice and sovereignty.'[57]

Furthermore, the concept of gender justice is understood christologically in relation to Jesus Christ. Firstly, this refers to the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Several scholars point out how, according to the gospels, Jesus dealt with women in a liberating and de-stigmatising way, including them in the circle of his disciples and breaking with the patriarchal status quo of his day.[58] Hence Dube concludes that 'it is

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Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2001, 140-157; Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 21-35 and 178-180.

[54] Cf. Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, 43, 45.

[55] For instance, see Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, 179-190; Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing. Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*, 90-96 and 130-131. See also B.J. Ekeya, 'Woman's Place in Creation' in M.A. Oduyoye and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Talitha, Qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians*, Ibadan: Daystar Press 1990, 89-103; T. Okure, 'Women in the Bible' in M.A. Oduyoye and V. Fabella (eds.), *With Passion and Compassion. Third World Women Doing Theology*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 1988, 48-51.

[56] Cf. Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, 155.

[57] Kanyoro, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics. An African Perspective*, 17.

[58] E.g. see E.K. Kamaara, *Gender, Youth Sexuality & HIV/AIDS. A Kenyan Experience*, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications 2005, 100-102; Dube, *Grant Me Justice: Female and Male Equality in the New Testament*, 89-97; I.A. Phiri, 'Christianity: Liberative Or Oppresive to African Women? ' in K.R. Ross (ed.), *Faith at the Frontiers of Knowledge*, Blantyre: CLAIM 1998, 201-204; A. Nasimiyu-Wasike, 'Christology and an African Woman's Experience' in J.N.K. Mugambi and L. Magesa (eds.), *Jesus in African Christianity. Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers 1989, 126-130. Oduyoye and Amoah mention that it is specifically because of his counter-cultural, liberating relationships to women that Jesus

clear that Jesus came to a world of gender imbalance, a world that sentenced many women to violence and to the disease of gender injustice. However, he undertook to announce liberation, to undermine gender inequality and to begin charting the path of gender justice.'[59] According to Nasimiyu-Wasike, not only the practice of Jesus' ministry, but also the event of incarnation itself underpins gender justice. In the incarnation, she says, 'the humanity of Jesus is united to every other human being, granting everyone dignity, which mandates justice for all.'[60] Secondly, though Jesus is crucified, as the risen Christ he is believed to continue bringing liberation to women and realising gender justice.[61] A third Christological argument for gender justice is the idea that through baptism in Christ one enters a new community established by Christ. A popular verse is Gal. 3:28 which reads that there is 'neither Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female for all are one in Christ'. This verse is not understood in terms of an eradication of sexual difference but rather in terms of 'a life of partnership between men and women' that arises from the new creation in Christ.[62]

The latter points already to the eschatological foundation of gender justice, which is central in the work of Oduyoye and Phiri.[63] As they make clear, the engagement of African theologians with a transformation of gender relations is actually an anticipation of their hope for the realisation of the biblical vision of a new earth and a new human community. This vision tells them that 'the tyranny of patriarchy is bound to end.'[64] Though this is said to be a "utopian vision", at the same time the eschatological hope functions as a "midwife for new beginning" which, according to Moyo, is foretasted in every marital relationship that is characterised by gender justice, companionship and

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of Nazareth 'has become for us the Christ', see M.A. Oduyoye and E. Amoah, 'The Christ for African Women' in M.A. Oduyoye and V. Fabella (eds.), *With Passion and Compassion. Third World Women Doing Theology*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 1988, 43.

59 M.W. Dube, 'Who do You Say that I Am?' in *Feminist Theology* 15:3 (2007), 361.

60 A. Nasimiyu-Wasike, 'Imagining Jesus Christ in the African Context at the Dawn of a New Millenium' in N.W. Ndung'u and P.N. Mwaura (eds.), *Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa. Theological Reflections of the 21st Century*, Nairobi: Paulines 2005, 112.

61 According to Oduyoye, Christology is not to analyse the nature of Christ but to identify the liberating and saving acts of Christ in today's world and human experience. See Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, 63. See also Uchem who comments that 'the growing awareness today in the global human community that women's subordination is not willed by God but constructed by men, is a sign of the active presence and activity of the Spirit of Jesus.' (Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, 209).

62 See ibid., 208-209; Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, 156; Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing. Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*, 137.

63 Cf. I.A. Phiri, 'A Theological Analysis of the Voices of Teenage Girls on Men's Role in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 120 (2004), 43-45; Phiri, *Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa*, 78-79; Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, 110-119.

64 Ibid., 119.

mutual sexual pleasure.[65] Phiri even indicates that a transformation of gender relations towards gender justice is not only a foretaste of, but even a precondition for the future to come: 'Justice for all humanity is not only important but it is necessary for the realisation of the presence of God on earth.'[66]

It appears that for the theologians under discussion, gender justice is a deeply rooted theological concept providing the horizon for a transformation of gender relations and, as will be shown later on, of masculinities. Their concept of gender justice is built on some of the major loci of Christian theology, being the doctrine of God, anthropology, Christology and eschatology. Though the concrete meaning of gender justice remains somewhat vague – and the related notions of mutuality, companionship and equality do not bring us closer to a full appreciation of its meaning – it appears to be a key notion that buttresses the opposition to patriarchy and the quest for a new arrangement of the relations between men and women. Their theology of gender justice enables the theologians to name patriarchy as a sin and to call upon churches to leave this reality and to transform the perceptions and structures of gender in their own midst and in society.

Gender, Transformation and the Role of the Church

Generally, African women theologians are very critical of Christian churches for maintaining and reinforcing patriarchy. Concretely, they point for example to women's exclusion from the full ministry in many churches, to the general silence of churches on issues such as domestic and sexual violence against women, to churches' legitimisation of male dominance in marital and other gender relations, to the literalist and women-oppressive interpretations of Scripture that prevail in churches and so on.[67] The general feeling is expressed by Oduyoye when she states: 'There is a myth in Christian circles that the church brought liberation to the African woman. Indeed, this is a myth, a claim glibly made and difficult to illustrate with concrete or continuing examples.'[68] From this critical appraisal, the theologians are calling upon churches for transformation. Magesa identifies three challenges raised by women theologians to churches in Africa:

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[65] F.L. Moyo, *A Quest for Women's Sexual Empowerment through Education in an HIV and AIDS Context. the Case of Kukonzekera Chinkhoswe Chachikhristu (KCC) among aMang'Anja and aYao Christians of t/a Mwambo in Rural Zomba, Malawi* (PhD, University of KwaZulu-Natal), 6-7 (esp. n. 22). The phrase "utopian vision" comes from Phiri, *Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa*, 79, while the phrase "midwife of new beginnings" is used by F.L. Moyo in 'Navigating Experiences of Healing. A Narrative Theology of Eschatological Hope as Healing' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion and Health. Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, New York: Orbis Books 2006, 250.

[66] Phiri, *A Theological Analysis of the Voices of Teenage Girls on Men's Role in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*, 45.

[67] For example, see the various essays collected in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2005.

[68] Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 172.

> They lie in the anthropological sphere where the task is to re-imagine cultural perceptions with regard to the feminine and masculine. Then there is the theological sphere, strictly so called, in which the concern is about predominant theological language and images and liturgical symbols. And, finally, there is the ethical sphere where questions about sexuality, the beginning of human life itself, arise.[69]

The three challenges defined by Magesa concern the areas of identity, language and relationships.[70] Churches are challenged to review their work in these areas, guided by the criteria of inclusiveness, equality and community that are central in African women's ecclesiology.[71]

It is believed that when churches indeed transform their teaching and structures towards the vision of gender justice, they can become instruments for the transformation of gender relations in society. This belief is informed by the realisation of the influential position and authority churches have. As Oduyoye says: 'Women hope for a transformed Church, because in Africa, the Church remains an institution with a potential for contributing to bringing in the new life that women struggle for.'[72] African women theologians develop an ecclesiology in which the pursuit of gender justice is a central part of the church's mission. For example, scholars such as Mwaura, Nadar and Phiri engage in an understanding of mission as *missio Dei*, in which the church is seen as an instrument of God to carry out God's quest for justice, which they apply specifically to gender justice. This perception, Phiri says, 'allows the church in Africa to make gender justice to become part of our mission.'[73] Initially, and up to now predominantly, for the church to pursue gender justice is understood as something in relation to women. Women have to be fully included in the structures of the church, and the church' teachings have to respect their full dignity and to promote equality in marriage and so on. In this way the church is thought to repay its historical debt to women 'for whom patriarchy in Christianity had been bad news.'[74] However, recently the scope of and engagement with gender justice has been widened: apart from the

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[69] Magesa, *The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the 21st Century*, 93.

[70] These areas are considered to be closely related. For example, Oduoye points out that a hierarchical and patriarchal discourse on God reinforces oppressive male gender identities and results in sexism in gender relations. See Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 180.

[71] Cf. M.A. Oduyoye, 'Ecclesiology in African Women's Perspective' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2005, 146-156.

[72] Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, 116.

[73] Phiri, *Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa*, 79 but see 73ff. See also S. Nadar, 'Towards a Feminist Missiological Agenda: A Case Study on the Jacob Zuma Rape Trial' in *Missionalia. Journal of the Southern African Missiological Society* 37:1 (2009), 85-102; P. N. Mwaura, "Reconstructing Mission: The Church in Africa in the Service of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation," http://www.rethinkingmission.org.uk/pdfs/METHODIST%20 CONFERENCE-UK%20(2).pdf (accessed 8 February 2010).

[74] Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, 87.

liberation of women, the transformation of men and masculinities is increasingly included. Thus, today some African theologians present the transformation of masculinities as part of the church's mission to realise gender justice. This development is a direct outcome of the HIV epidemic. How this epidemic has impacted the study of gender in African theology and has raised the issue of masculinities to the fore of the agenda will be explored in the next section.

2.3. HIV AND AIDS REINFORCING THE QUEST FOR GENDER JUSTICE

The present section outlines how the concern with issues of gender, and more specifically the quest for gender justice, in African theology has been reinforced by the HIV epidemic. Therefore, first attention is paid to the general understanding of and response to HIV and AIDS in African theology. Second, it sketches how HIV is understood as a gendered epidemic, and which particular gender issues have been raised by the epidemic.

HIV and AIDS in African Theology

As African theology aims to be contextual, the HIV epidemic can be expected to be a major issue. From their appearance in the mid 1980s HIV and AIDS have raised many challenges and have had a major impact on communities and societies on the African continent, especially in Southern and Central Africa. It is significant therefore, that for a long time African theologians, with a few exceptions, kept silent on HIV and AIDS. Only with the turn of the new millennium did it become a trend to reflect on issues related to the epidemic.[75] This change is marked, for example, by the statement of Tinyiko Maluleke that the HIV epidemic is the new *kairos* to the church and theology in Africa:

> It is shaking the very foundations and meaning of life, individuality, family, culture, community, religion and church. In much of Africa, people are living under the heavy cloud of the HIV/AIDS scourge. ... [T]heologians should be trying to establish the theological significance of this moment in the history of humanity in general and the history of Africans in particular. It is in terms such as these that I regard the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a *kairos*.[76]

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[75] For an outline of this development, see M.T. Frederiks, 'HIV and Aids: Mapping Theological Responses in Africa' in *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 37:1 (2008), 6 and 22. See also A.S. van Klinken, 'The Ongoing Challenge of HIV and AIDS to African Theology: A Review Article' in *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 39:1 (forthcoming, 2011).

[76] T.S. Maluleke, 'The Challenge of HIV/AIDS for Theological Education in Africa. Towards an HIV/AIDS Sensitive Curriculum' in *Missionalia* 29:2 (2001), 130. Actually, Maluleke was not the first referring to HIV and AIDS as a *kairos* (cf. R. Nicolson, *God in AIDS? A Theological Enquiry*, London: SCM Press 1996, 5). However, his statement, and the link he makes to the influential Kairos Document that addressed Apartheid in South Africa, has become a milestone in the development of an African theological response to HIV and AIDS, especially in Southern Africa.

Though HIV and AIDS are said to be a major challenge for theology, African women theologians and scholars from a younger generation in particular have taken up this challenge and can be found dealing with issues related to the epidemic. Apart from their work, Ezra Chitando in his survey of HIV and AIDS in African theology observes 'a worrying lull' in the response to the epidemic.[77] His conclusion is that 'African theology prides itself as a contextual theology, [but] its inability to tackle the HIV epidemic signals that this is more a claim than a fact.'[78]

Many explanations can be given for the reticence in African theology to respond to the epidemic. Partly this has to do with the link of HIV with sexuality, specifically the association of HIV with "promiscuous" sexual behaviours. As Fulata Moyo explains, when European missionary Christianity came to Africa it did not deal with issues of sexuality, and hence sexuality has remained a taboo issue in African churches and among African theologians.[79] It is from this taboo, Moyo argues, that sexuality is hardly discussed, and if so, only in a negative and moralising way. This could give rise to the popular belief among Christians and church leaders that HIV is a punishment from God for immoral sexual behaviour. This theological perception of the HIV epidemic, and the resulting stigmatisation of people living with HIV in churches and communities, has been critically addressed by those African theologians who have engaged in a reflection on the epidemic.[80] Hence, these theologians challenge churches to respond to HIV and AIDS constructively, and they provide churches with theologies centred around concepts such as compassion, healing and life.[81]

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[77] See Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 6. Both Chitando and Maluleke have criticised leading African theologians for being slow and silent when it comes to the questions of HIV and AIDS (cf. E. Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2007, 24-25; Maluleke, *The Challenge of HIV/AIDS for Theological Education in Africa. Towards an HIV/AIDS Sensitive Curriculum*, 131).

[78] Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 63.

[79] F.L. Moyo, 'The AIDS Crisis: A Challenge to the Integrity of the Church in Malawi' in K.R. Ross (ed.), *Faith at the Frontiers of Knowledge*, Blantyre: CLAIM 1998, 100-104.

[80] For example, see J.N. Amanze, 'Stigma: The Greatest Obstacle in the Fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa' in J.N. Amanze (ed.), *Christian Ethics and HIV/AIDS in Africa*, Gaborone: Bay Publishing 2007, 28-47; E. Chitando and M.R. Gunda, 'HIV and AIDS, Stigma and Liberation in the Old Testament' in *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 36:2 (2007), 184-197; D.O. Akintunde, 'HIV/AIDS: God's Punishment for Sexual Perversion? The Nigerian Experience' in S.O. Abogunrin (ed.), *Biblical View of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective*, Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies 2006, 266-278; I.A. Phiri, 'HIV/AIDS: An African Theological Response in Mission' in *The Ecumenical Review* 56:4 (2004), 422-431.

[81] M.W. Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, Scranton and London: University of Scranton Press 2008, esp. chapter 7; Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 41-73; P.A. Mombe, 'Compassion of Christ' in B. Bujo and M. Czerny (eds.), *AIDS in Africa. Theological Reflections*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2007, 43-48; P.C. Chibuko, 'HIV/AIDS and the Healing Mission of the Church Today: Reversing the Stigma of the Scourge' in *Bigard Theological Studies* 25:2 (2005), 42-67; M.A. Ruele, 'Facing the Challenges

Towards an HIV Liberation Theology

The perception of HIV as a divine punishment, and the resulting narrow understanding of the epidemic as a consequence of individual sexual "sin", is explained by Gerald West on the basis of the 'theology of retribution' that, in his opinion, prevails in Christianity and African religions.[82] In African theological responses to the epidemic, this paradigm is increasingly criticised and is replaced by a different perspective. A so-called HIV liberation theology has evolved which understands the epidemic primarily in terms of systematic and structural injustice rather than personal sin. Maluleke was one of the first to suggest that an African theology of liberation nowadays should have the face of a theology of HIV and AIDS.[83] He did so, because of the link he observed between poverty levels and the impact and spread of HIV in Africa. From then on, several other African theologians have engaged in the paradigm of an HIV liberation theology – whether or not using this term explicitly. In the tradition of classic Latin American liberation theologies, their theology analyses social realities at the level of social and economic structures and interprets these realities with a discourse of social (in)justice and sin.[84] Concretely, in view of the HIV epidemic the theologians who engage in a liberation paradigm refer to poverty and global economic exploitation, migration labour, unequal access to health care and unequal distribution of medicine, gender inequality and so on. Hence they conclude that HIV 'is a social injustice driven epidemic'[85] embedded in 'structural sins'[86]. The primary concern of these theologians is no longer with individual morality, but with structural injustice. Musa Dube articulates the implications of this paradigm for the church and theology in view of the epidemic as follows:

> Clearly, the challenge confronting the church and its mission in the HIV/AIDS and globalization era is the need to address structural sins with an equal commitment

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of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa: Towards a Theology of Life' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 77-83. For a discussion of these theologies of the mission of churches in the HIV and AIDS era, see A.S. van Klinken, '"The Body of Christ has AIDS." A Study on the Notion of the Body of Christ in African Theologies Responding to HIV and AIDS' in *Missionalia. Journal of the Southern African Missiological Society* 36:2/3 (2008), 319-336.

[82] See G. West and B. Zengele, 'Reading Job 'Positively' in the Context of HIV/AIDS in South Africa' in *Concilium* 4 (2004), 114ff.

[83] Maluleke, *The Challenge of HIV/AIDS for Theological Education in Africa. Towards an HIV/AIDS Sensitive Curriculum*, 134.

[84] For the location of an African theology of HIV and AIDS in the tradition of Latin American liberation theology, see A.E. Orobator, *From Crisis to Kairos: The Mission of the Church in the Time of HIV/AIDS, Refugees, and Poverty*, Nairobi: Paulines 2005, 68-73 and 121-128. See also Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, chapter 4.

[85] M.W. Dube, 'Grant Me Justice: Towards Gender-Sensitive Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Readings of the Bible' in M.W. Dube and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2004, 4.

[86] Phiri, *HIV/AIDS: An African Theological Response in Mission*, 428; Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 23.

> with which individual sin is addressed. Members of society/church may very well know and believe in the values of abstinence and faithfulness, but social injustice does not always allow them to live by these values. Theological strategies of confronting structural sin are therefore vital, for HIV/AIDS is not just about individual lack of morality, but also an individual's lack of social justice in their lives.[87]

Dube herself is a (if not *the*) major representative of an African HIV liberation theology.[88] Under the name of "prophecy" she has proposed a theological strategy of confronting the unjust structures that underlie the HIV epidemic.[89] In her opinion, the method of prophecy is informed by 'the divine imperative to respond to the violation of life, as a violation of God's creation, God's image, God's dignity – God's body.'[90] This quotation indicates that the emerging liberation theology of HIV is fundamentally rooted in the understanding of God. Rather than a God who punishes people for (sexual or other) sin, this theology believes in a God siding with the oppressed and marginalised, meaning that nowadays 'God is on the side of those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS'.[91] Hence the theologians call upon churches to show solidarity, to promote life and justice, and to transform relationships and structures at a global, communal and individual level.[92] This engagement with social transformation in view of the HIV epidemic is characteristic of the HIV liberation theology.

African Women Theologians and HIV and AIDS

A significant, if not the major part of the theological response to the HIV epidemic in Africa is provided by African women theologians. From the early 2000s the Circle has

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[87] M.W. Dube, 'Theological Challenges: Proclaiming the Fullness of Life in the HIV/AIDS & Global Economic Era' in *International Review of Mission* 91:363 (2002), 542.

[88] Dube's significant contribution to the African theological response to HIV and AIDS is praised and described at length by E. Chitando and R. Gabaitse, 'Other Ways of being a Diviner-Healer: Musa W. Dube and the African Church's Response to HIV and AIDS' in E. Chitando (ed.), *Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in Theological Education: Experiences and Explorations*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2008, 85-102.

[89] See M.W. Dube, 'The Prophetic Method in the New Testament' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 43-58.

[90] Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 13.

[91] Phiri, *HIV/AIDS: An African Theological Response in Mission*, 430. Likewise Dube underscores that 'God is a God of justice' and is in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalised. This, she says, gives her and others the courage to call for justice in the HIV and AIDS era (see Dube, *Grant Me Justice: Towards Gender-Sensitive Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Readings of the Bible*, 19).

[92] For instance, see I.A. Phiri, 'Life-Affirming African Theological Reflection on HIV and AIDS' in *Concilium* 3 (2007), 41-47; B. Haddad, '"We Pray but we Cannot Heal": Theological Challenges Posed by the HIV/AIDS Crisis' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 125 (2006), 88-90; Ruele, *Facing the Challenges of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa: Towards a Theology of Life*, 81-83.

made HIV and AIDS its top priority issue. As Phiri describes the background to this decision, 'African women theologians have felt the need to use their communal power to challenge the HIV/AIDS pandemic from the perspectives of religion, culture and social practice in order to save life.'[93] Indeed the Circle has mobilised the communal power of its members, resulting in a significant body of literature being published on issues related to HIV and AIDS.[94] The significance of this contribution to the African theological engagement with the epidemic is widely acknowledged. According to the assessment of Chitando, for example, African women theologians 'represent the only group of theologians who have researched and published consistently on HIV and AIDS.'[95] Where he observes that African theology in general has yet to respond profoundly to issues raised by the epidemic, the Circle in his opinion has defined and set the path.

In their response to the epidemic, African women theologians by and large engage in the paradigm of an HIV liberation theology. As Dube observes, only very few Circle writers subscribe to the sexual immorality framework while the majority engage in what she calls a justice-oriented approach.[96] The option for this paradigm is understandable from the background of African women theology being part of the tradition of liberation theologies. However, there is also a more specific reason determining the option for this paradigm. Responding to the challenges raised by the epidemic, the Circle has opted for a "gender-based response".[97] This was informed by the growing awareness that HIV is a gendered epidemic (cf. §1.2). As Njoroge formulates it, AIDS is 'a disease with a woman's face' and the epidemic shows the

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[93] I.A. Phiri, 'African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS Era' in I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2003, 8.

[94] About eight edited volumes have been published. Those which I have been able to access and are used in the present study are I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2003; M.W. Dube and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2004; I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion and Health. Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, New York: Orbis Books 2006; T.M. Hinga and others (eds.), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2008; E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009.

[95] Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 69, but see 55-74.

[96] Dube, *HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006*, 174-176. Likewise Dube, in her evaluation of the Circle's engagement with HIV and AIDS, underscores that African women theologians are pioneers in this area even globally (see M.W. Dube, 'In the Circle of Life: African Women Theologians' Engagement with HIV and AIDS' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 203-204.

[97] Phiri, *African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS Era*, 8-17.

'destructive nature of gender inequality and injustice'.[98] It is for this reason that the HIV epidemic has become a major challenge to African women theologians: their engagement with the issue is a way of being faithful to their original mission.[99] Considering HIV as embedded in social injustices, they particularly pay attention to gender injustice as one of the major unjust structures in society that facilitate the epidemic to thrive. As Dube puts it,

> In this HIV&AIDS era, however, gender inequalities are second only to poverty in being a major driving force behind the spread of HIV&AIDS. Many economically, culturally, politically, and religiously powerless women find that abstaining, being faithful, or having a condom or femidom [female condom, AvK] will not save them from HIV&AIDS infection.[100]

As this quotation indicates, the HIV epidemic has reinforced African women theologians' critical analysis of gender inequalities and their engagement with gender justice. The urgency of this is put by Phiri, saying: 'Gender justice is particularly important in the church's fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The African Women Theologians have argued that as long as there is gender injustice in Africa, HIV/AIDS will continue unabated.'[101] How, then, is this connection between gender injustice and HIV conceived?

Religion, Culture, Gender and HIV

As just mentioned, the observed feminisation of HIV in Africa has given rise to the analysis of and reflection on the epidemic from a gender perspective as part of the African theological response to the epidemic. In the present section this gender-based response, in which also some male theologians have engaged, will be outlined: how is the link between gender and HIV analysed, and what is the critical role of religion and culture?

Women at the Centre of the Storm

When it comes to gender and HIV, the theologians are first and foremost concerned with women. This concern is threefold. Firstly, it is said that socialisation, cultural practices, economic factors and prevalent religious beliefs enhance women's susceptibility to HIV infection.[102] Secondly, the concern is that women especially suffer

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[98] N.J. Njoroge, 'AIDS: The Disease that Speaks Multiple Languages and Thrives on Other Pandemics' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 10:2 (2004), 4, 8.

[99] Cf. M.R.A. Kanyoro, 'Preface: Breaking the Silence on HIV/AIDS: The Lament of Women of Africa' in I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg/New York: Cluster Publications/Orbis Books 2003, xii.

[100] Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 50.

[101] Phiri, *Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa*, 79.

[102] See for instance T.M. Hinga, 'Introduction' in T.M. Hinga and others (eds.), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2008, viii-xviii; Phiri, *African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS*

from the stigmatisation of people living with HIV, meaning that the stigma is a gendered phenomenon.[103] Thirdly, it is said that women are disproportionately affected by some of the outcomes of the epidemic: women are burdened with the care of people who suffer from AIDS related diseases, and they are faced with economic-financial consequences such as the costs of medicine and a loss of household income.[104] To conclude, according to these analyses, gender as it is constructed in African societies today and is maintained by social, cultural, economic and religious factors, in multiple ways increases the impact of the epidemic on women's lives. To put it succinctly, women are said to be 'at the centre of the storm of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.'[105] How, then, is this explained?

Sex, Gender and Power

In order to explain the heavy impact and consequences of the HIV epidemic on women, the theologians under discussion employ the concept of gender which, as explored above, is used to investigate the power relations between men and women. Referring to the high HIV rates among women, Constance Shisanya argues that 'power imbalance between genders considerably explains why women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men to a large extent.'[106] Because sexual contact in heterosexual relations takes place within the gender relations between men and women, a gender imbalance directly impacts upon sexual relations and thus can be critical in view of the sexual transmission of HIV. This is precisely the major concern of the theologians. Having argued that gender relations are defined by power and powerlessness, Dube points out:

Era, 9-14; C.R.A. Shisanya, 'The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Women in Kenya' in M.N. Getui and M.M. Theuri (eds.), *Quests for Abundant Life in Africa*, Nairobi: Acton 2002, 48-54.

[103] For example, see P.N. Mwaura, 'Stigmatization and Discrimination of HIV/AIDS Women in Kenya: A Violation of Human Rights and its Theological Implications' in *Exchange. Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research* 37:1 (2008), 35-51; C.R.A. Shisanya, 'Today's Lepers: Experiences of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya' in T.M. Hinga and others (eds.), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2008, 144-166; I.A. Phiri, *Gender, Religion and HIV and AIDS Prevention. Module 1 of the HIV and AIDS Curriculum for TEE Programmes and Institutions in Africa*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2007, 100-102; D.M. Ackermann, 'From Mere Existence to Tenacious Endurance. Stigma, HIV/AIDS and a Feminist Theology of Praxis' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion, and Health. Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 2006, 221-242.

[104] E.g. Phiri, *Gender, Religion and HIV and AIDS Prevention. Module 1 of the HIV and AIDS Curriculum for TEE Programmes and Institutions in Africa*, 141-144; Dube, *Grant Me Justice: Towards Gender-Sensitive Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Readings of the Bible*, 10-11; S.M. Muriithi, 'Capability Development in Women: A Major Resource for Overcoming HIV/AIDS' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 9:2 (2003), 29-50; Shisanya, *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Women in Kenya*, 55-58.

[105] Phiri, *African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS Era*, 15.

[106] Shisanya, *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Women in Kenya*, 61.

> This serious discrepancy in the distribution of power is our unmaking in the HIV/AIDS era. It is the fertile soil upon which the virus thrives. Women who have been constructed as powerless cannot insist on safer sex. They can hardly abstain, nor does faithfulness to their partners help.[107]

This quotation hints at the issue of sexual decision-making. It is believed that a woman – either as a wife in the marital relationship, or as a young girl in relation to a boy friend or "sugar daddy", or as a sex worker in relation to a client – is hardly in the position to have control over her own body and sexuality and to protect herself from HIV. As Moyo phrases it: 'Sexuality is about power for those who determine the what, when, where and how of sex, be it socio-economic and/or religio-cultural. In heterosexual relationships, those who have this power are men.'[108] That sexual and gender relations are a power game becomes particularly clear from the phenomenon of violence against women and children. This is another major concern of the theologians, among other things because sexual violence increases women's vulnerability to HIV.[109] Violence against women and children is considered 'a

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[107] Dube, *Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues*, 88.

[108] F.L. Moyo, 'Religion, Spirituality and being a Woman in Africa: Gender Construction within the African Religio-Cultural Experiences' in *Agenda* 61 (2004), 73. In later publications Moyo nuances this statement by exploring religio-cultural practices that could empower women in sexual relationships. See F.L. Moyo, 'The Making of Vulnerable, Gyrating and Dangerous Menstruating Women through *Chinamwali* Socialization' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 35-52; F.L. Moyo, 'The Red Beads and White Beads: Malawian Women's Sexual Empowerment in the HIV&Aids Era' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 11:1 (2005), 53-66.

[109] Cf. E. Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2007, 20-23; D.M. Ackermann, 'Tamar's Cry: Re-Reading an Ancient Text in the Midst of an HIV and AIDS Pandemic' in M.W. Dube and M.R.A. Kanyoro (eds.), *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*, Pietermaritzburg/New York: Cluster Publications/Orbis Books 2004, 27-59; B. Haddad, 'Choosing to Remain Silent: Links between Gender Violence, HIV/AIDS and the South African Church' in I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2003, 149-154. Different forms of sexual, physical and gender-based violence are addressed in various publications. For example, the use of violence in situations of war, in social institutions and in the domestic sphere. E.g. A.N. Kubai, 'Living in the Shadow of Genocide: Women and HIV/AIDS in Rwanda' in T.M. Hinga and others (eds.), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2008, 49-74; R.M. Amenga-Etego, 'Violence Against Women in Contemporary Ghanaian Society' in *Theology and Sexuality* 13:1 (2006), 23-46; S. Chirongoma, 'Women's and Children's Rights in the Time of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe: An Analysis of Gender Inequalities and its Impact on People's Health' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 126 (2006), 54-59; I.A. Phiri, 'Why does God Allow our Husbands to Hurt Us? Overcoming Violence against Women' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 114 (2002), 19-30.

demonstration of who is in power' and thus as the ultimate result and worst manifestation of gender inequality.[110]

It is noteworthy that the theologians under discussion pay hardly any attention to homosexuality in their discussions of gender, sexuality and the HIV epidemic. It is simply not considered a relevant issue.[111] According to Phiri, 'in Europe and America the spread of HIV is mainly through homosexual relationships, [but] in Africa it is predominantly through heterosexual multiple relationships.'[112] Similar statements can be found in many other publications, but are hardly substantiated. Though Chitando says that the HIV epidemic provides churches in Africa with an opportunity to discuss sexuality in an 'open and liberating way', he himself limits the discussion to heterosexuality by saying that 'heterosexual transmission lies behind the rapid spread of HIV in Africa.'[113] The silence of most African theologians on homosexuality in relation to HIV corresponds with the wider perception of HIV in Africa as being a heterosexual epidemic.[114] Recently, some prominent women theologians such as Dube and Njoroge have taken progressive stances on homosexuality to open up the debate.[115] However, they are yet to explore its intersections with sexuality, gender and HIV.

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[110] Phiri, *African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS Era*, 14.

[111] There are a few exceptions. For example, Shisanya in her discussion of gendered factors increasing the HIV risks of women, points out that the 'homosexual tendencies of some married men in Kenya equally make their wives to be vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.' (Shisanya, *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Women in Kenya*, 51.) However, rather than breaking the taboo on homosexuality, Shisanya reinforces heteronormativity by stating that 'sex was intended to be used in marriage alone. This explains why adultery, incest, homosexuality, prostitution and fornication were forbidden. Subsequently … the Church in Kenya is faced with the prophetic role of condemning adultery, incest, prostitution, homosexuality and fornication.' (p. 60, 62).

[112] Phiri, *HIV/AIDS: An African Theological Response in Mission*, 424.

[113] Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 33.

[114] Marc Epprecht, a historian and prominent scholar of homosexuality in Africa, has recently addressed this assumption in his book *Heterosexual Africa?* From a critical analysis of the discourses on HIV and AIDS in Africa he observes that hardly any attention is paid to a possible homosexual transmission of the virus. He explains this silence from what he calls 'the myth of heterosexual Africa', that is the strong tendency from colonial times up to today to construct a singular, heterosexual identity for Africa (see M. Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS*, Athens: Ohio University Press 2008, 8 but see 1-33).

[115] Nyambura Njoroge has stated that the reality of HIV and AIDS forces African theologians 'to make a U-turn in their teaching and theologizing'. With this she means that the epidemic urges theologians to discuss and reflect on topics they did not dare to study before, including homosexuality. See N.J. Njoroge, 'Beyond Suffering and Lament: Theology of Hope and Life' in D.C. Marks (ed.), *Shaping a Global Theological Mind*, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate 2008, 119. Musa Dube makes homosexuality part of her HIV and AIDS liberation theology: she considers homophobia as one of the structures of injustice underlying the epidemic that need to be addressed (cf. Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 5, 33, 47, 162, 173, 182; M.W. Dube, 'Service for/on Homosexuals' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *Africa Praying. A*

The Critical Role of Religion and Culture

Analysing women's observed lack of power[116] in sexual and gender relations and women's subsequent vulnerability to HIV, the theologians under discussion particularly address cultural and religious practices and teachings. These would maintain and reinforce the harmful realities women live in. According to Madipoane Masenya, African women are "trapped between two canons", these being African culture and Christianity, both of which put them at risk of HIV.[117] In relation to gender-related violence, Maluleke and Nadar speak about an "unholy trinity" of religion, culture and gender socialisation which underwrites sexual and physical violence against women.[118] What, then, is exactly the critical role of cultural and religious practices and teachings in the field of gender and HIV?

With regard to "African culture", theologians point to several cultural practices that expose women to HIV.[119] Examples of these are the payment of dowry, female circumcision, polygamy, dry sex, widow cleansing and widow inheritance.[120] These practices are mentioned by African women theologians as illustrations of African cultures being harmful to women in many ways. Dube, for instance, points out that these practices should not be understood as isolated cases but as symptoms of

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Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 209-214.

[116] The representation of "the African woman" as powerless frequently appears in the publications of African theologians who engage in discussions on gender and HIV and AIDS. In a recent evaluation of the Circle's work in this area, Dube has critiqued this as a too monolithic depiction of African women, which does not take into account the ambiguity of sexual practices and the ethnic and cultural variety among these women. See Dube, *HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006*, 183-184.

[117] M. Masenya, 'Trapped between Two "Canons": African-South African Christian Women in the HIV/AIDS Era' in I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2003, 113-127.

[118] Maluleke and Nadar, *Breaking the Covenant of Violence against Women*, 14-15.

[119] Generally, the African theological publications on gender and HIV and AIDS refer to "African culture" in a very general way. Dube critiques this tendency as generalising, stereotyping and distorting. See Dube, *HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006*, 184 .

[120] For example, see C. Ambasa-Shisanya, 'Widowhood and HIV Transmission in Siaya District, Kenya' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 53-70; Moyo, *The Making of Vulnerable, Gyrating and Dangerous Menstruating Women through Chinamwali Socialization*, 35-52; H. Ayanga, 'Religio-Cultural Challenges in Women's Fight Against HIV/AIDS in Africa' in T.M. Hinga and others (eds.), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2008, 34-48; T. Shoko, 'Gender, Sexuality and Emancipation: Women in Karanga Religion in Zimbabwe' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14:1 (2008), 55-69; M.N. Wangila, *Female Circumcision. the Interplay of Religion, Culture, and Gender in Kenya*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2007.

patriarchy.[121] They illustrate in particular that patriarchy does not allow women to take control over their own sexuality but rather assigns this control to men.

The control and domination of men over women and women's sexuality is linked by several theologians to the concept of male headship which is central to prevailing cultural and Christian perceptions of marriage. In view of HIV, the critique of this concept is threefold. Firstly, headship is said to be a major symbol empowering men and disempowering women when it comes to sexual decision-making. As Masenya points out:

> The view that the headship of men is viewed as God-ordained assigns all authority and power to control to men. This includes the control of women's bodies. The understanding that a wife must be subject to her husband in everything would thus also be understood to entail that she must always be willing to avail her body for her husband's sexual gratification.[122]

In addition to this critique, Moyo adds a second issue. According to her assessment, the concept of headship and other teachings taught to girls during traditional and Christianised initiation rites, do not only subordinate women's sexuality to that of men, but also insist upon women always respecting and protecting the dignity of the husband. She denounces 'the immense concern to protect the dignity of the head of the families' even in cases of abuse and violence, which 'does not take into account the whole question of the woman's dignity.'[123] Thirdly, Hinga and others indicate that the notion of male headship even functions as a justification of domestic violence against women and keeps a woman locked up in a marriage with a husband who is sleeping around or abuses her.[124] It is against this background that theologians call for a revision of theologies of marriage and gender, because 'if nothing is done to change the status of married women, the HIV/AIDS pandemic will go on wiping out communities.'[125]

Concerning the critical role of religion in gender and HIV, another issue addressed is the role of religious institutions, in particular Christian churches and church leaders.[126] Apart from the more general critique of churches adhering to patriarchal

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[121] Dube, *In the Circle of Life: African Women Theologians' Engagement with HIV and AIDS*, 215.

[122] Masenya, *Trapped between Two "Canons": African-South African Christian Women in the HIV/AIDS Era*, 119.

[123] Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 133.

[124] T.M. Hinga, 'AIDS, Religion and Women in Africa: Theo-Ethical Challenges and Imperatives' in T. M. Hinga and others (eds.), *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2008, 91-92; Maluleke and Nadar, *Breaking the Covenant of Violence Against Women*, 9; I.A. Phiri, 'Domestic Violence in Christian Homes: A Durban Case Study' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 6:2 (2000), 107-108.

[125] Phiri, *African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS Era*, 10.

[126] Dube observes that African women theologians time and time again address and call upon churches but are yet to identify, address and involve the institutions of indigenous religions.

ideology, several particular aspects that are critical in view of gender and HIV are mentioned. It is argued that churches, rather than liberating women from harmful cultural practices, accept or at least tolerate practices such as dowry, virginity testing, widow inheritance and so on.[127] According to Moyo, though some churches have Christianised traditional initiation rites for girls, they have not made use of this opportunity to empower women in the area of sexual decision-making. The same is true, she says, for many pastors, who in their premarital and marital counselling teach women to subordinate their sexuality to that of men. Hence Moyo concludes that 'the Church inadvertently reinforces women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.'[128] This is supported by the study of Maluleke and Nadar who found pastors justifying gender-based violence and insisting that women stay in abusive relationships.[129] Furthermore, Moyo has revealed that some churches are deeply implicated in practices that dispose of women's bodies, for example by demanding church women to show "hospitality" to their pastors.[130] These and other issues are taken as an illustration that African churches generally continue to be insensitive to gender issues and remain 'the bastion of patriarchy' even though it is increasingly clear that gender inequality is a major factor driving the epidemic.[131]

As appears from the account above, a wide range of issues concerning culture and religion are addressed by theologians working on gender and HIV. Significantly, whatever particular issue is addressed, almost all publications finally point to patriarchy as the root problem. As a cultural and religious ideology and a deeply rooted social structure, patriarchy is said to give rise to various practices and beliefs that facilitate the spread and impact of HIV and which increase the vulnerability of women. Hence the general perception among the theologians under discussion is that HIV cannot be dealt with without dealing with patriarchy. As it is put by Njoroge,

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Hence she challenges her colleagues in the Circle 'to identify the indigenous institutions such as community leaders, councils of elders, indigenous leaders, indigenous priests, marriage counsellors, the family and associations as interlocutors. Efforts should be made to address the institutions for justice-seeking processes.' See Dube, *HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006*, 194.

[127] M.R. Gunda, 'The Sexuality of Women in an HIV/AIDS Era: The Pastoral Challenge in Zimbabwe' in M. E. Aigner (ed.), *Geschlecht Quer Gedacht : Widerstandspotenziale Und Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten in Kirchlicher Praxis*, Wien, Munster, Berlin: LIT Verlag 2007, 243-260; E. Mombo, 'Missiological Challenges in the HIV/AIDS Era' in *Theology Today* 62 (2005), 60-62.

[128] Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 131.

[129] Maluleke and Nadar, *Breaking the Covenant of Violence Against Women*, 9, 11, 14.

[130] See F.L. Moyo, '"When the Telling itself is a Taboo": The Phoebe Practice' in I. A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2005, 184-202.

[131] Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 26.

> Reductionist ways of understanding gender inequality demonstrate either naivety or a deep-seated ignorance of the oppressive and dehumanising nature of patriarchy and sexism in our families, societies and religious communities. It is of great importance that when we engage in gender discourse in theology, in the search for recognition, reconciliation, healing, justice and fullness of life, that we confront the fundamental problems of patriarchy and sexism in the face of the pandemic.[132]

Whatever is meant by "reductionist" understandings of gender inequality, it is clear that Njoroge, like other theologians dealing with issues of gender and HIV, radically opposes all forms of gender inequality, as she principally considers gender inequality an injustice, and engages in a deconstruction of patriarchy and a transformation of gender relations towards gender justice.

The Imperative of Transformation

For African theologians working on gender and HIV, the epidemic has shown clearly that patriarchy is a dangerous and life-threatening ideology, especially to women but consequently also to men. From this realisation, the quest for a transformation of gender relations has re-appeared. The understanding of gender as a social construct opens up the possibility of change. Dube, being a leading scholar in the area of theology, gender and HIV, engages in this space for gender transformation and challenges others to do so, saying:

> Any theologian, lecturer, leader or worker who lives in the human-rights era – who believes in democracy, and wants to contribute positively to the fight against HIV/AIDS which is turning our dark-peopled continent into a red fire-inflamed continent of death – must not only seek to understand fully how gender is socially and culturally constructed, how it disempowers half of humanity, how it fuels the spread of HIV/AIDS, but also to change gender constructions so that it empowers men *and* women. It is up to the society to be instrumental to change and transformation. The present set-up benefits no one – men or women.[133]

Central in this call for change of gender constructions is the concept of empowerment. Gender is to empower men *and* women, Dube says, and this is considered particularly crucial in the context of HIV where imbalances in gender relations appear to be so critical. Hence, African women theologians underline the need for women's sexual empowerment. They not only consider it an intervention and prevention strategy in the face of HIV, but also a way for women to regain their dignity.[134] The most elaborate account in this area is provided by Moyo who creatively employs cultural, biblical and theological resources in order to develop an empowering "barefoot women's theology

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[132] N.J. Njoroge, *Gender Justice, Ministry and Healing. A Christian Response to the HIV Pandemic*, London: Progressio 2009, 3.

[133] Dube, *Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues*, 95.

[134] Cf. Phiri, *African Women of Faith Speak Out in an HIV/AIDS Era*, 16.

of sexuality".[135] Though Moyo's primary quest is for sexual empowerment, she insists upon a wider change of gender relations, especially in marriage. She presents the notions of mutuality and companionship as qualifications of marital-sexual relationships, building these notions upon the anthropological concept of the equality of men and women as co-bearers of the image of God.[136] According to Moyo, the empowerment of women along these lines will 'help women to realise that they are not sexual objects at the mercy of men's sexual prowess, but that they are companions and partners in this sexual act which is a holy and pleasant gift from God' and will 'enhance mutual love, and thus contribute to the mutuality of sexual fulfilment, faithfulness and healing in heterosexual relationships, culminating in HIV/AIDS prevention.'[137]

The empowerment of women and the transformation of gender relations is presented by Moyo and others as a crucial aspect of the church's mission in view of the HIV epidemic. In the words of Chitando, challenging patriarchy and building communities of gender justice are major characteristics of "AIDS competent churches".[138] This is significant because churches, as mentioned above, are strongly criticised for maintaining and reinforcing gender inequalities that expose women to HIV. Referring to this dualism, Dube observes that for theologians working on gender and HIV, the church is a "beloved problem child" which is both critically spoken to and of which much is demanded.[139]

To conclude this section, two observations with regard to African theologians' work on issues of gender and HIV are crucial. Firstly, the call for gender justice, and the call upon churches to align with this vision and to engage in a transformation of gender relations, has only been reinforced by the HIV epidemic. Secondly, the meaning of gender justice, and therefore also the objective of a transformation in gender relations, is specified as a result of the epidemic, meaning that it is defined in a more detailed manner in terms of an equal share of power between women and men in order to guarantee autonomy and mutuality in sexual and wider gender relations. It is against this background of what Dube calls an "HIV+ feminism"[140] that the topic of

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[135] Moyo, *A Quest for Women's Sexual Empowerment through Education in an HIV and AIDS Context. The Case of Kukonzekera Chinkhoswe Chachikhristu (KCC) among aMang'Anja and aYao Christians of t/a Mwambo in Rural Zomba, Malawi*. See especially chapter 7 for her proposal of a "barefoot women's theology of sexuality".

[136] Ibid. 213ff; Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 134-136.

[137] Ibid., 135.

[138] Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 8.

[139] Dube, *HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006*, 190.

[140] M.W. Dube, 'HIV+ Feminisms, Postcoloniality and the Global AIDS Crisis' in D.N. Hopkins and M. Lewis (eds.), *Another World is Possible. Spiritualities and Religions of Global Darker People*, London: Equinox 2009, 157.

masculinities is currently an emerging issue among African theologians engaged with issues of gender and HIV.

2.4. THE EMERGING QUEST FOR LIBERATING MASCULINITIES

Though gender has been studied in African theology for quite a number of years now, only recently has the topic of masculinities been addressed. For a long time the focus has generally and almost exclusively been on women in African religions, cultures and communities. This is understandable as the study of gender in African theology has been developed predominantly by women theologians, who aimed at including women's experiences in theology. In their accounts on women in religion and culture, and in their vision for the liberation of women and the realisation of gender justice, African women theologians sometimes refer to men and to issues related to masculinity. For example, in an early publication, Oduyoye mentioned the concept of male headship as one of the most critical issues for a Christian feminist theology in Africa, because of its intrinsic association with power.[141] Another example of a reference to men is Kanyoro who says to 'yearn for a time when the men in the churches of Africa will be prophetic about the things that adversely affect the lives of African women!'[142] Statements like these, however, are hardly explored. An exception is the more elaborate discussion on "the role of men" in a (hardly cited) publication by Oduyoye, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.[143] While addressing critical issues in the relation of men to women, such as violence, dominance and economic inequality, Oduyoye here emphasises that African women do not want to get rid of men but rather envision a new kind of community with new relations between men and women, characterised by companionship, equality and a common humanity. Significantly, Oduyoye points out that such a community is not just liberative to women but also will bring about the needed "liberation of men".[144] It liberates men, she explains, because only when patriarchy is abandoned and power is shared, can men come to appreciate and live up to the full humanity they share with women.

It is a very recent development that men are more explicitly included and elaborately discussed in debates on gender in African theology, and that men's position and performances in gender relations are theorised with the concept of masculinity/ies.[145] This is a direct result of the HIV epidemic and the above-outlined gender-based response to the epidemic under the leadership of African women

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[141] Oduyoye, *The Roots of African Christian Feminism*, 42.

[142] M.R.A. Kanyoro, 'Engendered Communal Theology: African Women's Contribution to Theology in the 21st Century' in N.J. Njoroge and M.W. Dube (eds.), *Talitha Cum! Theologies of African Women*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2001, 176-177.

[143] See Oduyoye, *Acting to Construct Africa: The Agency by Women*, 37-40.

[144] Ibid., 38.

[145] For a survey and discussion of this development, see A.S. van Klinken, 'Transforming Masculinities Towards Gender Justice in an Era of HIV and AIDS: Charting the Pathways' in B. Haddad (ed.), *A Cartography of HIV and AIDS in Religion and Theology*, Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press 2011 (forthcoming).

theologians. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, having addressed gender inequality and its consequences for women's lives in the face of HIV for a number of years, in 2007 for the very first time invited male theologians to its Pan-African conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The general theme was gender and HIV, but the conference had a particular focus on masculinities. As Phiri explains, this focus was informed by 'the realization that women alone cannot stop the spread of HIV in Africa. It emphasised the importance of a community approach to prevent HIV.'[146] Hence, the quest of the conference was for "liberating masculinities" that are constructive to combat HIV.[147] This conference and the resulting forthcoming volume is a milestone, both for the collaboration of African men and women theologians on issues of gender, and for the introduction of the concept and study of masculinities in African theological debates. According to Chitando, it is a major challenge to the various strands of African theology 'to take the theme of reconstructing and liberating masculinities seriously in the time of HIV.'[148] Clearly, Chitando himself has set the trend in the emerging field of studies on religion, masculinities and HIV in African theology, with other scholars such as Tinyiko Maluleke, Musa Dube and Gerald West engaging in the field more or less actively. What, then, are the critical issues that are addressed concerning men and masculinities, what alternative type of masculinity is envisioned and how is it thought that this transformation can be realised?

Contesting HIV-Critical African Masculinities

The concern of African theologians with hegemonic ideals and performances of masculinity is informed by their gender-critical analysis of the structures underlying the HIV epidemic and by their trenchant critique of patriarchy. Additionally it is informed by the phenomenon of violence against women, which is a major issue especially in South Africa but in other countries as well.[149] Against this background, prevalent masculinities have become fiercely contested, as appears from the discourse of African theologians on men and masculinities in relation to HIV and violence. Masculinities are referred to by adjectives such as "aggressive"[150], "destructive"[151],

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[146] Phiri, *Major Challenges for African Women Theologians in Theological Education (1989-2008)*, 107.

[147] See ibid., 116. The first outcome of this project is E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[148] Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 89.

[149] See, for instance, S. Nadar, 'Who's Afraid of the Mighty Men's Conference? Palatable Patriarchy and Violence Against Wo/men in South Africa' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming); G. West, 'The Contribution of Tamar's Story to the Construction of Alternative African Masculinities' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[150] Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 31.

[151] E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma, 'Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14:1 (2008), 65.

"dangerous and deadly"[152] and men are said to be characterised by a "machismo of sexual aggressiveness"[153]. Though the plural of "masculinities" is used more and more in order to prevent men being essentialised and to account for the different ways men perform their manhood and engage in gender relations[154], it is believed that these adjectives apply to prevalent patterns of masculinity in African societies today.[155] What, then, are the aspects that cause prevalent masculinities to be evaluated as dangerous, destructive and even deadly in the context of the HIV epidemic?

Firstly, the issue that is addressed most often concerns men and sexuality, which is not surprising in view of HIV being a sexually transmitted disease. As already mentioned above, the theologians under discussion perceive sexuality as being embedded in the wider and unequal gender relations between men and women. According to Moyo, 'sexuality is a power issue at the mercy of those who have the decision-making power – in this case, men.'[156] This is critical especially when men misuse this power, and that is exactly what is said to happen. The concern is that men use sexuality as a way to demonstrate their manhood. For example, they engage in unprotected sex in order 'to prove to their friends that they are real men, and real men

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[152] R. Gabaitse, 'Searching for Contextual Relevance: The Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Botswana's Response to HIV and AIDS' in E. Chitando (ed.), *Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in Theological Education: Experiences and Explorations*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2008, 43. See also R. Gabaitse, 'Passion Killings in Botswana: Masculinity at Crossroads' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[153] Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 131.

[154] Cf. Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 56-58.

[155] The concept of hegemonic masculinity originates from the work of R.W. Connell and is applied in the context of Southern Africa by Robert Morrell (see R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (2 ed.), Berkely/Los Angeles: University of California Press 2005 [1st ed. 1995], 76-81; R. Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, Pietermaritzburg and London: University of Natal Press and Zed Books 2001). Chitando and some others employ the context in their analysis of masculinities, gender and HIV and AIDS, using it however in a somewhat simplistic way. Connell develops a theoretical model to understand the relations between the multiple masculinities in a given social context, distinguishing the categories of hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and marginalised masculinities. Connell explicitly mentions that the number of men embodying the hegemonic type of masculinity is likely to be small (79). Hegemonic masculinity sets the norm rather than referring to the type of masculinity practiced by the majority of men. Connell proposes the concept of complicit masculinities to theorise those men who relate to but do not embody hegemonic masculinity. In the emerging work of African theological scholars on masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS, from the four categories of Connell only the category of hegemonic masculinity is employed, and it is used precisely to refer to the type of masculinity that is considered prevalent among men in society.

[156] Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 130.

take risks.'[157] Chitando points to widespread cultural notions of men as "sexual predators" which makes men preoccupied with virility: they consider themselves as having 'uncontrollable sexual urges' and therefore easily engage in multiple sexual relationships.[158] Kä Mana explains this from the background of patriarchy: in traditional African patriarchal and polygamous cultures masculinity is defined in terms of power, potency and fertility.[159] This is the reason, he says, why HIV prevention messages focusing on abstinence, fidelity and/or condom use are hardly effective: these are experienced by men as demasculinisation, castration and loss of erotic power.[160] It is this socio-cultural and religious construct of male sexuality, sometimes captured in the concept of machismo[161], which is considered particularly dangerous and indeed potentially deadly in the context of HIV.

Inherent to machismo is also a sense of aggressiveness. Indeed, another major concern about prevalent masculinities concerns the various forms of domestic and sexual violence against women and children. For the theologians under discussion, this is an inherent consequence of patriarchy, as patriarchy puts men on top of the gender order and gives men power that can easily be abused. Rosinah Gabaitse, for example, explains the phenomenon of "passion killings" in Botswana where women are killed by former lovers as 'a consequence of a destructive system', being patriarchy, and as a 'result of the patriarchal construction of masculinity, where men are given enormous power over women by their socio-cultural system.'[162] Likewise, Nadar in her analysis of sexual violence in South Africa points out that patriarchy provides an "ideological framework", 'which tells men that it is okay to rape because society does not really see it as rape.'[163] Apart from passion killings and rape, reference is made to the many

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[157] Gabaitse, *Searching for Contextual Relevance: The Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Botswana's Response to HIV and AIDS*, 42.

[158] E. Chitando, 'Religious Ethics, HIV and AIDS and Masculinities in Southern Africa' in R. Nicolson (ed.), *Persons in Community: African Ethics in a Global Culture*, Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press 2008, 52-53.

[159] Kä Mana, 'Culture, Societé et Sciences Humaines dans la Lutte Contre le VIH-SIDA en Afrique' in Kä Mana, J.-B. Kenmogne and H. Yinda (eds.), *Religion, Culture et VIH-SIDA en Afrique. Un Hommage au Docteur Jaap Breetvelt*, Yaounde: SHERPA 2004, 67-72.

[160] 'Dans les structures profondes de la vision patriarcaliste du monde, ces moyens représentent sans aucun doute des formes de démasculinisation, de castration et de perte de la puissance érotique du mâle. Leur pouvoir de transformation des comportements s'avère ainsi très restreint, surtout quand, comme en Afrique, la sexualité est perçue comme le lieu par excellence de la démonstration de forces de l'homo eroticus.'(ibid., 70).

[161] Though originating from Latin America, the term machismo is used by some theological scholars as a key concept to capture the construct of male sexuality in African contexts (e.g. Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 58; Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 131.

[162] Gabaitse, *Passion Killings in Botswana: Masculinity at Crossroads*.

[163] Nadar, *Towards a Feminist Missiological Agenda: A Case Study on the Jacob Zuma Rape Trial*, 97.

other subtle and overt forms of violent behaviours of men against women and children through which men maintain and reaffirm their position in the patriarchal order.[164] For the theologians, all this illustrates the dangerous and destructive side of hegemonic versions of masculinity.

Apart from the major issues of sexuality and violence, some other critical issues with regard to masculinities are mentioned but are less elaborated upon. Chitando and Chirongoma address the lack of men's leadership in the face of HIV. They critically observe that, though patriarchy puts men in the position of leaders at family, community and national level, men generally are absent in the reactions to the epidemic, when it comes to prevention, care and support programmes.[165] One explanation given is that patriarchal masculinities do not allow men to engage in care, but rather demand that men are cared for by women. Furthermore, Chitando relates dominant masculinities to the stigmatisation of women living with HIV.[166]

What is significant in the various aspects mentioned here is that they are all related to and explained from "the root problem" of patriarchy. This is important, as it points to the level of analysis. Though the behaviours of individual men are taken into account and are critically addressed, these behaviours are explained from deeply rooted structures and ideologies of gender and the subsequent masculinities. This structural approach is also crucial, as will be explored below, with regard to the project of intervention or transformation. The call of some theologians for a transformation of masculinities does not just aim at the change of behaviour of individual men, but aims at deconstructing the patriarchal masculinities informing these behaviours and at constructing "liberative" or "redemptive" alternatives. As Maluleke puts it, 'the myriad challenges brought about by the HIV pandemic cannot be dealt with without dealing with patriarchy and masculinity issues.'[167]

Envisioning Alternative Masculinities

From the critical examination of socially prevalent masculinities and their impact in the context of HIV, African theologians working on gender and HIV increasingly call for a transformation of masculinities. Theoretically this follows from the social constructionist understanding of gender which, as mentioned above, opens up the possibility of change and re-construction. Chitando and Chirongoma, for example, explicitly locate their call to transform masculinities in this theoretical perspective:

> Having accepted the value of the concept of masculinities, it becomes possible to embrace the idea that men can be transformed. There is no single fixed identity for men. Men *can*, *do*, and *must* change, as experience indicates. .... It has become clear that the social construction of manhood needs to be interrogated. Too often, men have imbibed cultural values that threaten the well-being of women and children. .... There is

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[164] Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 61.

[165] Ibid., 63-64.

[166] Chitando, *Religious Ethics, HIV and AIDS and Masculinities in Southern Africa*, 54-55.

[167] Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy*.

> therefore need to work with men to enable them to appreciate that they can express themselves in ways that are not harmful to women, children and themselves. This has become particularly urgent in the context of the HIV epidemic.[168]

Though the urgency of this transformation project might be clear, the question arises as to the direction of this transformation. As Moyo puts it, 'what transformed definitions of masculinity do we need to develop?'[169] Though elaborate answers to this recent question have not yet been provided, the few theological publications dealing with issues of masculinities certainly give an indication of the direction. These publications follow different strategies in their quest for transformative masculinities. For example, Lovemore Togarasei investigates Pauline masculinity in the New Testament, in the hope that a 'biblically centred masculinity' may be effective in African Christian contexts where the Bible is so central.[170] Another strategy is developed by Julius Gathogo who revitalises traditional perceptions of a Kikuyu man in order to propose a vision for masculinity today.[171] In spite of the different resources that are employed, the contours of the ideal of masculinity that is envisioned largely correspond. This vision is in line with the wider theological vision for gender relations that is outlined above. In other words, masculinities are intended to move from patriarchy to gender justice.[172] However, what does the concept of gender justice bring to bear on masculinities specifically? In the preliminary literature on the subject, some notions are proposed to define alternative masculinities. These will be identified below.

Liberating Masculinities

"Liberating" is one of the adjectives that appear in the theological discourse as a qualification of the new type of masculinity that is envisioned. The term "liberating masculinities" was used, for example, during the 2007 Circle conference.[173] It appears that "liberation" here actually has two subjects: it concerns women as well as men,

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[168] Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 57-58.

[169] Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 131.

[170] L. Togarasei, 'Paul and Masculinity: Implications for HIV and AIDS Responses among African Christians' ' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[171] J.M. Gathogo, 'Chasing a Leopard Out of the Homestead: Mundurume's Task in the Era of HIV and AIDS' ' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[172] For example, see Z. Teka, 'Male Honour and HIV and AIDS as a Gendered Pandemic: An African Male Reflection on how Men can be Effectively Engaged Towards a Positive Male Response' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14:1 (2008), 30-31; E. Chitando, 'A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic' in *Missionalia* 35:3 (2007), 122.

[173] Phiri, *Major Challenges for African Women Theologians in Theological Education (1989-2008)*, 107, 116.

both of whom need to be liberated from patriarchy in order to foster the humanity of all.[174] On the one hand, the new type of masculinity is thought of as supporting the liberation of women in African churches, cultures and societies.[175] Though this word is not used, it is a kind of "pro-feminist" masculinity that, as Chitando and Chirongoma say, encourages men willingly to 'forgo the patriarchal dividend', 'to identify with women and children, and to work towards gender justice.'[176] On the other hand, the concept of liberating masculinities also points to the liberation of men.[177] The deconstruction of patriarchy and the eradication of gender inequalities is considered as liberative for men, because these realities are believed to endanger not only women but men as well. For example, Dube frequently comments that patriarchy, especially in the present HIV era, in the end benefits nobody and is a threat to humanity in general.[178] Where prevalent masculinities are said to be based on 'falsehood and lies about manhood'[179], men need to be liberated in order for them to realise their human potential. This is in line with the account of Oduyoye mentioned above, where she speaks about the liberation of men: 'To educate men means to bring them to the realisation that if all they have is their maleness, then they do not count for much. Herein lies the need for the liberation of men.'[180]

Redemptive Masculinities

The second concept proposed is that of "redemptive masculinities". This term is used by Gerald West in his activist-academic project of doing contextual bible study with men on issues related to masculinity. Rather than defining the meaning of "redemptive" masculinities, West in a section entitled 'In search of redemptive masculinities' reads the Bible story about Tamar being raped by her brother Amnon, looks through the eyes of Tamar and then says:

> Tamar summons forth, anticipates, hopes for, a man who understands "No," who understands what it means to be in relationship as a "brother," who is able to discern and desist from doing what is disgraceful, who considers the situation of the other, who

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[174] This two-sided impact of "liberation" is understood by Chitando in the line of liberation theology and its key insight that 'the oppressor is also a victim of his/her oppression.' (Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 93).

[175] Cf. Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 47.

[176] Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 66.

[177] Cf. Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 92; Chitando, *Living with Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 1*, 31.

[178] For example, see Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 139-140.

[179] *The Girl Child, Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Gender Perspectives* (report of the 4th Pan African Conference of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians Younde, Cameroun, September 2-8, 2007), 7.

[180] Oduyoye, *Acting to Construct Africa: The Agency by Women*, 38

> considers the consequences of his actions for himself, who is willing to pause and examine other options, who is willing to listen to rational argument.[181]

Apparently, such a man as described here is considered as embodying a redemptive kind of masculinity. Where the emphasis in this quotation is on the ability to control the self and to think-before-acting, Chitando in a reference to redemptive masculinities rather associates it with men's concern about others, their affirmation of life and of the community.[182] The latter aspect is also emphasised by Dube, who presents the African traditional religious concept of *setho/ubuntu* as a criterion for masculinities, meaning that these masculinities are constantly questioned as to whether they enhance the community, the relationships with others.[183] Concretely this would mean, she suggests, that harmful behaviours are renounced and that men engage in care and become loving and compassionate. As Chitando says: 'Macho attitudes must be replaced with those that show sensitivity and solidarity.'[184] This would not only imply that men adopt more safer sexual practices and no longer violate women and children, but also that they start to give care to people with HIV and help to overcome stigmatisation and discrimination.[185] In this way, masculinities are thought of as becoming redemptive to the community, especially to those community members that suffer the most under the pressure of hegemonic masculinities. Chitando and Chirongoma acknowledge the soteriological connotation of the notion of "redemptive masculinities", though they want to avoid the image of the male saviour. They say that they embrace and employ the concept because of the 'spiritual dimension' it evokes and the related hope for masculinities 'that are life-giving in a world reeling from the effects of violence and the HIV and AIDS epidemic.'[186]

A Constructive Use of Power

In line with the notion of redemptive masculinities is the quest for a more constructive use of men's power. As mentioned above, hegemonic masculinities are associated by the theologians with dominating and aggressive behaviours of men. They explain this from the way patriarchy attaches power disproportionately to men, and from men's abuse of this power. The project of transforming gender relations and masculinities

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[181] West, *The Contribution of Tamar's Story to the Construction of Alternative African Masculinities*, 8

[182] Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 98.

[183] See M.W. Dube, '*Adinkra*! Four Hearts Joined Together on Becoming Healer-Teachers of African Indigenous Religion/s in HIV & AIDS Prevention' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion, and Health. Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 2006, 141, 151, 152.

[184] Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 49.

[185] Cf. Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 56-61.

[186] E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma, 'Introduction' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

first and foremost insists upon a redistribution of power in order to realise equal gender relations and to overcome patriarchy. However, at the same time there is a quest to redefine the notion of power in order for men to use their power constructively to the benefit of their family and the community. For example, from a bible study on "the graveyard man" in Mark 5, Maluleke first points out how the power and strength of this man are symptoms of his sickness, and then comments that 'one of the fundamental challenges that lies before us is a thorough examination of the understanding and uses of power and strength in various areas of life. … Are there more positive, more life and community affirming notions and practices of power?'[187] This question is even more urgent, as Chitando makes clear, because due to patriarchy men actually hold most positions of leadership at various levels in society, from the family up to the government. This reality only underscores that 'men must re-define power and leadership so that they work towards the good of all.'[188]

In several publications the figure of Jesus is presented as a model for men to redefine their sense of power. Having raised the question of life- and community-affirming notions and practices of power, Maluleke points to Jesus as the one who gave us 'more than clues to such practices of power'[189] because he related to people 'in life-affirming rather than violent ways.'[190] In a similar way Cheryl Dibeela says that Jesus demonstrates alternative types of power, being the 'power to care, love and embrace those who are different.' [191] Hence she calls upon men in the current HIV era to use their power to love and care for their wives and children, and to protect them from HIV infection. Dube, from a re-reading of the Bible story about Jesus healing the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5), acknowledges that both Jairus and Jesus appear in this story as powerful men, but emphasises that they use their power to empower others who are vulnerable. She also presents this as an example for men nowadays: 'I believe that this model highlights that the powerful men in our families, churches, academy and society, do have a role in building gender empowerment and in fighting against the forces of death that globalization and HIV/AIDS unleashes against the girl-child of today.'[192]

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[187] T.S. Maluleke, 'The Graveyardman, the "Escaped Convict" and the Girl-Child: A Mission of Awakening, an Awakening of Mission' in *International Review of Mission* 91:363 (2002), 552.

[188] Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 64.

[189] Maluleke, *The Graveyardman, the "Escaped Convict" and the Girl-Child: A Mission of Awakening, an Awakening of Mission*, 552.

[190] T.S. Maluleke, 'Men and their Role in Community' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *Africa Praying. A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 192.

[191] C. Dibeela, 'Men and the use of Power' in M. W. Dube (ed.), *Africa Praying. A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 196. See also Chitando, *Religious Ethics, HIV and AIDS and Masculinities in Southern Africa*, 60.

[192] Dube, *Talitha Cum! Calling the Girl-Child and Women to Life in the HIV/AIDS & Globalization Era*, 88.

Though recently there has been a call for a reinvention of African patriarchy as a way to combat HIV, the arguments for a constructive use of men's power are not to be understood as part of such a restorative project.[193] The theological scholars under discussion clearly are very suspicious of the very idea of men's power. They formulate carefully in order to avoid the suggestion of reinforcing any patriarchal type of masculinity.[194] However, realising that many men actually hold positions of power, they insist upon men's responsibilities to apply this power in a constructive way.

Strategies to Transform Masculinities towards Gender Justice

With the need to transform masculinities and the broad direction of this transformation being clear, the remaining question is how this project is to be undertaken. How to get men involved indeed in an alternative type of masculinity, one that is liberating, redemptive and constructive? It is generally acknowledged that this demands, in the words of Paul Leshota, a profound personal conversion (*metanoia*) of men.[195] But how to bring about such a conversion?

Several suggestions have been made, though these are yet to be developed in more concrete strategies of transformation. Firstly, an academic strategy in theology and religious studies has been proposed. Chitando has underscored the need for African theologies of inculturation, liberation and reconstruction to engage constructively with the quest for alternative masculinities in order to make true their claim to be contextually relevant.[196] Together with Chirongoma, Chitando has also highlighted the role that could be played by academic departments of religious studies.[197] In their view these are places where critical masculinities are to be

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[193] See C. Isike and U.O. Uzodike, 'Modernizing without Westernizing: Reinventing African Patriarchies to Combat the HIV and AIDS Epidemic in Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14:1 (2008), 3-20. Both authors are scholars in political studies. Though their article does not deal with religion or theology, it was published in a special issue of the *Journal of Constructive Theology* dealing with masculinities and HIV and AIDS. The reinvention of patriarchy they propose is defined by the terms "modernising without westernising", meaning that they want to avoid western (pro-feminist) views which tend to depict patriarchy as something negative, and aim to recover the values of traditional, pre-colonial African patriarchy. Though the concerns of the authors are quite similar to the theological scholars under discussion in the present chapter – both are concerned with current prevalent types of masculinity, with their impact in the context of HIV and AIDS and with the subordination of women – the theological scholars clearly reject patriarchy, whether in its traditional or modern manifestation, and aim to transform gender relations and masculinities beyond patriarchy towards gender justice.

[194] For example, see Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 106.

[195] See P. Leshota, 'The Spell of Discrete Islands of Consciousness: My Journey with Masculinities in the Context of HIV and AIDS' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[196] Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 88-89, 125.

[197] Chitando and Chirongoma, *Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa*, 55-69.

deconstructed and where alternative masculinities could be formulated drawing on notions derived from the different religions in Africa. Also, students can be trained to become gender activists mobilising religious resources and communities in the quest for gender justice and transformed masculinities. Secondly, Gerald West and others have proposed a community-based strategy to construct alternative masculinities through the use of contextual Bible study. This method has been used to address, among other things, issues of gender violence and HIV in communities. Recently the method has also been applied to involve men in the transformation of masculinities.[198] According to West, a Bible study such as on the story of Amnon raping Tamar produces a social space where dominant masculinities are disrupted and contradicted, and where alternative masculinities can be articulated which may lead to social transformation.[199] Thirdly, another strategy proposed is that of involving local churches in the transformation of masculinities. As this strategy is most significant to the present research and its case studies in local churches, it is discussed more elaborately.

Involving Local Churches

The strategy of involving local churches in the project of transforming masculinities is proposed particularly by Chitando, but is in line with the wider vision provided by theologians calling for a transformation of gender relations. Clearly, the theologians under discussion are very critical of Christianity in general, and of Christian churches in particular, for maintaining and reinforcing patriarchal ideology and practices. As Oduyoye puts this criticism: 'African men, at home with androcentrism and the patriarchal order of the biblical cultures, have felt their views confirmed by Christianity. The Christian churches have not encouraged or even accommodated women who have raised their voices in protest.'[200] However, as they consider patriarchy as a structure facilitating HIV, the theologians seize the HIV epidemic as an opportunity to get churches committed to the vision of gender justice and to make this part of their mission. What is at issue here, in their opinion, is the reliability of churches. Haddad puts this poignantly, saying: 'The church can no longer assert to be the moral watchdog of society without challenging men to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour. ... One cannot theologise nor moralise while patriarchy continues unabated.'[201] Thus, addressing critical male behaviours in areas of sexuality and gender

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[198] See G.O. West and P. Zondi-Mabizela, 'The Bible Story that Became a Campaign: The Tamar Campaign in South Africa (and Beyond)' in *Ministerial Formation* 103 (2004), 5-13.

[199] West, *The Contribution of Tamar's Story to the Construction of Alternative African Masculinities*, 9. As the director of the Ujaama Centre for Biblical and Theological Community Development and Research (University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa), West has initiated the Tamar Campaign. In this campaign, the Bible story on the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-22) is used to address issues of gender based violence among women and young girls, and recently also among men.

[200] Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, 183

[201] Haddad, *Choosing to Remain Silent: Links between Gender Violence, HIV/AIDS and the South African Church*, 155.

violence is considered a major task of churches. Even further, the ideology and structures informing these behaviours – i.e. patriarchy – need to be contested by churches and church leaders, according to Haddad and others. Chitando draws the argument more specifically to masculinities when he says:

> The HIV epidemic challenges African churches to rethink their mission towards men. Yes, many denominations do have active men's groups but how many members do they have? More crucially, are such groups promoting gender equality? Are they challenging conventional forms of masculinity? How can hegemonic masculinities be deconstructed among Christian youth and men? Such questions are critical as African churches strive towards AIDS competence.[202]

It is clear from this quotation that for Chitando, to address, challenge and transform masculinities is a central task of churches seeking to be "AIDS competent". He gives many concrete suggestions for churches to engage in this task, for example through preaching in Sunday services, the curriculum of Sunday schools, activities for the youths' and women's and men's groups. Furthermore, he says that mission has to be reconceptualised because of HIV, and that churches therefore have to engage in a "creative evangelism" of reaching out to men in the so-called worldly places.[203] According to Chitando, through all these activities men are to be sensitised to the harmful aspects of prevalent masculinities, and are to be challenged to develop more constructive understandings of themselves as men. He believes that when churches are fully committed to the vision of gender justice, and when all church departments are actively involved in the shaping of new ideals of manhood, not only masculinities but society as a whole will be transformed in a radical way.[204]

2.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined how African theologians analyse, reflect upon and envision masculinities in the context of HIV. It has become clear that the engagement with the topic of masculinities is a very recent development in African theology. However, it did not emerge out of the blue, since it emerged from the established tradition of African women's theology. There gender issues have been addressed and investigated for several decades. This background impacts upon the current approach of masculinities, which is influenced by the feminist edge that characterises the analytical and political work of African women theologians. Though the direct reason for the current engagement with masculinities is the HIV epidemic, the actual concern of the scholars involved is with patriarchy as an ideology and a social structure being oppressive to women. As a result, the analytical framework in which masculinities are investigated by African theologians is built on the classic feminist concept of patriarchy.[205] In line

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[202] Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 40-41.

[203] Ibid., 49.

[204] Cf. ibid., 47, but see 40-54.

[205] This corresponds with the study of men, masculinities and religion as developed in the Western world, which also emerged from feminist studies in religion and theology and where

with this, the political vision for masculinities is captured in the central concept of gender justice, which entails notions like equality, mutuality and partnership between men and women. For the theologians under discussion, the HIV epidemic once again has exposed the dangerous and life-threatening face of patriarchy, already addressed by African women theologians before HIV was known, and has highlighted the urgent need for gender justice. Hence these scholars vigorously contest hegemonic masculinities because of their patriarchal nature, which are considered particularly critical in light of HIV. They do not just address the behaviours of individual men but rather call for a deconstruction of patriarchy and for a transformation of masculinities towards gender justice. This structural approach of masculinities is part of and informed by an HIV liberation theology which understands the HIV epidemic as embedded in systematic and structural social injustices, one of them being patriarchy. Theoretically the space for a transformation of masculinities is opened up by the perception of gender and masculinity as social constructions which, therefore, also can be re-constructed. Concretely, the transformed masculinities are intended to be liberative and redemptive: they have to support the liberation of women and men from patriarchy, and they have to foster humanity and to affirm life in the community at various levels. Though the theologians principally encourage men to give up patriarchal power in order to achieve gender equality, more pragmatically they insist on the constructive use of men's power. Noteworthy is the way the theologians address the role of religion, particularly Christian churches. On the one hand, churches are severely criticised for reinforcing patriarchy and legitimising oppressive behaviours of men, while on the other hand they are being asked to play a major role in the transformation of masculinities. The theologians call upon the churches to finally adopt the vision of gender justice and to put it at the centre of their mission in view of the HIV epidemic and beyond.

In view of the case studies presented in the next two chapters, two questions concerning the approach to masculinities developed by the African theologians are important. First, in the light of the theologians' criticism of churches for reaffirming patriarchal masculinities and their call upon churches to engage constructively in a transformation of masculinities in view of HIV, the question arises as to how local churches actually deal with men and what ideals of masculinity they promote. The second question follows from this, and concerns the relation between the (pro)feminist approach to men and masculinities of the theologians, and the approach of the churches. According to the theologians, the problem is patriarchal masculinities and the solution is to transform these towards gender justice. How does this analysis and evaluation relate to the approach of men and masculinities in the case study churches? The first, descriptive question is central in the next two chapters where the

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patriarchy is employed as a central critical theoretical and hermeneutical concept. Cf. J. Gelfer, *Numen, Old Men. Contemporary Masculine Spiritualities and the Problem of Patriarchy*, London: Equinox 2009, 12-15; S.B. Boyd, 'Trajectories in Men's Studies in Religion: Theories, Methodologies, and Issues' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 265-268.

case studies on masculinities in local churches are presented. The second, comparative and evaluative question is raised in chapter 5 and is further discussed in chapter 6.

3. MEN & MASCULINITIES IN A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH – THE CASE OF REGIMENT PARISH

Joachim is the model of every catholic husband and father.
He was a model of love, faithfulness, obedience, devotion, diligence, goodness, openness of husband and wife to one another. He is still a model of catholic men.
Joachim is a symbol of Christian life to all men who persevere to live happy marriages despite the shortcomings and misguiding from the other partner.
Constitution St Joachim Men's Organisation[1]

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Having investigated how African theologians analyse and reflect upon masculinities in the context of HIV, I would now like to shift the focus to the praxis in local churches. As is evident from the previous chapter, the theologians on the one hand are critical of churches as these are alleged to reinforce patriarchal masculinities, while on the other hand the same theologians accord churches a major role in the transformation of masculinities. Through case studies, this part of the thesis will explore how local churches actually deal with men and how they engage in a (re)construction of masculinities against the background of the HIV epidemic. Therefore two case studies were conducted. The first, in the Roman Catholic Regiment parish in Lusaka, is presented in this chapter.

The central question in the case studies is how local churches practically and theologically address, contest, (re)define and seek to transform masculinities in the context of HIV. This question draws attention to both the practical and theological dimension of churches' engagement with men and masculinities. Hence, the present chapter explores *how* Regiment parish works with men, addresses male behaviour and defines a certain ideal of masculinity as well as *why* it is done in this way: on what religious notions is it built, and by what ideology of gender and broader theological perceptions is it informed? In order to investigate the latter questions, the research employs a conceptual analytical approach. The materials subjected to analysis were collected through qualitative research conducted in the parish in 2008 and 2009.[2] The main body of materials on which the analysis is based is twofold: written materials and interviews. The written materials include the weekly parish newsletter, the many Catholic booklets and magazines used in parish activities and on sale in the small parish bookshop and documents of the Catholic bishops of Zambia. Interviews were conducted with approximately twenty-five parishioners, the parish priest and with

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[1] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, Lusaka: Archdiocese of Lusaka 2001, 1.

[2] See §1.5 for an account of the methodological approach of the case studies.

some officials of the archdiocese and the Caritas.[3] Furthermore, my analysis has been informed by the conversations I have had and the observations I made during the period of research.

The present chapter opens with an introduction to the parish (§3.2). Particular attention is paid to the response to the HIV epidemic and to the places and activities where men are gathered and where issues of masculinity are addressed. Section §3.3 examines the type of masculinity contested in the parish, by investigating which issues concerning men and male behaviour are addressed critically. Over against this contested masculinity is the ideal of manhood promoted in the parish. The major building bricks of this ideal are identified in §3.4. Of course, the discursive construction of such an ideal type of masculinity is embedded in and informed by the broader framework of Catholic theology and spirituality. Some major lines of thought relevant to the discourse on masculinity are outlined in §3.5. The question of whether and how men in the church try to live up to this ideal is discussed in §3.6. The chapter ends with a conclusion in §3.7.

3.2. REGIMENT PARISH

General Introduction to the Parish

When Lusaka became the capital city of Northern Rhodesia in 1935, the police and military were located in barracks at the outskirts of the small town. The area became known as Regiment. In 1937 the first Mass was celebrated there, and in 1940 Regiment Catholic Church was consecrated.[4] From this modest beginning, the parish has now become quite a large and prominent Catholic parish in Lusaka today. The Missionaries of Africa, who have served in the parish for a long time, handed over pastoral responsibility to the archdiocese in 2009, indicating that the parish had become established. Most parishioners live in the areas surrounding the church. These are mainly low-density areas but also include some high-density areas. This difference is reflected in the parish membership: a minority of the parishioners is more or less well to do, but the majority is socio-economically in a lower class.

Organisation

The wide area covered by the parish is organised in geographical sections, each having a Small Christian Community (SCC). In Regiment parish there are 27 SCCs, which play a vital role in the parish life (see below). At parish level there is a Parish Pastoral Council, the governing body in which the various groups and lay movements are represented. The parish priest bears the final responsibility for the parish. During the period in

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[3] Caritas Zambia is the Zambian Episcopal Conference's organization for justice, peace and development.

[4] Further details about the history of Regiment parish are provided by H.F. Hinfelaar, *History of the Catholic Church in Zambia, 1895-1995*, Lusaka: Bookworld Publisher 2004, 115-116 and in *Let our Light Shine. Diamond Jubilee: Regiment Catholic Church 1939-1999*, Lusaka: Regiment Parish 1999.

which this research was conducted, Fr Marc Nswanzurwimo was the priest in charge. He originates from Burundi and was the last Missionary of Africa serving Regiment, from 2005 up to 2009. The priest is assisted by a catechist and a social worker employed by the parish.

As a Catholic parish, Regiment is part of the Archdiocese of Lusaka. The different dioceses in the country are related through the Zambia Episcopal Conference. This body participates in the regional organisation AMECEA, the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa. Finally, the archdiocese of Lusaka is under the Catholic hierarchy in Rome. This structure makes Regiment parish part of a world church, which affects many of its practices and beliefs.

Parish Life

Central in the parish life is Mass, which is daily celebrated in Regiment parish. On Sundays there are three Masses (one in English and two in a vernacular language), attended by about two thousand people. The worship during Mass is with traditional African musical instruments, some hand clapping and dancing.[5] The Bible readings follow the lectionary, and the sermons are relatively short. Issues concerning people's daily life are frequently referred to in preaching but are hardly elaborated on. The Eucharist is the central part of Mass. Parishioners often indicate that they attend Mass to receive Holy Communion, which illustrates how central the Eucharist is to their spirituality.

Once every two weeks people meet on Sunday in the Small Christian Communities. The SCCs are called "the arteries" of the church, which indicates that they are considered crucial for the life of the parish.[6] The meetings have both a spiritual and a social function. The aim is that all Catholics participate in the SCC in their locality. The level of participation differs among the various SCCs in the parish but is generally considered as too low. Once every two weeks on Sunday afternoons there is also a meeting for charismatic Catholics in the church, attracting a relatively small number of people.

In the parish several lay groups are active, including Aktio, Legio, St. Anne, Nazareth, Marriage Encounter, Christian Life Community, and the St. Joachim men's organisation. These groups are part of national, regional or global Catholic lay movements which aim to contribute to the life, spirituality and mission of the church. Their contribution to parish life is much appreciated and encouraged, as it strengthens the spirituality of parishioners and their involvement in the church.[7]

With regard to the youth, all SCCs have youth sections where the parish youth are supposed to meet. Here issues concerning their life and faith are discussed. At parish

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[5] According to Nsanzurwimo, this is one of the outcomes of the process of inculturation that has been initiated in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa. He even considers liturgy the most outstanding example of inculturation in the church (see his article M. Nsanzurwimo, 'Echo of the First African Synod: New Look of Ordained Ministry' in *JCTR Bulletin* 75 (2008), 15).

[6] *Let our Light Shine. Diamond Jubilee: Regiment Catholic Church 1939-1999*, 17.

[7] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

level, there is a weekly youth Mass. Furthermore, frequent sport and entertainment activities are organised as well as workshops on various social and spiritual topics. In 2009 a youth hall was established on the parish grounds, with facilities for table tennis and billiards. In this way the parish aims to provide the youth with "a second home".[8]

Arising from an awareness of the social needs in the community, the parish employs a social worker and has established a community school as well as a youth skills training centre. Furthermore, there is an active home-based care group (see below).

The Family of God

The character of the parish can be understood from the ecclesiology of the church as the family of God. This ecclesiology was adopted by the First African Synod (meeting of the African Catholic bishops in Rome) in 1994.[9] It has also been embraced by the Zambian Catholic bishops.[10] Two important characteristics of Regiment parish can be understood from this ecclesiology. First, the understanding of the church as God's family leads to a concern of the church with marriage and family life.[11] As the Zambian bishops put it: 'For the Church as Family to exist, we need Christian families that are authentic domestic Churches.'[12] Explaining this, Nswanzurwimo says that in the Catholic tradition the human family is considered as the smallest unit of being church, the so-called domestic church.[13] Thus in order to build the Church as the family of God, human families have to be protected and fostered and marriages have to be strengthened. This inspires various groups in the parish, such as St. Anne, Nazareth, Marriage Encounter and St. Joachim, in their engagement with issues of marriage and family life. Second, the metaphor is intended as an inclusive ecclesiology. As it was put in a sermon, 'there are no boundaries, there is no fence, because the church is open to anybody who is in need, they are part of our community and we will share with

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8 Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

9 The African Synod, 'Message of the Synod' in Africa Faith & Justice Network (ed.), *The African Synod. Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1996, 77ff. For theological explorations of this ecclesiological metaphor, see A.E. Orobator, *The Church as Family. African Ecclesiology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 2000; L. Paul (ed.), *Theology of the Church as Family of God*, Nairobi: Paulines 1997.

10 Cf. Catholic Bishops of Zambia, 'Called to be the Family of God. A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Zambia to launch the Five Year African Synod Programme' (May 1996) in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 341-346.

11 Cf. Damian Musonda, 'General Introduction: Pastoral and Moral Issues' in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 14-15.

12 Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *The Church as a Caring Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics by the Bishops of Zambia on the 1997 Theme for the Synod Implementation' (21 March 1997)*, 360.

13 Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo, Lusaka: 30 September 2008.

them.'[14] From this perception, the Zambian bishops understand the idea of the church as the family of God, among other things, in terms of solidarity with the community, care for the weak and the poor, and the promotion of justice and development.[15] In line with this, Regiment parish is a church deeply rooted and actively involved in the community, for example by means of the Small Christian Communities, programmes such as the Caring Women and the Caring Youth, the community school and the youth training centre. This has also inspired the parish to respond actively to the challenges raised by the HIV epidemic.

The Response to HIV and AIDS

Evidently, HIV affects many people in the community. From this awareness, Regiment parish has developed a twofold response to the epidemic. First, a community-based response through home-based care and education, and second, the teaching of moral values as a prevention strategy.

Community Based Responses

In 1992 Regiment was the first parish of the archdiocese to establish a home-based care programme for people affected by HIV and AIDS. This initiative was developed because increasing numbers of people in the community were infected with HIV. The home-based care programme is run by a group of about seventy women. They work in the community, taking care of those struck by the disease, monitoring the adherence to ARVs, and providing support. In addition, there is a small clinic that provides some basic medical support. The so-called Caring Women are assisted by a group of Caring Youth. These provide practical assistance in home-based care and also organise workshops on HIV and AIDS and related topics for their fellow youth.

The involvement of the parish in home-based care is to be understood from the ecclesiology of the church as family of God. According to the Zambian bishops, the HIV epidemic challenges the church to be a *caring* family.[16] As mentioned above, the family metaphor indicates an inclusive church. It follows from this that HIV is not considered as something outside the church, but as something affecting the church precisely because it affects people in the community. Through the home-based care programme Regiment seeks to be in solidarity with those living with HIV in the community.

Another response to the epidemic has been to establish a community school and a youth skills training centre. Faced with the many orphans and other children and youth affected by the epidemic, these were established in order to provide a "holistic response".[17] It is believed that through education and training, young people's chances of employment will increase, the cycle of poverty will be broken, and HIV will come to an end. The project demonstrates an awareness of the social factors underlying the

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[14] Sermon delivered during the English Mass in Regiment parish Lusaka, 26 July 2009.

[15] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *The Church as a Caring Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics by the Bishops of Zambia on the 1997 Theme for the Synod Implementation*, 358-359.

[16] Ibid., 362-363.

[17] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo, 30 September 2008.

epidemic, such as poverty, unemployment and broken families. Also the statements of the Zambian bishops show this awareness. Referring to HIV and AIDS and other social challenges, they state that 'social injustice is the root cause of many problems we face in Zambian society today.'[18]

Prevention through Moral Teaching

Though there is an awareness of the social inequalities in which the epidemic is embedded, in the parish HIV is mainly talked about in a moral discourse. The disease is said to have reinforced the emphasis on moral values concerning sexuality.[19] These values are taught in particular to the youth. As early as 1995, a behavioural change programme was initiated, targeting the youth 'to help them see the Christian path in the whole area of sexuality and human development.'[20] Frequently there are sessions for young people, often organised by the Caring Youth, where issues of sexuality and HIV are discussed. Also booklets and magazines are used to sensitise the young on these issues.[21] Generally these promote abstinence as the key preventive measure for the youth, discourage the use of condoms, and emphasise the ability to control sexuality. Similar values, including sexual fidelity in marriage, are regularly taught to adults, for example in the courses organised by Marriage Encounter and in SCC meetings.

The emphasis in the parish on moral values concerning sexuality corresponds with the understanding of the Zambian bishops that the epidemic is largely a result of sexual immorality.[22] They call for a re-valuation of the 'true meaning of the sexual act as an expression of love between a man and a woman in marriage and open to the transmission of life', which is said to be part of 'our Zambian and Christian heritage.'[23] Apparently the bishops are aware that the moral discourse on HIV runs the risk of stigmatising people living with HIV, as they state in a nuanced way that 'the cause of

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[18] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *The Church as a Caring Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics by the Bishops of Zambia on the 1997 Theme for the Synod Implementation' (21 March 1997)*, 361.

[19] Cf. Interview with Fr Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Luaka: 30 September 2008.

[20] *Let our Light Shine. Diamond Jubilee: Regiment Catholic Church 1939-1999*, 14.

[21] The Catholic Church in Zambia has its own youth magazine, *Speak Out!*, and the Catholic publisher Paulines Publications Africa has a series of booklets for youth on a wide range of topics. Some of the titles in this series are *About AIDS*, *About Boys and Girls, About Sex*, and *About True Love Waits*. These are on sale in the parish bookshop and are available for reading and on loan in the youth hall.

[22] See Catholic Bishops of Zambia, 'Have Life to the Full. A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Zambia on HIV/AIDS (24 November 2002)' in African Jesuit AIDS Network (ed.), *Catholic Bishops of Africa and Madagascar Speak Out on HIV & AIDS*, Nairobi: Paulines 2004, 93.

[23] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *The Church as a Caring Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics by the Bishops of Zambia on the 1997 Theme for the Synod Implementation' (21 March 1997)*, 357. The bishops seem to ignore here that several groups in Zambia traditionally had polygamous marriages.

the disease might be a sin, but the disease itself is not a sin.'[24] Hence they emphasise that the church should not judge but rather show compassion, following the example of Jesus Christ.[25]

Clearly, Regiment parish responds actively to the HIV epidemic, both through its community-based response that aims to provide care and to address some of the social factors underlying HIV, and through its reinforced teaching on sexuality and relationships that aims at HIV prevention. Issues related to HIV are discussed quite openly in Regiment parish, though it is significant that people living with HIV are not visibly present.

Where and How are Men and Masculinities Addressed?

Having introduced the parish and its response to HIV, this section will introduce some particular aspects of the parish life relevant to the present study. These are the places where men and aspects of masculinities are (or may be) addressed in Regiment parish, and which could be relevant to the construction of a Catholic Zambian masculinity. Attention is paid respectively to youth activities, marriage teaching and counselling, the St. Joachim men's organisation, sermons delivered during Mass, small Christian communities and to pastoral letters of the Zambian bishops.

Youth Activities

About a hundred young people are more or less actively involved in the parish. They attend the weekly youth mass, participate in the SCC youth sections, and/or attend the activities for the youth organised at parish level. The objective of the youth work in the parish is twofold. First, it aims to provide young people with an alternative place to spend their leisure time. This keeps them away from the bars, where they run the "risks" of drinking and – in the case of young men – womanising. Second, various activities seek to make young people familiar with the Catholic faith, its moral values and spirituality. The programme of youth meetings includes Bible study and prayer, theological discussions, study of religious and cultural issues, and teaching on moral behaviour. A number of young people are extremely interested in this, but according to a youth leader most of them just come to church to pass the time and to socialise. In his opinion, they are 'traditional Catholics: wearing a rosary but hardly praying the rosary.'[26] The youth activities, then, seek to raise young people's interest in and commitment to the Catholic faith and to the church. This is especially the case with the

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[24] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, 'The Missionary Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics from the Bishops of Zambia on the 1999 Theme for the Implementation of the African Synod (25 March 1999)' in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 407.

[25] See the various statements of the bishops mentioned above, but also E. Toccali, *About AIDS*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2003 (1989), 22-26.

[26] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

Altar Boys Club, which is intended to 'help those boys to grow in Catholicism and to develop a sense of spirituality.'[27]

Though the activities are mixed in terms of gender and though teaching generally is not gender-specific, they are significant to the present study. Several male youths, for example, indicate that the fact that they spend a lot of time around the church rather than in bars already distinguishes them from their peers in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, from interviews it appears that the involvement in the parish affects the self-understanding of these Catholic young men.

Marriage Teaching and Counselling

According to Fr. Nsanzurwimo, the (pre-) marital teaching provided by various groups in the parish, is crucial in addressing issues concerning men and their role in marriage, the family and the community.[28] How, then, is this teaching organised?

Before a marriage is consecrated in church, a couple has to take a course of marriage instructions.[29] The parish has assigned this task to the local section of Marriage Encounter, an international and originally Catholic movement aiming at the renewal of the "vocation of marriage".[30] The course consists of twelve sessions dealing with issues such as communication, sexuality, male-female roles, spirituality, budgeting and the upbringing of children.

Apart from Marriage Encounter, the Nazareth and St Anne women's groups are also involved in the preparation for marriage, as well as some individual men. Parents or relatives can call upon these groups to prepare a bride and/or groom for marriage in the traditional way, though the teaching is said to be Christianised.[31] The difference

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[27] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[28] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 4 November 2008.

[29] In the parish, two types of marriage are distinguished: a blessing of already traditionally married couples, and a white wedding. Traditionally married couples have gone through the cultural rites of marriage. The church, however, only recognises marriages that have been consecrated in the church. As a result, there are many Catholics who in their community are considered as married and who may have a family, but who according to the church's formal point of view are cohabitating illegally. When traditionally married couples want to have their marriage blessed in the church sooner or later, this happens during a Sunday Mass with a number of couples together. The so-called white wedding, on the other hand, refers to a couple that has not been cohabitating but enters into marriage with a consecration Mass on their wedding day. Couples for a marital blessing receive premarital group counselling, while for a white wedding the couple is counselled individually.

[30] Cf. the website of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, www.wwme.org (accessed 3 December 2009).

[31] On October 22, 2008 I attended a part of a three-day training for parishioners involved in this traditional but Christianised version of (pre)marital teaching. The training was organized by the FENZA institute in Lusaka. This institute is run by the Missionaries of Africa and seeks to promote the encounter between Zambian cultures and the Christian faith, in line with the project of inculturation adopted by the first African Synod in 1994 (see www.fenza.org, accessed 3 December 2009).

between this instruction and the teaching provided by Marriage Encounter, is said to concern the "cultural dimension": Marriage Encounter is said to derive its teaching solely from Christianity, while the other groups are stated to combine Christian with traditional teachings. Apparently, there is a difference in the appreciation of traditional culture between the various groups in the parish, which impacts on their teaching on marriage.

In the case of marital problems, counselling is provided in the parish in several ways: by the Small Christian Communities, parish groups like Nazareth, St Anne and St Joachim, Marriage Encounter and finally by the parish priest. As divorce is never a serious option according to Catholic teaching, marital counselling always aims to keep the couple together. The concern with marriage in the parish is not only expressed in the counselling of marital problems, but also in preventing such problems. This is the primary objective of Marriage Encounter. The movement organises weekends for married couples in the parish where they can increase their so-called "couple power" – that is, their level of intimacy and doing things together.[32]

The enormous concern of the parish with marital life is shared by the Catholic Church in Zambia at large. The bishops have declared the evangelisation of the family to be a priority for the church, and marriage is considered the key to building strong families.[33] In view of the present research the question is what this brings to bear on the way men are addressed, and how their roles in marriage and the family are (re)defined.

St. Joachim Men's Organisation

St. Joachim is the name of the diocesan men's organisation with a section in Regiment parish. In the late 1990s this lay movement was welcomed as the first men's organisation by the archdiocese of Lusaka, as a way of getting men more involved in the church and more committed to the Catholic faith.[34] According to the constitution, the aim of the organisation is 'to promote unity, spiritual growth and matrimonial well-being of its members. To do works of charity, to actively participate in small Christian communities, to promote baptism vows and to promote the catholic doctrine as well as promote the dignity of the family.'[35] In order to realise this objective, the organisation promotes its patron Saint Joachim – who according to early Christian traditions was the father of Mary and the grandfather of Jesus – as 'the role model of every Catholic husband and father'.[36] Members of St Joachim are supposed to follow

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[32] Interview with John and Anne Machechali (couple in their 50s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[33] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *The Missionary Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics from the Bishops of Zambia on the 1999 Theme for the Implementation of the African Synod (25 March 1999)*, 405.

[34] Interview with Gerald Tembo (Archdiocese of Lusaka), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[35] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 8.

[36] Ibid. 1. The story about the birth and infancy of Mary is told in the apocryphal gospel known as the Protoevangelium of James, dated AD 140-180. The gospel opens with a classic story about a desperate childless couple who, after Joachim has left his wife Anne to pray and fast

the example of their patron and to live a life that is exemplary to other Catholic men in their communities. The organisation has a strict disciplinary code of conduct, and in cases of misconduct members may be expelled.

The section of St Joachim in Regiment parish was founded in 2003 and currently has over forty members. Generally these members are of a senior age, but a few are in their thirties. The group has a formal gathering once a month after Sunday Mass, but almost every Sunday they meet informally. In their gatherings, issues concerning the parish and the SCCs are discussed, and personal, matrimonial or family problems are shared. Joachim members are supposed to participate actively in the SCCs and in the parish. Furthermore, they have to provide practical services in the parish and the diocese. Clearly, to be a member of St Joachim is demanding in terms of time. This is a conscious strategy of the organisation, because when one is occupied with church affairs there is no time left for "earthly things".[37] Participation in St. Joachim is also demanding financially. Members have to purchase a uniform, have to pay their fees to the organisation and are supposed to contribute substantially to the parish. Consequently, membership of the organisation is beyond the means of many parishioners. Joachim members further indicate that the high moral demands put on members discourage men in the parish from joining the organisation.[38] Yet the members themselves testify that the demands are worth it. Being a Joachim member seems to provide them with a certain status in the parish and they earn respect in the community.

In view of the present study, St Joachim men's organisation is a highly significant place. Here, a model of Catholic manhood is presented in the figure of Saint Joachim. Crucial questions are what particular male virtues are represented in this figure, and whether and how men imitate this example.

Sermons at Mass

Sunday Mass is the largest gathering of men in the parish. Even though there is a general complaint about men's low attendance at Mass (see §3.3), still hundreds of

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in the desert while Anne is lamenting and bewailing her situation at home, have their prayers answered. An angel appears to Anne and announces to her that she will conceive a child, while at the same time Joachim receives a similar vision. Anne thereupon promises to bring the fruit of her womb as a gift to the Lord. Joachim returns home and after nine months Anne gives birth to a girl who is named Mary. Her parents take the girl to the temple when she is three years old.

The history of Christianity indicates quite an early devotion to St. Anne and, to a lesser extent, to St. Joachim. According to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, churches in honour of St. Anne began to be erected as early as the sixth century, and the cult of St. Anne was introduced in Rome in the eighth century. The feast of St. Joachim, on the other hand, was only introduced in the fifteenth century. Cf. J.P. Asselin, 'Anne and Joachim, SS.' in B.L. Marthaler et all (ed.), *New Catholic Encyclopedia. Second Edition*, Detroit etc.: Gale 2003, 469.

[37] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008.

[38] Interview with the executive committee members of St Joachim in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 11 October 2008.

men are assembled there. That could be an excellent opportunity to address men. However, this is hardly done in an elaborate way.[39] When it happens, it is by-the-way, through jokes, small stories and examples.[40] For instance, once in a sermon a comment was made that men are often better acquainted with the names of players in the football team than with the names of their children. The fact that issues of men and masculinity are not addressed more explicitly is explained by Nsanzurwimo by the fact that sermons in the Catholic Church follow the lectionary and are relatively short. In his opinion, Protestant pastors 'can preach about what they want' but for priests that is not possible.[41] Of course, this is not to say that sermons are not relevant to the construction of a Catholic masculinity among men in the parish. Values such as love, responsibility, forgiveness and solidarity are often underlined in preaching and are related to people's life in the family and the community. This may impact in one way or another men's perception of the Christian faith and of themselves as Catholic Christian men.

Small Christian Communities

What has been said about sermons during Mass also largely applies to the SCC meetings. Generally speaking, men's participation in the SCCs is considered insufficient. However, a number of men are actively involved in their SCC and in the parish at large, and they also try to involve fellow men in their sections. Discussions in the SCC meetings are quite often about issues concerning marriage, family life, the community and HIV and AIDS. Such discussions may touch on the role of men and on issues concerning masculinity, but it is not an explicit policy of the parish or diocese to do so.

Pastoral Letters of the Bishops

The Catholic bishops of Zambia frequently publish pastoral letters and statements on social, economic, political and moral issues in the nation.[42] These documents represent the formal discourse of the Zambian Catholic Church and will somehow impact on the discourses, practices and policies in local parishes such as Regiment. At first sight the content of the documents is not of significance to the present study: they hardly refer to men or address issues concerning masculinity. Significantly, a closer look shows that

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[39] At least this is the case with sermons in the English Mass. Although I did not understand the sermons in the vernacular masses, the translations and conversations with parishioners confirmed this observation.

[40] An exception was 19 July 2009. The archdiocese had dedicated this Sunday to the theme 'Men – Take up the Challenge'. In the sermon particularly men were challenged to take up their responsibility in the church.

[41] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 4 November 2008.

[42] These three categories of issues addressed by the bishops in their letters are distinguished by Fr. Joe Komakoma, who is the editor of a volume comprising the major documents published from 1953 up to 2001. See J. Komakoma, 'General Introduction' in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 3.

the bishops are very much concerned with women's issues. They frequently express their concern about the oppression of women in families, the grabbing of widows' property, women's lack of decision-making power, the sexual exploitation of women and violence against women. The bishops address these realities critically, for example saying that 'these are signs of denial of basic human rights, an injustice which cries out to our Creator.'[43] In their letters they frequently underline the rights of women and they emphasise the need to empower women and to promote their dignity. In the light of this, it is striking that the bishops hardly address the behaviour of men. The only time they do so is in their letter *Choose Life*, which is about abortion. Here there is a critical reference to young men and to the so-called sugar daddies who perceive girls as no more than objects of pleasure and who cause pregnancies without taking responsibility.[44] The fact that men and aspects of masculinity are hardly addressed explicitly, indicates that the concern with women's issues has not yet led the bishops to a critical analysis of masculinities or to a strategy to promote an alternative ideal of manhood.[45]

Conclusion

It appears from the above section that Regiment is a mainstream Catholic parish rooted in the local community. The parish has actively responded to challenges raised by the HIV epidemic. Particularly with regard to men and masculinity, there is no real active strategy to address male behaviour and to transform masculinities. However, though there is no proactive campaign, at several places and in various ways the parish does to some extent address men and change masculinities. Examples of these are the youth activities where moral values are taught to (male) youth, the courses before and during marriage where men are taught about their role as husbands and fathers, and the St. Joachim men's organisation, which actively promotes an ideal of Catholic manhood. What, then, are the issues that are critically addressed, and what alternative ideal is promoted? These questions are explored in the following sections of this chapter.

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[43] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, 'You Shall be My Witnesses: Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Zambia to Mark 100 Years of Catholic Faith in Zambia (9th July 1991)' in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 254.

[44] Cf. Catholic Bishops of Zambia, 'Choose Life: The Sacred Value of Human Life and the Evil of Promoting Abortion - A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops (30 November 1997)' in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 379 and 386.

[45] This corresponds with the situation with Caritas Zambia. Its gender and HIV&AIDS programme focuses on women and women's issues; men and issues of masculinity are yet to be included. See interview with Christine Chikolwa (Caritas Zambia), Lusaka: 1 October 2008.

3.3. ADDRESSING CRITICAL ISSUES CONCERNING MEN AND MASCULINITIES

Now that the parish has been introduced and the places have been charted where men and issues of masculinity are addressed, the question arises as to what issues are critically addressed. What are the major concerns in the parish with regard to men in relation to areas such as marriage and family, behaviour and lifestyle, the church and the community? What aspects of socially dominant or hegemonic masculinities are evaluated critically? These questions will be dealt with in the present section, and several critical issues are identified. Attention is paid respectively to sexuality, alcohol, irresponsibility towards marriage and family, abuse of women and the lack of involvement in the church.

Sexuality

The HIV epidemic has reinforced the discussion of and moral teaching on sexuality in Regiment parish. Generally, discourses on sexuality in the church are not gender-specific. Only the moral restrictions are emphasised: sex is only acceptable within the context of marriage; in other cases it is sinful. However, specific reference is sometimes made to men and their sexual behaviour. The main concern is with popular beliefs that sexuality is a major way to prove manhood. With regard to young men, a youth leader points out that the social and cultural system 'tells them that if you are able to sleep with ten or eleven women you are a champion.'[46] He says that the tendency to have "indiscriminate sex" is strongly denounced in the parish youth activities. The same belief is also addressed in the youth magazine *Speak Out!* where a young woman writes in 'A letter to my future husband':

> Apparently, manhood doesn't come automatically for males. Some guys seem to spend their entire lives trying to "prove their manhood" – by hunting, playing sports, driving fast, and, unfortunately, by having sex. It seems rather strange to us women that guys think having sex proves they're a man. … I want more from you. I want you to respect your sexuality as much as I respect mine.[47]

With regard to adult married men, a parishioner says that in a recent men's meeting in the parish the question was discussed 'why we, men, are more promiscuous [than women] in spite of being Christian?'[48] In the group discussion, he says, men's difficulty with marital fidelity was explained from the traditional custom of polygamy. Then it was allowed for a man to have more than one wife in order 'to be satisfied in terms of

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[46] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: November 11, 2008. Some booklets also point to the tendency among youths to engage in sexual relationships indiscriminately, and they denounce the media for promoting this. See J. Kiura, *About Sex*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2006 (1990), 19; M. Ochieng, *About True Love Waits*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2006 (2000), 15.

[47] M. Mugala-Ng'Ambi, 'An Open Letter to My Future Husband' in *Speak Out!* 26:2 (2009), 8.

[48] Interview with Haggai Mwansa (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

sex' and as a sign of status, because 'the more children you had, you know, you were really a man, you were there.'[49]

The latter interviewee suggests that Christianity has made formal polygamy problematic, but has not eradicated the idea that to be a real man, a man needs to have more than one woman in his life. Evidence of this is further provided by parishioners involved in marital counselling. They mention infidelity on the man's part to be one of the most common marital problems they are faced with.[50] It is said that women are less likely to engage in extramarital affairs and, when they do, it is out of poverty. Men, on the other hand, are said to be far more likely to engage in such affairs, and 'it is not poverty but lust for other women' that informs their behaviour.[51] Also the bishops, in one of the few references to men that are made in their pastoral letters, explicitly address men in the area of sexuality. They particularly point to the objectification of girls and the female body that, in their observation, is characteristic for the way boys and men often deal with their sexuality: 'Boys frequently perceive girls as mere objects for pleasure and abuse the meaning of "love" in order to obtain the satisfaction of their desires. … This attitude is not uncommon among men also.'[52] In order to oppose the perception of women's bodies as just serving men's sexual needs, and to increase women's say in sexual decision-making, the bishops in this letter call for a recognition of the rights of women and the promotion of justice for women.[53]

While the popular perception of manhood being performed through sexuality is addressed critically in the church, strangely enough it is also reinforced in a certain way by literature spread in the church. Several booklets for the youth explain that it is a natural urge of boys and men to be preoccupied with sex, as this is part of biological sex differences. See for example the following quotation from a booklet entitled *Boys Growing Up*:

> A boy has different carnal desires than a girl. He may feel the need to sleep with a girl, just to satisfy his sexual drive. A girl for her part will sleep with a boy in order to feel specially chosen by him, or to have a child. It is rare that a girl will do so for the pleasure of sex alone.[54]

In this quotation, the difference between boys and girls is the emotional aspect of sexuality, which among boys is assumed to be less developed than among girls. For a boy it would be normal to want to sleep with a girl just for sexual satisfaction. Boys' particular "carnal desire" is presented in the book as part of the "masculine pattern".

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[49] Interview with Haggai Mwansa (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[50] Interview with Gladys Phiri (woman in her 50s), Lusaka: 7 November 2008; interview with Rosalyn Banda (woman in her 50s), Lusaka: 28 October 2008.

[51] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008.

[52] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *Choose Life: The Sacred Value of Human Life and the Evil of Promoting Abortion - A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops (30 November 1997)*, 386.

[53] Ibid., 378-379.

[54] C.N. Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2007 (1994), 57.

This pattern is explained from the natural hormones that arouse the need in boys to give new life and hence urge them to engage in sexual relationships. Theologically it is explained from a sexual instinct that God has given to men in order for the human race to multiply.[55] While it is acknowledged that men's sexuality naturally tends to be "unrestrained", at the same time there is a strong emphasis on the control of the sexual urges, as will be shown later in this chapter. Thus, men are not supposed to live up to their natural sexual urges but rather have to restrict the "masculine pattern". Clearly, this is a somewhat ambiguous message.[56]

To conclude, it appears that in the teaching on sexuality in the parish there is a particular concern about men's sexual behaviour and the popular perceptions about male sexuality. However, messages directed at boys and men concerning sexuality are rather ambiguous: men's assumed unrestrained sexual desire on the one hand is presented as something natural, and on the other hand is said to be in need of discipline.

Alcoholism

An issue that is frequently addressed in the parish is alcoholism among men. The Catholic Church (in contrast to some other churches in Zambia) does not reject the use of alcohol – alcoholic drinks are even served on special occasions in the parish. Yet there is concern about the excessive intake of alcohol, especially among men. Alcohol itself it not considered a moral issue: 'Nowhere in the Bible it is said: "Thou shalt not drink."'[57] The problem is with alcoholism, the unlimited drinking that makes people 'guilty of undisciplined conduct.'[58]

The excessive consumption of alcohol is generally said to be a major problem in the community, and it is attributed particularly to men. Parish youths mention that it is common for boys to start drinking in their teenage years.[59] Members of a women's group point out that their husbands often hang around in bars during the day.[60] The tendency towards alcoholism is explained from the lack of recreational facilities in the compounds: 'The only thing people can do is to go to a pub and have a beer.'[61] Peer pressure is also said to play a critical role. The parish leadership realises that alcoholism has a negative impact on families and the community. Nsanzurwimo explains:

> So like in a family, when a man is a drunkard or a womaniser it has a consequence for the economy of the family, the communication of the family, relationships in the family,

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[55] Ibid., 15.

[56] Maybe this ambiguity can be explained from the Catholic dualist anthropological scheme of nature and supra-nature, in which the latter – the grace of God impacting upon the human mind – does not remove but regulates the former.

[57] N.O. Oloo, *About Drinking*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2007 (1997), 15.

[58] Ibid., 9.

[59] Interview with Justin Gondwe (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 31 October 2008.

[60] Interview with members of the Nazareth group in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 27 October 2008.

[61] Interview with Raymond Malambo (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

> even in the neighbourhood. And sometimes it is carried over in the children. It is very difficult to recover from the drinking or womanising habit of your father. These are the most critical areas for men, drinking and womanising.[62]

Likewise, young people point to the negative consequences of drinking they observe among their peers: it affects their results at school, costs a great deal of money, affects their health and encourages them to indulge in sex. Besides, many realise that alcohol can have extremely grave consequences in the current era of HIV. As someone says: 'Most of the people of my age die because of AIDS. There is too much freedom: they drink alcohol, lose their senses and have sex.'[63]

Clearly, there is a concern in the parish about the excessive drinking observed among men. Yet the approach is nuanced, as drinking alcohol is not simply prohibited, but men are sensitised about the negative consequences and are encouraged to limit their intake. It is noteworthy that some interviewees argue that there is need to take a more radical stance towards alcohol than does the church leadership. Some of the active parish youths, as well as some members of St Joachim, say that they have decided to keep away from alcohol completely, or at least to limit themselves very strictly. Often they do so after having observed the impact alcoholism can have on one's life.

Irresponsibility in Marriage and Family Life

In Regiment parish, there is a strong concern with marriage and family life. A similar concern is expressed by the Zambian bishops in their pastoral letters. This is informed by the awareness of the many problems faced in and by families nowadays, such as poverty, disease and death.[64] However, there is also an awareness of the disruption of families from inside out, caused by instability of marriages. In view of this, men and their role in marriage and family life are particularly singled out. According to Nsanzurwimo,

> If there is a member of the family which causes most problems in the family, it is the man. Not the man as gender but as the head of the family and as the husband. It is like in a community or organisation, if the head is rotten the whole organisation collapses.[65]

What, then, are the problems caused by men in families? In short, the problem is with the irresponsibility of men: they do not live up to the responsibilities they have as head of the family. As Nsanzurwimo puts it: 'The problem is [that] the man does not match

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[62] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[63] Interview with William Kunda (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008. The critical consequence of drinking to HIV risk is underlined in the booklet *I Bought AIDS in a Bar, and Other True Stories*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2002.

[64] For example, see Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *The Missionary Family. A Pastoral Letter to all Catholics from the Bishops of Zambia on the 1999 Theme for the Implementation of the African Synod (25 March 1999)*, 405-406.

[65] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

up to what is expected from him.'[66] An example is the man's role to provide for the family. It is realised that men may have difficulties fulfilling this responsibility because of unemployment. However, it is also said that men often waste the money they have: it is spent in bars and on girlfriends rather than being brought home. 'They keep their salaries for themselves, and the woman has to ask always for money when she wants to buy something.'[67]

Men's tendency to engage in extramarital affairs is also considered a major cause of problems in marriages and families. It is strongly rejected, not only from a moral perspective, but also from the perspective of the household finances. A parishioner points to 'an economic part' of marital infidelity, and he puts this as follows: 'For me as a man, to be unfaithful is to get the best resources that are supposed to be put at home, and I put them elsewhere. The more unfaithful you become, the more resources you deny your family just because you have to womanise.'[68]

Another critical issue that is mentioned is men's irresponsibility towards and absence from the family. It is said that many husbands hardly spend any time at home, because they prefer to hang around in bars and with friends:

> [S]ome go very early in the morning for drinking. They are from home for the whole day. Come back when the children are sleeping. They think that is life. Sometimes they even don't know what grades their own children are in, even the names they don't know.[69]

Obviously, this is not in line with how a good father is supposed to behave, according to the standard held up in the parish. This corresponds with the criticism that husbands hardly spend time with their wives. 'From the moment they are married, his wife is not longer an outing partner for him', someone said in a workshop of Marriage Encounter.[70] Yet another critical issue that is mentioned concerns the dictatorial behaviour of men in marriage and the family, such as men's autocratic way of decision-making and their superior attitudes towards their wives. Several interviewees explain this from "African tradition", because here the notion of male headship would be understood in terms of power and dictatorship.[71] Clearly, men are associated with many problematic issues in the areas of marriage and family life. Particularly in men's relation to women, some specific issues are addressed.

Injustices to Women

As mentioned above, the writings of the Catholic bishops of Zambia often refer to women's issues. Examples are grabbing the property of widows, sexual and domestic

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[66] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 4 November 2008.

[67] Interview with Rosalyn Banda (woman in her 50s), Lusaka: 28 October 2008.

[68] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi, 11 November 2008.

[69] Interview with members of the Nazareth group in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: October 27, 2008.

[70] Marriage Encounter workshop in Regiment parish, Lusaka: 25 July 2009.

[71] For example, see the interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008, and with Chaba Soko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 30 June 2009.

violence against women, sexual exploitation of women, high poverty and illiteracy levels among women, women's huge burden of taking care of children and the sick and the oppression of women in the family and in society. These issues are addressed in a discourse of human rights and justice. The bishops say, for example, that 'in many instances women are treated in ways, which deny our fundamental Christian belief in the basic equality of human beings, a belief founded in the biblical revelation that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27).'[72] Significantly, though women's issues are often addressed, the documents hardly point to the initiators and perpetrators who, in many cases, will be men. Only with regard to sexual issues is an explicit reference made to the role of men:

> Boys frequently perceive girls as mere objects for pleasure and abuse the meaning of "love" in order to obtain the satisfaction of their desires. … We also note that the portrayal of violence and of the domination over women by men in books and on the screen cannot be dissociated from an increase in the sexual exploitation of women.[73]

Here boys and men are explicitly mentioned in relation to sexual violence, domination over women and the so-called sexual exploitation of women. These behaviours are explained with a brief reference to external influences such as from the media, but they are not further analysed or reflected upon.

In light of the injustices to women mentioned by the bishops, it is significant that the constitution of St. Joachim says among other things that the organisation aims to help men 'to cultivate positive attitudes towards women'.[74] Explaining this, the executives of the Regiment section of St. Joachim point to phenomena such as wife-beating, domestic violence and oppressive attitudes of men towards women. They consider it a major task of their organisation to address and overcome these issues that are common in the community, by promoting moral values among Catholic men.[75] Also at other places in the parish, issues like these are addressed. More generally, the need for men to respect the dignity of women is often emphasised.

Low Involvement in the Church and Faith

A major concern in relation to men in the parish and, more broadly, in the Catholic Church in Zambia, is not a social but rather a spiritual issue: men's lack of involvement in the church and their lack of commitment to the faith. It is said that most men are only "Sunday worshippers", meaning that on Sunday they may come to Mass but

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[72] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *You Shall be My Witnesses: Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Zambia to Mark 100 Years of Catholic Faith in Zambia (9th July 1991)*, 254.

[73] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *Choose Life: The Sacred Value of Human Life and the Evil of Promoting Abortion - A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops (30 November 1997)*, 386-387.

[74] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 9.

[75] Interview with the executive committee members of St Joachim in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 11 October 2008.

forget about church for the rest of the week.[76] Generally, so is the observation, there is 'apathy towards church matters'[77] among Catholic men: fewer men than women attend Mass, and men participate only marginally in the SCCs. This is considered a major challenge because 'when we talk of the church as a family, the church is not complete without the men, the fathers.'[78] Asked for explanations, several reasons are given. It is commonly believed that most men are simply not interested in issues related to the church and faith. Their interest would be diverted to "the things of this world"[79], such as watching football, hanging around in bars, and enjoying themselves with women. It is also suggested that some men are so occupied with their task of being the provider of the family that they are always working in order to make money.[80] A remarkable explanation with regard to the low participation in the SCCs is that men shy away from these meetings because their wives are present and may tell about how things are at home.[81] Yet another explanation, is that they 'lack confidence as Catholic men, for the reason that a very few men do understand the Bible.'[82]

Whatever the reasons for their lack of involvement in the church, in the parish men are challenged to change and to become more committed. Members of St. Joachim, and other men actively involved in the parish, indicate that they try to evangelise fellow men in their communities. Likewise women say that they encourage their husbands to go to Mass and to attend the SCC meetings.[83] The youth activities and the (pre)-marital counselling try to make boys and men familiar with the Catholic faith and to increase their participation in church. Out of the concern over men's lack of involvement, at one time the archdiocese dedicated a special Sunday to men. Under the title 'Men – take up the challenge' a message was spread in all parishes, which stated:

> What a wonderful opportunity for Catholic men in our Archdiocese to realize and take up the challenge of getting involved in the mission of Christ. Most Catholic men do not participate in a number of activities taking place in the parish. …. [I]t is indeed true that men are usually fewer during Church celebrations and less involved compared to women. Through the intercession of St Paul, we pray that the Lord may slowly bring them to the true and intimate knowledge of the Gospel of Christ and, in turn to communicate it to others including their households.[84]

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[76] Interview with the executive committee of St Joachim in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 11 October 2008.

[77] Interview with Robert Kalumbila (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 12 November 2008.

[78] Interview with Gerald Tembo (Archdiocese of Lusaka), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[79] Interview with John Kabonde (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[80] Interview with Raymond Malambo (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[81] Interview with Kedrick Mbuzi (man in his 60s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[82] Interview with Haggai Mwansa (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[83] Interview with members of the Nazareth group in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 27 October 2008.

[84] 'Men, Take Up the Challenge!' in *The Parish Newsletter* 254, 19 July (2009).

That particular Sunday, this message was preached during Mass in Regiment parish. Referring to faithful men like Stephen, Timothy and Titus who, according to the New Testament epistles, assisted Paul and engaged in the mission of the early church, the officiating priest emphasised that the church today is in great need for such "zealous" men who actively involve themselves in the parish.

Though in the parish men are critically addressed for their lack of involvement with church and faith affairs, the church leadership realises that the impact of this is small. According to Nsanzurwimo, more creative ways of evangelisation are needed to reach men: 'You have to minister to them in the pubs or wherever they are.'[85] However he indicates that this strategy has yet to be developed.

Conclusion

This section has outlined the major critical issues concerning men in the parish. Together these issues sketch a picture of the type of masculinity considered dominant in the community. It is the picture of a man who is busy drinking and womanising rather than looking after his wife and family; he regards women as inferior beings and treats them in an oppressive way; he may come to Mass every now and then but is far from being a faithful believer and a committed parishioner. Clearly there is a critical awareness of the problematic behaviour and attitudes of men in the context of marriage, the family and the community. The general problem of men and masculinity is not deeply analysed in the parish, and a mere beginning has been made in actively addressing and overcoming it. Yet the question arises as to what alternative ideal of masculinity is promoted in the parish.

3.4. DEFINING THE IDEAL OF CATHOLIC MANHOOD

In view of the critical issues concerning men that are addressed in the parish, the question arises as to how men are expected to be and to behave according to the vision of the church. In other words, what is the ideal type of masculinity that is promoted? In trying to reconstruct this masculinity, the current section identifies the key concepts that build the alternative ideal of manhood. These notions – that are, of course, closely interconnected and partially overlapping – are responsibility, family-man, headship, self-control and spirituality.

Responsibility

One of the notions central to the ideal of manhood in Regiment parish is responsibility. Ask men of whatever age what it means to them to be a man and they will often respond that it means being responsible. Of course, responsibility is a very broad concept. It is applied to almost all areas of life, such as the way a man deals with his sexuality, his roles in marriage and the family and his duties in the community. Growing up as a boy and becoming a man is understood in terms of becoming aware of and taking up responsibility. A booklet speaks about a 'journey towards manhood',

[85] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

which leads a boy from childhood to the stage of "responsible manhood".[86] The sense of responsibility is thought to develop naturally in boys: 'As you grow older, you [will] feel an increasing need to lead, to take responsibility'.[87] Apparently, responsibility is considered to be a natural and essential characteristic of manhood. This is explained with a reference to Genesis 1:28, suggesting that male responsibility is considered a God-given role from creation.[88]

What, then, is men's responsibility all about? This depends among other things on one's age and stage of life. Young unmarried men in the parish understand their responsibility in terms of financial independence and self-reliance. For example, someone says: 'Nobody will come and take care of me when I am not responsible. I have to look for a job myself. I am a man, I just have to be responsible.'[89] This responsibility is experienced as quite tough, as it is difficult to find a job in order to make some money. However, young men realise that it is crucial to show that they are responsible at this stage of life, because they have to prove that they are able to take care of a wife and a family.

For married men the notion of responsibility primarily focuses on the duty of a man to take care of his wife and children. First of all these duties are material: time and time again it is stated that a man has to provide for the needs of the family, such as food, clothing, housing, and school fees. See, for example, the following quotation:

> I have to provide the resources. My wife, when she gives me children, that is enough for her. The economic failure of the family depends on the man. So if I am not able to send the children to school, I have failed in this lifetime. So it is my responsibility to take care of this.[90]

Men indicate that this is quite a challenging task. Yet when they are successful, it adds to their status as a man. Male responsibility for the family, however, is not just material: it also includes the emotional and spiritual aspects of men's role in the home (see below).

Explaining why the notion of responsibility is attributed to men as husbands and fathers, people often point to the concept of headship. For a man to be the head of his family means that he bears responsibility for his wife and children. This responsibility is even broader, as it also includes the wider circle of relatives, the so-called extended family. Men say, for example, that 'if my in-laws have a problem I need to come in and to assist. Those are the responsibilities: you need to come in financially, materially, and

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[86] Kiura, *About Boys*, 12.

[87] Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, 16.

[88] According to Genesis 1:28, humankind in general, male and female, receives the command of God to rule over the earth. Significantly, in this booklet the verse is applied to men specifically: they are said to have a particular 'need to lead and take responsibility'. (Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, 16.)

[89] Interview with Justin Gondwe (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 31October 2008

[90] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 11November 2008.

to give advice.'[91] Several interviewees gave concrete examples of how they look after cousins, pay their school fees, and support relatives who are less well off. They also mentioned that the demands on them have increased due to the HIV epidemic. As many relatives fall sick and die, 'the burden is growing for us who remain, our responsibilities are growing while our income is going down.'[92] Though challenging, the responsibility of a man for the extended family is felt as a moral duty. Ignoring it is said to be against "the African way of life" and is even considered a "blasphemy in the Christian sense".[93]

Last but not least, there is yet another aspect of male responsibility, namely the control of one's sexuality. According to the booklet *About Boys*, 'as a young man you should realize that you also have responsibility for your sexual energies, and that you need to master them so that you don't create problems either for yourself or for a girl.'[94] In line with this, a youth leader expressed his concern that young men often engage in sexual relationships while they are not yet able to bear the responsibility for the possible consequences: 'They have not yet reached a level where they can be responsible parents. They can't take care of the wife and the child, both mentally and physically they are not ready.'[95] These quotations illustrate clearly that the notion of responsibility is also applied to the area of sexuality.

Responsibility, then, appears to be a defining characteristic of the ideal of manhood promoted in Regiment parish. It is considered to be both a cultural and a Christian notion defining manhood. Male responsibility is understood in a material way, in the sense of financial independence and providing for the needs of the family, but it also has spiritual and moral aspects. Living up to the various responsibilities in the different areas of life is challenging for men. However, it also gives them a certain status, being "mature manhood".

Family Man

The notion of male responsibility in marriage and family life discussed above has primarily material aspects, but also includes men's spiritual role in and emotional attachment to the family. These latter aspects are encapsulated in the concept of the family man, which is characteristic of the ideal of manhood promoted in the parish. Asked to describe the ideal Catholic man, Nsanzurwimo responds: 'He is a family man, (…) at home he lives by example and he prays with his family.'[96] Precisely these aspects of being involved in and praying with the family are thought to be represented by St. Joachim who is 'the model for every Catholic husband and father.'[97] Referring to the example of their patron, at a meeting of the St Joachim men's organisation it was

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[91] Interview with Danny and Christine Mulikita (couple in their 30s), Lusaka: 25 July 2009.

[92] Interview with Raymond Malambo (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[93] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[94] Kiura, *About Boys*, 29.

[95] Interview with Raymond Malambo (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[96] Interview with Marc Nsanzurwimo, 4 November 2008.

[97] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 1.

stated that to be a family man is a "vocation" – a term that often is used with regard to priesthood. In other words: just as a priest is called by God to serve the church as the Family of God, so laymen are called to serve their own family, i.e. the so-called domestic church (note the hierarchy implied in this image).

Concretely, to be a family man is understood in terms of spending time with the family, showing interest in the children, sharing meals together as a family, saying prayers together, creating an atmosphere of communication and dialogue, and coming to church together as a couple. This is expressed, for example, in the testimony of a young man, saying: 'I pray to be a very good family man. That is that I truly love my wife and truly love my children and have time for them. That has been my priority.'[98] Organisations such as Marriage Encounter and St. Joachim try to foster such attitudes among men. Members of these organisations are likely to tell how they have come to appreciate their increased involvement in the family. Note, for instance, the following remark from a Joachim member:

> You will find that in certain families where there is no prayer, in such families you will find that a man is on his own and the wife and the children are on their own as well. But in our families we are together. We eat together. And in that way you bring your family together.[99]

It is often indicated that a high level of family involvement is not common in either traditional or present-day Zambian society. Men usually have their meals together as men, separated from the women and children. However, 'in a Christian marriage they are expected to eat together as a family.'[100] Corresponding to this, it is said that men generally do not look after their children and leave the task of upbringing to the mother, while 'we [in Marriage Encounter] teach them about the roles and responsibilities which they have as a parental couple together.'[101] It is considered urgent for men to become more actively involved in their families, because this builds stable marriages and families who can face the many challenges of today.

Closely related to the idea of being a family man is the notion of fatherhood, which specifically points to a man's relation to his children. To beget offspring is considered a must for a man ('you really need to have offspring') as he is then considered to have entered another stage of life and receives the related respect from the community ('now you are a grown man').[102] Fatherhood, again, is understood in terms of responsibility: first and foremost in the material sphere, but increasingly also in the emotional sphere. As a young woman says, 'men mostly think that bringing up a child means going for work and buying what the child wants ..... [but] I force my husband saying "Can you hold the baby? Play with the baby, I am tired. It is not *my*

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[98] Interview with Jack Mwale (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[99] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008.

[100] Interview with Rosalyn Banda (woman in her 50s), Lusaka: 28 October 2008.

[101] Interview with John and Anne Machechali (couple in their 50s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[102] Interview with Chaba Soko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 30 June 2009.

child, it is *our* child. She needs your affection as well."'[103] Significantly, one of the parishioners who is a father himself says that he is inspired by the belief in God as the heavenly Father caring for his children. Hence he intends to be a 'godlike father', taking an example from the patience and love of God.[104]

To conclude, the concept of the family man, with its implied notion of fatherhood, is an important characteristic of Catholic manhood as found in Regiment parish. It is precisely this concept that is represented in St. Joachim as a role model for Catholic men. The concept of the family man has to be understood from the broader concern in the church with marriage and family life as well as from the ecclesiology of the church as the family of God (as will be explored below). For men to embrace their "vocation" as family man is considered the key to building families, and strong families are thought to build up the church and to make a strong society.

Headship

The idea of male headship is a central notion defining the ideal of Catholic manhood promoted in Regiment parish. Yet as will be outlined below, it is also a disputed concept. When talking about the position and roles of a man in the marriage and family setting, many parishioners point out that a man is supposed to be the head of his marriage and family. This headship means that a man is held responsible for the well-being of the home, materially as well as morally and spiritually. Concretely, to be the head is associated with roles such as being the breadwinner and providing for the material needs of the family, showing leadership in the home and providing guidance to the family, and leading the family in prayer. The concept of male headship is not understood to mean that the woman cannot or does not play a role in these areas – it is often acknowledged that women do so, and this is appreciated. However, the general opinion is that finally 'only one can be on top'[105], and that one is thought of as the man. Note, for example, the following quotation: 'Of course the man is the head of the house. … Though the woman also plays a very important role. … But as a man you have to control things all the time.'[106]

Why, then, is it the man who is supposed to be the head? People generally consider this concept as part of Zambian/African culture as well as of Christian teaching. Sometimes it is suggested that Christianity rhymes with culture completely on the issue of headship.[107] However, a critical difference between both traditions is often indicated, namely that the Christian concept of headship is less authoritarian than the cultural. This is expressed, for instance, as follows:

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[103] Mrs Mulikita in the interview with Danny and Christine Mulikita (couple in their 30s), Lusaka: 25 July 2009.

[104] Interview with Raymond Malambo (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[105] Interview with John Kabonde (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 24 July 2009.

[106] Interview with Haggai Mwansa (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[107] For example, referring to male headship in African culture and Christianity someone said: 'It is difficult to differentiate between them because they have the same values.' See interview with William Kunda (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

> The headship is both cultural and biblical, but in the Bible it is a two-ways thing. The husband should first love the wife and then the wife should be submissive. But our tradition here in Africa just tells the wife to be submissive, it does not talk about love. You just should submit, whether he beats you, he abuses you, the only thing is: you should be submissive.[108]

This remark by a young married woman echoes the Pauline teaching on male headship in marriage. Here, husbands are not only called to be the head of their wives as Christ is the head of the church, but also to love their wives as Christ loves the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:23-27). This also seems to be the understanding of Nsanzurwimo, who indicates that male headship is not to be understood as a tool for domination but as 'a ministry, a way of service to the family and the community.'[109] Many parishioners point out that there are different ways for men to practice headship. They distinguish between "good" and "bad" male family heads. The good ones understand headship in terms of taking up the responsibilities related to it, while the bad ones understand it in terms of power and ignore their responsibilities. Significantly, though this distinction is made, a women's group emphasises that wives should *always* respect their husbands as the head: 'Even when it is a bad man, you should respect him and follow good things and do things to him. That's why today many women have lost their marriage, because they show no respect. … A woman is a woman. She always should be down, a man is the head.'[110]

Clearly, the concept of headship defines the marital relationship in a hierarchical way, even when it is understood in terms of service and responsibilities.[111] It is for this reason that the concept is rejected, or at least criticised, by some of the parishioners involved in Marriage Encounter, both men and women. They point out that the critical difference between traditional teaching on marriage and the teaching provided by Marriage Encounter concerns precisely the idea of male headship and its related notion of female submission. Rather than male headship, they say, 'Marriage Encounter emphasises partnership in marriage.'[112] Elaborating upon the meaning of this partnership they refer to communication, joint decision-making, sharing the finances, mutual sexual satisfaction, and co-responsibility for the upbringing of the children. Some members of Marriage Encounter demonstrate a critical hermeneutical approach to biblical texts, which enables them to reject the notion of male headship even though it is affirmed in the Bible. Referring to the Pauline epistles in the New Testament, a woman says: 'Those letters were written in that time, where the Jewish

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[108] Mrs Mulikita in the interview with Danny and Christine Mulikita (couple in their 30s), Lusaka: 25 July 2009.

[109] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[110] Interview with members of the Nazareth group in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 27 October 2008.

[111] This is recognized by Nsanzurwimo (interview of 28 July 2009). He says: 'The notion of headship points to service to the community. Of course it has the aspect of hierarchy but that comes second to service. You have to earn respect through serving. There are very few societies that do not have any form of hierarchal structure.'

[112] Interview with John and Anne Machechali (couple in their 50s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

had their own problems. But looking at our problems now, we should not take it as if he is the head of the house. We are partners and we complement each other.'[113] Nsanzurwimo seems to support the progressive stance of Marriage Encounter on the issue of male headship, as he says that he appreciates the more egalitarian approach. However he also suggests that this approach may be too radical for many people and may thus frighten them away from the organisation.[114]

Thus the concept of headship has a somewhat ambivalent status. For many parishioners it is central to their understanding of the position of a man in marriage and the family. They consider it part of their culture and of the Christian tradition. As part of the ideal of Catholic manhood, headship is somewhat redefined, moving from an understanding in terms of power to a definition in terms of responsibility and service. Some parishioners, however, are more radical and tend to reject the concept in favour of partnership in marital relationships. Though they are a minority voice, they have an influential position as organisers of the (pre)marital courses.

Self-Control

Characteristic of the ideal of Catholic manhood found in Regiment parish is also the notion of self-control or self-discipline. This notion is emphasised in view of all the "temptations" boys and men are faced with, especially in the areas of sexuality and (other forms of) amusement. Though these attractions are considered natural for youths, they need to be controlled in order for boys to become "mature" men. The booklet *Boys Growing Up*, for instance, presents the process of becoming a man as a growth in maturity. Referring to all the impulses and desires young men have, the booklet assures that these 'are good and should not be silenced'.[115] However, at the same time it underscores the need to control these impulses:

> In the beginning, you may not believe that it is possible to master all your impulses and desires. But as you grow older, you will be surprised at how self-controlled you can be. And then through experience, (which they say is not cheap at any price!), you will be able to agree that: Happy indeed is the person who has fully learnt to control his impulses and desires.[116]

The importance of self-control is highlighted in order to increase resistance to peer pressure among young men. Giving in to peer pressure is considered unmanly: 'If you always keep following others, you are not a man. You are a sheep.'[117] In line with this, another booklet challenges young men to develop "will power" in order to say 'no' to

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[113] Mrs. Nyirenda in the interview with Henry and Linda Nyirenda (couple in their 40s), Lusaka: 7 July 2009.

[114] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[115] Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, 22

[116] Ibid., 24.

[117] Ibid., 28.

the pressures from their peers as well as to the internal impulses, emotions and "sexual energies".[118]

The notion of self-control is applied specifically to the area of sexuality. It is considered a crucial means of preventing HIV. The well-known ABC-prevention message of Abstain, Be faithful or Condomise is re-defined as Always Be Chaste, with the clarification that 'chastity simply means sexual self-control'.[119] At the same time condoms are rejected because these are assumed to weaken the discipline over the sexual urges. One of the recommendations to young men, in the booklet *About Boys*, says: 'Avoid contraceptives at all costs, for they will lead you as a young man to seek pleasure devoid of self-control and responsibility, hence destroying your character.'[120]

The importance of self-control is not only underscored in booklets, but is confirmed by men in the parish. Recounting how they follow the moral teaching of the church, they use phrases such as that they have developed "a certain mindset", have made a "resolution with the self", or are "disciplining their desires". One of them even says: 'I have put myself in the lifestyle of a monk', meaning that he avoids places of temptations and consciously isolates himself from peers with a different lifestyle.[121] It seems that the sense of urgency to discipline the self is reinforced by the HIV epidemic. Referring to fellow youths dying from the disease, someone says: 'I have found out that at this age the most important thing is discipline. … Discipline is important to live long.'[122]

In view of the present study it is noteworthy that several young men, indicating that their peers prove their manhood through sexual activity, point out that for themselves it is precisely the control over their sexuality that reveals their male strength. 'I am strong enough to abstain', a young man states firmly.[123] Telling about his relationship in which he and his girlfriend 'have drawn certain lines', someone says:

> Her friends and my friends encourage us to do certain things, to cross the lines. So my friends say: 'She is an attractive girl, why don't you do what you are supposed to do as a man?' And I say: 'It's better for me not to be a man than to cross that line.' Because when I cross that line I know: I won't be the man. For me, sticking to my rules makes me a man.[124]

So, in this perception "sticking to the lines" is what makes one a man. This is not to say that there are no temptations or weaknesses – these are admitted by almost all interviewees – but restricting and controlling them is considered an indication of true manhood. Maybe this is the reason that one's ability to abstain from sex or alcohol is

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[118] Kiura, *About Boys*, 24-25.

[119] Ochieng, *About True Love Waits*, 9.

[120] Kiura, *About Boys*, 30.

[121] Interview with William Kunda (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[122] Interview with Titus Mundia (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 26 October 2008.

[123] Interview with Titus Mundia (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 26 October 2008.

[124] Interview with Chaba Soko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 25 June 2009.

not so much explained with a reference to the help of God but is considered a result of one's own will (though the will, of course, may co-operate with the holy Spirit).[125]

Spirituality

'As a young man, you need to look after your soul.'[126] This is one of the pieces of advice given to boys as a way to build the character of a mature man. Apart from physical, emotional, social and material aspects, the area of spirituality is also mentioned, with boys being challenged to strengthen their spiritual life. Apparently, spirituality is considered a crucial notion of being a Catholic man. This is also evident from the St. Joachim men's organisation whose patron is considered to be a role model for Catholic men – among other things because of his prayerful life. The organisation aims to foster spiritual growth among its members.[127] Why is so much attention paid to men's spiritual life? Of course, this has to be understood from the concern about men's lack of involvement in the church and the Catholic faith, which has been outlined above. However, two particular aspects need to be mentioned. Firstly, spirituality is believed to keep men morally upright, as it helps them to deal with temptations. Secondly, men are supposed to be the spiritual leaders of their homes, and their spiritual leadership is considered the key to strengthening the family.

It is believed that a rich spiritual life, consisting of daily prayer, Bible reading, regular taking of Communion and participating in the parish and SCC, will have a positive impact upon men's moral lifestyles. For example, the booklet *About Boys* says: 'Good reading, prayer and the Word of God will help the mind to be well disposed and oriented to ideas of value and good conduct.'[128] In other words, it is hoped that spirituality will help to 'become the man that God intends you to be.'[129] Furthermore, some particular spiritual means are recommended as a way to deal with and overcome temptations. Among other things, the constitution of St. Joachim men's organisation refers to prayer as 'a weapon of resistance to temptations.'[130] Indeed, a Joachim member narrates that when he is faced with sexual temptations he makes the sign of the cross and says 'Get off from me, Satan'.[131]

Men's spiritual life is not only a matter of individual devotion: as heads of their homes they are supposed to lead their families in prayer, or 'to bring their families to the Lord'.[132] Nsanzurwimo considers the task of praying with the family as a crucial part of Catholic manhood.[133] The responsibility of leading the family spiritually is underlined in the St. Joachim organisation time and time again. Members are

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[125] Cf. interview with Kedrick Mbuzi (man in his 60s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[126] Kiura, *About Boys*, 27.

[127] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 1 and 8.

[128] Kiura, *About Boys*, 20.

[129] Ibid., 30.

[130] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 1.

[131] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November, 2008.

[132] See *Men, Take Up the Challenge!*.

[133] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 4 November 2008.

recommended to pray the rosary because 'the rosary is a family prayer' and 'it would unite you as a family.'[134] Among Joachim members a deep awareness of their spiritual leadership can be found, and they consider this the key to building up their families. Again, St Joachim is considered exemplary for men's spiritual role in the family, as his prayer according to tradition resulted in the birth of Mary![135] Therefore he is presented as a role model challenging all Catholic men to establish praying families.[136]

Conclusion

The above section has identified the major notions defining the ideal of Catholic manhood as supported in Regiment parish. This outline could give the impression that there is a clear and actively promoted ideal in the parish. This needs to be corrected. There is hardly an explicit discourse where such an ideal is articulated. The notions discussed above are not well-defined concepts but rather shape the contours in which men (are to) develop their identity and modify their behaviour. Some of these notions are perceived differently between various groups in the parish. This results in ambiguities, for example regarding the notion of male headship, which creates space for men to negotiate the way they live up to the church' values and teachings.

Yet the outline presented above clearly shows that there is something like an ideal of Catholic manhood, though defined rather broadly, which is promoted in the parish. In order to oppose and overcome men's preoccupation with sexuality, their excessive drinking, their irresponsibility in marriage and family life, and a lack of involvement in the church, the parish encourages men to take up responsibility, to be committed to their marriage and family, to discipline the self and to develop their spirituality.

A significant observation is that the ideal of manhood is articulated in the parish not so much in contrast, but rather in line with cultural notions. For the parishioners, to be a Christian and to be an African seem to be integrated aspects of their identity as men. Though some differences are mentioned, for example in the understanding of male headship, generally "African manhood" and "Catholic manhood" are considered in relative continuity. Yet the notions that make up ideal of manhood outlined above are deeply rooted in the tradition of Catholic thought. These backgrounds are explored in the next section.

3.5. RE-CONSTRUCTING A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous paragraph has explored the contours of masculinity in Regiment parish. When the data are examined it appears that the defining notions are related to, informed by and embedded in the tradition of Catholic theology and spirituality. Together these form a kind of theological framework in which the construction of

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[134] Diocesan meeting of St Joachim men's organization, Lusaka: 8 November 2008.

[135] Cf. interview with Robert Kalumbila (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 12 November 2008; interview with the executive committee of St Joachim in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 11 October 2008.

[136] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 1.

masculinity in the parish takes place. This section explores some of the major lines of thought reflected in interviews, booklets and church documents.

Gender Ideology and a Creation-Based Theological Anthropology

The definition of masculinity outlined above is informed by a gender ideology that takes its starting point in a theological anthropology of creation. This becomes clear, for example, from the many references made in interviews and booklets to the Genesis creation stories. The creation-based anthropology gives rise to two notions that are key to the understanding of gender: firstly, the equality of man and woman and, secondly, the fundamental difference between man and woman.

In the parish, the idea of equality of the sexes is generally supported. In the pre-marital course provided by Marriage Encounter, values such as respect and partnership are taught, based on the notion of equality of husband and wife. This teaching is mentioned as a major difference with traditional understandings of marriage.[137] As someone says: 'In our traditional concept the man is a sort of the alpha and omega of the family, but the Bible tries to emphasize equality.'[138] In booklets and in formal church documents the equality of male and female is emphasised regularly in order to oppose inferior perceptions of women and oppressive attitudes towards women. Often, if not almost always, when the equality of the sexes it mentioned, the reference is to Genesis 1:27. This verse reads: 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.' Despite the masculine language used in this verse, the text is generally understood to mean that humankind in general (thus men as much as women) is created in the image of God. This verse functions as the foundational theological argument for the equality of men and women. For instance, the booklet *About Boys* states: 'It is wrong for a boy to look down upon a girl just because he is a boy and considers himself stronger. Boys should respect girls and not manipulate them just because they are female. God decided to create us differently, yet in his image and likeness.'[139] Likewise, the Zambian bishops say that the oppression of women is a denial of the 'fundamental Christian belief in the basic equality of human beings, a belief founded in the biblical revelation that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God.'[140] From this point of view, they

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[137] Cf. interview with Henry and Linda Nyirenda (couple in their 40s), Lusaka: 7 July 2009; see also interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009. It is a more common phenomenon in Catholic circles to take precisely the notion of equality of man and woman as a crucial difference between Christian and pre-Christian traditions. For example, Pope Pius XII in his address to the Federation of Italian Women at the Shrine of Loretto in the 1940s is said to have associated at length the oppression of women with paganism, while the church in his opinion protects the rights and dignity of women. Cf. A.H. Kalbian, *Sexing the Church: Gender, Power, and Ethics in Contemporary Catholicism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2005, 99-100.

[138] Interview with Jack Mwale (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[139] Kiura, *About Boys*, 9.

[140] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *You Shall be My Witnesses: Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Zambia to Mark 100 Years of Catholic Faith in Zambia (9th July 1991)*, 254.

declare the oppression of women to be "an injustice which cries out to our Creator". The strong emphasis upon the equality of women and men may be inspired by the late Pope John Paul II who, in his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, in the section on the family, stated:

> The dignity of man and woman derives from the fact that when God created man, "in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Both man and woman are created "in the image of God", that is, endowed with intelligence and will and therefore with freedom. …. Having both been created in the image of God, man and woman, although different, are essentially equal from the point of view of their humanity. … In creating the human race 'male and female', God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person.[141]

It appears from this quotation that the "essential equality" of women and men is understood in terms of an equal human dignity. It is about an anthropological essence of every human being, something that precedes or transcends the difference between male and female. From the awareness that this intrinsic human dignity is threatened, especially with regard to women, John Paul II calls on the church in Africa to safeguard and foster women's dignity – a call that was adopted by the Zambian bishops.[142] In line with this, the bishops and the parish address overt violations of the dignity of women. Even more, respecting women's dignity becomes a characteristic of Catholic manhood.

Because of his concern with the dignity of women, the British feminist theologian Tina Beattie has suggested that John Paul II might be called a feminist thinker.[143] The present study has no intention to dispute this idea – the study is, after all, neither about John Paul II nor about feminism. However, the case study indicates that the concern with women's dignity in Regiment parish often comes with a limited understanding of the equality of men and women – something most feminists would perceive critically.[144] For instance, Nsanzurwimo emphasises that equality should not

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[141] John Paul II, 'Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful to the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000' in (1995), no. 82.

[142] Cf. Catholic Bishops of Zambia, *Choose Life: The Sacred Value of Human Life and the Evil of Promoting Abortion - A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops (30 November 1997)*, 378-379 where they approvingly quote the statement of John Paul II on the dignity of women.

[143] T. Beattie, 'Carnal Love and Spiritual Imagination. Can Luce Irigaray and John Paul II Come Together?' in J. Davies and G. Loughlin (eds.), *Sex these Days. Essays on Theology, Sexuality and Society*, 160.

[144] This is not specific for Regiment parish. The Catholic theologian Laurenti Magesa from Tanzania criticises African women theologians for a too radical ("western feminist") understanding of gender equality since this, in his assessment, 'involves the tendency to reject the feminine in woman, turning woman into merely a mirror image of man, a very oppressive and non-liberating tendency indeed.' Magesa admits that both woman and man have an "equal human dignity" but emphasises that this does not mean that man and woman are equivalents. In his perception, both are endowed by God with 'innate sexual qualities',

be understood as a "mathematical equality" which in his opinion easily ends up in dualism and competition between women and men. Rather for him it is a sense of equality that requires respect of each other's human dignity, but in his perception this dignity can also be respected within marital relationships characterised by male headship. In line with this, in an interview with a couple the husband says that while both man and woman are equal in the eyes of God, 'you can't say there is equality; they [women] will never get where the men are, because of the way God has made them.'[145] His wife supports this view, saying that 'it should not be like: "I should reach the level where my husband is." Then competition comes in. … Equality does not mean to be at the same level.'[146] Thus, in the parish there is a sense of gender equality, but this equality is not interpreted in a radical but in a more or less conservative way.

A closer look makes clear that the restricted understanding of gender equality is related to the notion of sexual difference, also derived from Genesis 1:27. This verse not only reads that humankind is created in the image of God but also that it is created as male and female. This notion gives rise to a binary and dichotomous understanding of gender. Or actually, there is no gender but just sex: masculinity and femininity are not understood as social constructs but are about the distinctive essential characteristics of men and women respectively, related to the fundamental difference between male and female from creation.[147] Such an understanding is expressed, for example, in the following quotation: 'You are a boy or a man and when God created human beings, he distinctly created them male and female. By this definition, as a boy you will behave completely differently from a girl, because you are living your masculinity.'[148] The quotation does not make clear how precisely this "masculinity" is understood, but clearly it is defined as opposite to "femininity". Being a man is considered something completely different from being a woman. Therefore, marriage is so important in this theological line of thought, because it is in marriage that both

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leading to an "essential complementarity" of the sexes rather than a radical equality. See L. Magesa, 'The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the 21st Century' in N.W. Ndung'u and P.N. Mwaura (eds.), *Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa. Theological Reflections of the 21st Century*, Nairobi: Paulines 2005, 100.

[145] Mr Mulikita in the interview with Danny and Christine Mulikita (couple in their 30s), Lusaka: 25 July 2009.

[146] Mrs Mulikita in the interview with Danny and Christine Mulikita (couple in their 30s), Lusaka: 25 July 2009.

[147] Cf. Pope John Paul II who has significantly developed Catholic doctrine on sexual difference. He understands the bodily creation of humankind as male and female in terms of an ontological duality of masculinity and femininity. (cf. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created them: A Theology of the Body*, Boston: Pauline Books & Media 2006, 161). For John Paull the II, 'masculinity, femininity – namely, sex – is the original sign of a creative donation and at the same time the sign of a gift that man, male-female, becomes aware of as a gift lived so to speak in an original way' (idem, 183).

[148] Kiura, *About Boys*, 8.

sexes complement each other when they become "one body".[149] In Catholic doctrine, this complementarity of the sexes is not only understood biologically or psychologically but ontologically: it is considered necessary for human fulfilment.[150] Significantly, while the idea of complementarity can be used (and may be intended) to create a balance between man and woman, the "masculine" and the "feminine", and thus can be a basis for gender equality, it often tends to lead to a gender hierarchy.[151] This seems to be informed biblically by the account of creation in Genesis 2, which reads that God first created man and then made woman from a rib of man.[152] Several interviewees take this chronological order to be a principal order that constitutes a hierarchy of male and female. It is said, for example, that in marriage as well as in the sexual act 'always the man should be on top' because man was created first.[153] For the same reason in marriage a man is supposed to be the head and a woman the helper.[154] Perceptions like these may be informed by booklets which, referring to Genesis 2, suggest that for boys to feel the need 'to lead, to take responsibility, and even to be the boss' is certainly natural and is to be appreciated.[155] Thus, in spite of an emphasis on equality, this gender ideology still allows for men to be "on top", to be "the boss" or "the head" because this is considered part of masculinity as distinct from femininity. Only some parishioners involved in Marriage Encounter are critical of this. They, for example, reject the concept of male headship because in their opinion it contradicts the idea of equality of men and women.[156] Generally, a hierarchical ordering of gender relations as such is not considered a problem in the parish. It is emphasised, however, that men should not misuse their primary position to oppress women. On the contrary, men are to respect the equal human dignity of their female partners.

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[149] Cf. B.C. Chilufya, 'Christian Marriage: What is it?' in *The Parish Newsletter*:114, 19 November (2006).

[150] See John Paul II's teaching on this issue when he writes in his *Letter to Women*: 'Woman complements man, just as man complements woman: Men and women are complementary. Womanhood expresses the "human" as much as manhood does, but in a different and complementary way. When the Book of Genesis speaks of "help", it is not referring merely to acting but also to being. Womanhood and manhood are complementary not only from the physical and psychological points of view, but also from the ontological. It is only through the duality of the "masculine" and the "feminine" that the "human" finds full realization.' (John Paul II, *Letter to Women*, 1995), 7, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_29061995_women_en.html, accessed 10 April 2010).

[151] Cf. Kalbian, *Sexing the Church: Gender, Power, and Ethics in Contemporary Catholicism*, 97-98.

[152] Referring to John Paul II's interpretation of Genesis 2:23, Kalbian (ibid., 102) comments that the pope 'states quite clearly that masculinity precedes femininity, since to be confirmed implies that masculinity already exists. .... This coheres with the second Genesis account of creation where man exists before woman.'

[153] Interview with John Kabonde (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[154] Cf. interview with Chaba Soko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 30 June 2009.

[155] Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, 16

[156] For example, see the interview with Henry and Linda Nyirenda (couple in their 40s), Lusaka: 7 July 2009.

It can be concluded that the theological anthropology derived from the Genesis accounts of creation results in an ambiguous gender ideology. On the one hand, there is a strong affirmation of the equality of men and women. On the other hand, there is a strong sense of a fundamental and complementary difference between men and women, and this difference is hierarchically ordered. It is in this ambiguous ideological space that masculinities are defined and gender relations are shaped.

Men, the Community and the Church as Family of God

As mentioned above, in Regiment parish there is not a very explicit public discourse in which critical issues concerning men and masculinities are addressed or in which a clear ideal of manhood is defined. Likewise, documents from the Zambian bishops indicate a concern with *women's* issues but these are hardly analysed as *gender* issues. Asked for an explanation, Nsanzurwimo points out that gender too often is understood in terms of the individual, as the equality between men and women. He criticises this as a Western approach which easily leads to competition of women with men, in which women seek to become like men. According to Nsanzurwimo, the church opts for a different approach, which does not take the individual as a starting point but the family and the community. Describing this approach he says:

> [I]f we could really find a way to make everybody participate in the life of the family and the church and the community, that would be the ideal for me. So it is about participation in the community, and about the community allowing or promoting, making possible, for each individual, men and women, to give their best.[157]

This communitarian approach to gender, which corresponds for example to the work of the influential Catholic Congolese theologian Bénézet Bujo[158], implies that the concern of the church is not primarily with the individual rights and power of women versus men but with the participation of women and men in the community. In view of the present study's interest in men and masculinities, it implies that it is not men's power as such that is considered a problem but its possible abuse. As Nsanzurwimo puts it, men's position of authority and headship is not intended to be 'a tool for domination' but 'a ministry, a way of service to the family and the community'.[159] This service is understood in terms of responsibilities and duties, some of which have been outlined above, which are related to men's position of authority. The problem arises 'when the man does not match up to what is expected from him. That is when he exaggerates his role, forgetting the other people in the community.'[160]

The community ideal that arises from this approach to gender and manhood corresponds with the inclusive and communitarian ecclesiology in which the church is

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[157] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[158] See B. Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1998, especially chapter 7 entitled 'Preliminary Remarks on a Feminist Theology in Africa'.

[159] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[160] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 4 November 2008.

understood as the Family of God. As mentioned above, from the 1994 African Synod this ecclesiology has been adopted by the Catholic Church in Africa. The metaphor of the church as family takes the human family as an image for being church. Even more, in this ecclesiology the human family is understood to be the "domestic church" or 'the first cell of the living ecclesial community'.[161] When the ecclesial metaphor of the church as family is turned around, not only is the human family an image of the church but also the church appears to be an image of the human family. The Catholic Church, as is clear from its organisational structure, is quite a hierarchical and patriarchal institution. Obviously, it is headed by priests, bishops and finally the pope – who are all "fathers". What does this mean for the human family and for the position of the man in the family? It appears that just as priests and bishops represent Christ as the head of the church, men as husbands and fathers are perceived as representing Christ in their marriages and families, i.e. in their so-called domestic churches. Several times in interviews this conviction was expressed. Significantly, it is considered a crucial resource for responsible, serving and loving manhood – a notion that challenges men rather than affirming their position of power. For example, referring to Ephesians 5:22-28 which presents the relationship of husband and wife in analogy with the relation of Christ who loves the church which is submitted to him, a parishioner says that 'what Paul is teaching is far more challenging to men than to women' because for a man to love his wife is more difficult than for a woman to submit to her husband.[162] It appears from this line of thought that for men in the family, as much as for priests in the church as family of God, headship and leadership is modelled on Christ and is defined in terms of love, service and sacrifice. Should men take this seriously and practice headship in this way, according to Nsanzurwimo 'the feminists would not have anything against Scripture.'[163]

To conclude, the community-based understanding of gender and the ecclesiology of the family of God call for a participation of both women and men in the family, the community and the church. However, it does not question the hierarchical ordering of the relation between women and men but rather reaffirms it. Yet the metaphor of the family of God is thought to challenge popular types of manhood, in the sense that it redefines men's position of power and headship from domination into love, sacrifice and service in their marriage, family and community.

Saints and Religious Figures: Representations of Male Virtues

One of the characteristics of Catholicism is the role of religious figures or saints derived from the biblical and Christian tradition. These saints can be considered as constructions, meaning that 'they are remodelled in the collective representation

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[161] John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithfull to the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000*, no. 80.

[162] Mr Nyirenda in the interview with Henry and Linda Nyirenda (couple in their 40s), Lusaka: 7 July 2009.

[163] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 4 November 2008.

which is made of them.'[164] As such they function as icons of holiness, objects of veneration and models for imitation.[165] In the case of male figures, the saints can be considered as embodiments of certain male virtues and thus are highly significant to the construction of ideal Catholic masculinity.[166] In Regiment parish, St. Joachim especially plays a central role, with St. Joseph as a close second.

As the patron of the men's organisation, St. Joachim is explicitly presented as an icon of Catholic manhood. Actually it is a major objective of the organisation to promote its patron as the role model for Catholic men. The constitution reads:

> Joachim is the model of every Catholic husband and father. He was a model of love, faithfulness, obedience, devotion, diligence, goodness, openness of husband and wife to one another. He is still a model of Catholic men. Joachim is a symbol of Christian life to all men who persevere to live happy marriages despite the shortcomings and misguiding from the other partner.[167]

When saints are remodelled, as mentioned above, this quotation can be considered as an example of the 'collective representation' that is made of the historical figure of Joachim. It is then significant to observe the virtues associated with Joachim that make him a model for Catholic men: love, faithfulness, obedience, devotion, diligence, goodness, and marital openness. Apparently, these virtues are considered crucial for Catholic men today, especially in their position in marriage and the family. The virtues represented by Joachim largely correspond with the notions of responsibility, spirituality and the family man outlined above as part of the ideal of manhood in Regiment parish.

From interviews with members of St. Joachim men's organisation it appears that their patron indeed functions as a role model. For them, Joachim embodies the virtues they seek to possess. Two exemplary qualities of Joachim are mentioned in particular: his piety and his commitment to his wife and family. As someone says: 'For me he is a role model in prayer, as he is an example in building a praying family, and he was a

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[164] P. Delooze, 'Towards a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church' in S. Wilson (ed.), *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, Cambridge etcetera: Cambridge University Press 1985, 195.

[165] Cf. J. Duyndam, 'Hermeneutics of Imitation: A Philosophical Approach to Sainthood and Exemplariness' in J. Schwartz and M. Poorthuis (eds.), *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity*, Leiden: Brill 2004, 7-24; S. Wilson, 'Introduction' in S. Wilson (ed.), *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, Cambridge etcetera: Cambridge University Press 1985, 1-54.

[166] For example, see J. Gelfer, *Numen, Old Men. Contemporary Masculine Spiritualities and the Problem of Patriarchy*, London: Equinox 2009, 92; T. van Osselaer, ''Heroes of the Heart': Ideal Men in the Sacred Heart Devotion' in *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* 3:1 (2009), 22-40. Significantly, hardly any research can be found that investigates the role of saints in the construction of Catholic masculinities today.

[167] *Constitution of St. Joachim Catholic Men's Organization*, 1. See also the address of Fr Marc Nsanzurwimo to the diocesan meeting of St Joachim in Regiment parish, 8 November 2008.

very loving husband as he was committed to his wife and his family.'[168] It is specifically mentioned that Joachim remained faithful to his wife Anne, although their marriage was childless for many years.[169] In a context where childlessness is associated with so many taboos and is often a reason for separation or divorce, this is taken as an example to follow.[170] As much as St. Joachim is a representation of male virtues imitated by the members of the men's organisation, these members themselves appear as embodied representations of the same virtues associated with their patron. Though the Joachim members are small in number they are prominently present in the parish, especially when wearing their blue uniforms. They appear as living icons of holiness and are considered examples to fellow men parishioners.[171]

To a lesser extent than St. Joachim, the figure of St. Joseph also functions as an icon of Catholic manhood. Several interviewees mention his name when asked for exemplary male figures from their tradition of faith. Asked for an explanation, people particularly refer to the way Joseph responded to Mary after he found her pregnant:

> There was that social pressure when she got pregnant. Joseph had already decided to let Mary go, but silently. There was that consideration. And given the Jewish custom, the way they treated women, I think he did so because of that equality. I get inspiration from that. And then they go to Jerusalem as a family, even when Jesus was just born they went together, and they went to Egypt. You can see that commitment to his family.[172]

Likewise, Nsanzurwimo refers to 'the many rumours which husbands hear about their wives' and then mentions Joseph as a role model for Catholic men.[173] The virtues that are associated with St Joseph are patience, sacrifice, fidelity and commitment. These qualities, it is suggested, are the ones that enabled the Holy Family to come into being – and the Holy Family in turn is presented as the major model for Catholic families.[174]

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[168] Interview with Robert Kalumbila (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 12 November 2008.

[169] Interview with the executive committee members of St Joachim in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 11 October 2008.

[170] According to Bujo, the way African men influenced by cultural traditions and social expectations deal with childlessness in their marriage, calls for 'a new spirituality of marriage' for Africa. However, he does not present Joachim but Jesus Christ as a role model for African men in this area: 'The African male needs to make his own the last will and testament of the Lord, abandoning all pretensions to superiority and turning in love to a barren wife; for she is to be numbered among the weak ones who were especially dear to Jesus.' Cf. B. Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa 1992, 111.

[171] The St. Joachim men's organisation was established in the archdiocese in order to raise an 'elite of Catholic men', according to Gerald Tembo (staff member Archdiocese of Lusaka), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[172] Interview with Jack Mwale (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[173] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[174] See interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: 28 July 2009. According to Pope John Paull II, 'the Holy Family, which according to the Gospel lived for a time in Africa, is the *prototype and example for all Christian families* and the *model and spiritual source* for

Referring to the example of Joseph, in the quotation above the interviewee simply says: 'I get inspiration from that!'[175] This exactly seems to be the way saintly figures such as Joachim and Joseph function: They represent certain virtues and qualities which, through a devotional practice, come to inspire men who subsequently seek to model their lives on these heroes of faith. Significantly, this devotion appears to be a gendered phenomenon: men tend to identify with male saints, and they understand the virtues represented by these saints not just as qualities of Christian life but as qualities of Catholic manhood.

Apart from several saints, Jesus Christ is also mentioned by some interviewees as a role model of manhood. What exactly they gain from this model differs. Some refer to general virtues such as courage, sacrifice, patience and humility represented by Jesus and which are considered to be crucial for being a good Catholic man and husband. Others more specifically refer to the way Jesus dealt with temptations (cf. Matthew 4:1-11). As becomes clear from the following quotation, the very fact that Jesus was tempted provides a point of identification, and his ability to resist temptations is a point of inspiration and encouragement:

> When Jesus Christ got baptised he went through temptations. Jesus Christ is saying: I also went through temptations; I know where you are going through. So if he went through temptations, who am I? God is not protecting me from temptations; a lot of them are coming, so the question is how you face them.[176]

Clearly, Jesus is mentioned as a role model here, with whom men can identify when they themselves are faced with temptations. The references to Jesus, Joseph and Joachim illustrate how the Catholic theological-spiritual tradition of saints and other religious figures is employed in the parish to present and promote certain "masculine virtues". The examples of these figures could easily set too high a standard. Nevertheless, they seem to truly inspire at least a number of men in the parish to live up to this standard.

3.6. LIVING UP TO THE IDEAL?

Having identified the ideals and virtues promoted among men in the parish, and having explored some of the underlying theological lines of thought, the question arises as to whether and how male parishioners live up to this. This question cannot be answered unambiguously, as will become clear in the present section. There is a difference between the popular Catholicism of the majority, and the devotion and commitment of a smaller group of men. Even among the latter group there is a tendency not to take the moral standards and the ideal of manhood always too strictly. At the same time,

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every Christian family.' Cf. John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithfull to the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000*, no. 81.

[175] Interview with Jack Mwale (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[176] Interview with John Kabonde (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

these men realise that it matters to respect these standards, and their motivation to do so seems to be reinforced by the reality of HIV.

Popular Catholicism

Attention has already been drawn to men's lack of involvement in the church. The Archbishop of Lusaka was quoted, saying that 'most Catholic men do not participate in a number of activities taking place in the parish.'[177] Similar comments were made in several interviews. Popular Catholicism especially among men is not associated with a deep involvement in the church but rather with a superficial commitment to the church, the faith and Catholic moral teaching. Referring to the popularity of the rosary beads, a parishioner comments that most people who wear a rosary are "traditional Catholics" who never pray the devotional Rosary but who wear the beads as an outward sign of their association with the Catholic faith.[178] He refers to this as an illustration of the failure of the Catholic Church to really impact on people's lives, both spiritually and morally. This corresponds with the statement of a parish marital counsellor, who said that the only difference the church makes is that Catholic men have girl friends in secret while non-Christians do it openly.[179] It is also in line with the prevalent description of Catholic men as "Sunday worshippers" and with the statement of a young man that 'our Christianity is most times like elastic. Only on Sunday we go to church and think about God, but during the rest of the week we are something else.'[180]

Apparently the widespread perception of Catholic men is that they drink and womanise, are hardly involved in the church and are not really committed to the Catholic faith. This may be explained from the Catholic Church in Zambia being a mainline church comprising a third of the population, and from the inclusive ecclesiology in which church and community are closely related and in which one becomes a Catholic through infant baptism. Whatever the explanation, it can be concluded that Catholic manhood, when understood as the *lived practice* of the majority of men who are members of the Catholic Church, is associated with a compromised loyalty to the church and a constant negotiation regarding its moral regulations. Obviously, against this background the effect of the church's promotion of certain ideals and virtues among men should not be overestimated.

A Serious Devotion

Apart from Catholic manhood as actually lived by a great number of Catholic men, it has become clear in this chapter that in the parish an alternative ideal of manhood is promoted. Though this ideal is not defined in a very explicit discourse, several of its characteristics have been identified above, such as responsibility, self-control, spirituality, and a deep commitment to the family and marriage. The present research

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[177] *Men, Take Up the Challenge!*

[178] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[179] Interview with Rosalyn Banda (woman in her 50s), Lusaka: 28 October 2008.

[180] Interview with Gift Chilufya (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 7 November 2008.

shows that a number of men in the parish seek to live up to this ideal seriously. Several interviewees indicate a serious devotion, with devotion being understood as a dedication to and praxis of the moral and spiritual way of life promoted in the church. They put this in different ways, as appears from the following statements:

> So it is very important for me to offer my life to God. That means: put God first; put God in your programmes. If you want to achieve a lot of things in your life, put God first, believe in God and ask God to lead you in your life. Pray to God through Jesus Christ and ask for the Holy Spirit. Whatever programme you do, it must be and should be the will of God because it is God who brought you in this world.[181]

> My role as a man is to try first of all to keep my baptismal vows. That is one role and from there everything flows. My involvement in Joachim is one way to live up to my baptismal vows. Also, being a man involved in church affairs, I do assist other men. Other men have noticed change in my life.[182]

Both interviewees here express a serious commitment to what they consider as Christian life. They explain their commitment theologically as a faithful response to God who has created them and has embraced them through baptism. The praxis of Christian life for these and other interviewees includes active participation in the church, having devotional time with prayer and Bible reading personally and/or with the family, being faithful in their marriage, taking care of their family, and behaving in a responsible and morally proper way. Obviously this reflects the virtues represented by saint figures such as Joachim and Joseph and largely meets the ideal of manhood promoted in the parish.

Analysing the accounts of these devout Catholic men, both youths and adults, two significant issues appear: their difference from fellow Catholic men who are less devoted, and the role of women in encouraging their husbands to become more committed to the church and the faith. First, several interviewees indicate that in their serious devotion to the ideal they differ from other men who engage in a more popular Catholicism. They claim that they distinguish themselves by being more faithful husbands, being more committed parishioners and living up to different values. The social consequence is that they sometimes feel isolated: 'Living up to the Christian values, sometimes it leaves you without friends.'[183] Someone else explains: 'Normally what they do is, they call me mad. Which means you are a lunatic, you are not normal, you are not indulging in what most of the people are doing.'[184] At the same time, it appears that the parish provides a social environment, for example in the St. Joachim fellowship, Marriage Encounter or the youth group, in which men feel encouraged and support each other to live up to what they consider as Christian

[181] Interview with John Kabonde (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[182] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008.

[183] Interview with Raymond Malambo (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[184] Interview with Bensson Mbuzi (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

values. As a young man says: 'My life is just through our church. Even when I have a party, it is attached to church: a guy from church having a party at church.'[185]

Second, in several interviews men actively involved in the church indicate that this is at least partly the result of the influence of their wives. Take, for example, the members of St. Joachim men's organisation who generally say to have joined the organisation after being motivated by their wives who were already involved in the parish. As one of the members narrates:

> My madam was in St Anne and she encouraged me to join St Joachim. She felt guilty that I was not engaged that much in the church. I only went there on Sunday, but she wanted me to be involved in the small Christian community, too, and in a lay organisation. She thought this would help me to foster and to keep my faith. (…) The lay group has kept me from immoral activities. I used to drink, but I stopped drinking when joining St Joachim. It also helped me to keep from womanising. Beer drinking easily makes one think about going after women, you know. Now I keep far from that.[186]

This personal account illustrates the statement that wives 'have the power to change a man'.[187] Women in the parish seem to be quite aware of this power. Talking about problems with men in marriages and families, and the way to overcome these, the women of the Nazareth group say: 'When a man is married, the influence can come through us, from the wives to the husbands.'[188] Elaborating on their influence they say that they encourage their husbands to attend Mass and to participate in parish life, hoping that this will keep them away from the bars and will make them more faithful husbands and fathers. Though success may be limited, at least some men bear witness to their wives' effort, as is indicated above. They have become devoted Catholic men, living up to the ideal promoted in the church.

Not too Strict …

There is a group of men in the parish seriously committed to the church and faith and seeking to live up to the ideal of "Catholic manhood". However even these men often indicate a flexible understanding of the moral regulations associated with this ideal. To be sure, some interviewees show a radical commitment – one of them even says that he has put himself 'in the lifestyle of a monk'[189], but the more common attitude seems to be that moral restrictions are respected but are not taken too strictly. As a young man says, when talking about how he and his girl friend deal with intimacy: '[We are] not breaking the rule but bending it a bit. We are not a kind of very strict.'[190] Though

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[185] Interview with Chaba Soko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 25 June 2009.

[186] Interview with Robert Kalumbila (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 12 November 2008.

[187] 'The youth magazine *Speak Out!* published an 'Open letter to my future wife' where the statement was made: 'I know you have the power to change a man.' In the letter a young man encouraged his future wife to nurture him into the best husband and person he could be. Cf.S. Kalunga, 'Open Letter to My Future Wife' in *Speak Out!* 26:3 (2009), 17.

[188] Interview with members of the Nazareth group in Regiment Parish, Lusaka: 27 October 2008.

[189] Interview with William Kunda (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 11 November 2008.

[190] Interview with Chaba Soko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 25 June 2009.

he perceives sexual intercourse as unacceptable before marriage, he believes a certain level of intimacy is legitimate though he realises that it 'may lead us into something else'. Likewise, another young man states that according to African culture and the Bible, 'the only thing you are not allowed to do before marriage is sex, the rest you can do' while at the same time admitting that he has had sexual intercourse with his girl friend several times.[191] He had to do so, he explains, in order to avoid the impression that he is not 'a good man'. Though both interviewees indicate that they deal with their sexuality very consciously, their accounts also signify that they negotiate with the strict regulations of the church.[192] It seems that these are not individual cases but that their attitude corresponds with a more general understanding in the parish. A parishioner who has been working with parish youth for many years explains:

> I say to them: enjoy the days of your youth. When you are young, you can engage yourself in the activities for the youth, but time will come that you have to change. And if you are so involved in a wrong thing, it will be difficult to change. So you can do certain things while you are young, but remember: you have to stop this. With me, I am not too strict. And that is what they appreciate in me. I am correcting them, but not saying: don't do this. Just talking about things with them, giving them something to think about in a very friendly way.[193]

Here, a kind of laissez-faire attitude is indicated, which allows the youth some space to negotiate and to deviate from the moral regulations of the church. From this attitude it is understandable that an adult man, who is now a seriously committed parishioner, tells that he indeed had enjoyed the years of his youth by having many girl friends, and adds that there is no need to regret this. Though he states that 'at a certain stage as a man you have to mature', for him it is equally true that 'of course when I was a bachelor I enjoyed myself.'[194] As mentioned above, the "journey towards manhood" is viewed as a growth towards maturity.[195] The above quotations indicate that at least for youths (but possibly also for adults) it is considered acceptable, or at least understandable, that along this journey they are not always able to fully control their desires.[196]

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[191] Interview with John Kabonde (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[192] Maybe this is to be understood against the background of the ambiguous message concerning sexuality to be found in the parish (see § 3.3, the paragraph on sexuality). In this message, men's sexual "energies" on the one hand are declared natural while, on the other hand, there is insistence on the disciplining of such energies.

[193] Interview with Kedrick Mbuzi (man in his 60s), Lusaka: 14 July 2009.

[194] Interview with Haggai Mwansa (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 6 July 2009.

[195] Kiura, *About Boys*, 12.

[196] Cf. Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, 22, which reads: 'You have not yet matured into a man. Being still in the maturing process, you have not yet succeeded in controlling your desires. Today you are eager to be helpful and kind. Tomorrow you are thinking of how you can avoid being bothered by anyone asking for help. At times you want to use the precious years of your youth to become a good and responsible person. But soon afterwards, you are filled with a strong desire to simply enjoy yourself with the girls, smoke, drink, and attend nightclubs.'

The Reality of AIDS as a Motivation

Though the moral regulations are not always interpreted and dealt with very strictly, the motivation of men to live up to these regulations seems to be reinforced by the reality of AIDS. Many interviewees indicate that they have been directly affected by the HIV epidemic, as they have lost relatives and friends and are faced with the challenge of taking care of cousins whose parents died from AIDS. Hence they have realised that "AIDS is real", as it is stated several times. Or, as a young man says: 'Our elders are burying us, rather than we burying our elders.'[197] Several interviewees explain that this realisation, together with the understanding that many people become infected because of risky sexual behaviour, has reinforced their commitment to the norms of sexual abstinence before, or fidelity in marriage, and to the moral values promoted by the church in general. The following quote is illustrative here:

> I have lost several friends and relatives as a consequence of their lifestyle. They died because of HIV/AIDS, or because of an accident as a result of drinking. This reminded me that life can end easily, and that the question is where I will be then. I realised that I had to live with my Lord. The presence of HIV/AIDS in our community, and the suffering I have seen among friends, made me realising that faithfulness to your wife is crucial and life-protecting.[198]

As appears from this quote, the (re)commitment to the value of marital fidelity is reinforced by the confrontation with the reality of suffering and death due to HIV. The fear of this reality is actually used in prevention messages in the parish. A booklet clearly states: 'Unfaithfulness in married life opens the door to the killer called AIDS.'[199] In the men's organisation of St Joachim, the idea that 'AIDS comes about because of unfaithfulness' is underlined in order to insist upon marital fidelity among the members.[200]

However, the above quotation shows that there is more than just a fear of AIDS. The interviewee places his renewed commitment to marital fidelity in a religious discourse. He presents it as part of his "re-commitment to the Lord". This is not just informed by the confrontation with friends and relatives who are dying, but by the subsequent reminder that 'life can end easily' and the introspective question 'where I will be then?' This reflects an awareness of eschatological judgement and/or salvation after death. Though this doctrine does not appear to be very prominent in the spirituality of parishioners nor in the teaching in the church, it seems to be basically part of people's understanding of the Christian faith.[201] The sense of individual

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[197] Interview with Titus Mundia (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 26 October 2008.

[198] Interview with Robert Kalumbila (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 12 November 2008.

[199] O. Hirmer, *About the Killer Called AIDS*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2001, 7.

[200] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008.

[201] Sometimes the idea of judgment by God is referred to in order to underline the need to live up to the moral regulations of the church. For example see Kiura, *About Boys*, 27 where, having emphasised the need for boys to control their sexual energies, it is said: 'As a young

accountability to God and the fear of AIDS both reinforce men's commitment to the values of abstinence and fidelity. Hence they seriously intend to control sexual desires and to live up to the ideal of Catholic manhood.

3.7. MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN REGIMENT PARISH – A CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined how in Regiment parish men are addressed and masculinities are (re)defined in the context of HIV. Though the parish has actively responded to the epidemic from an early stage, it has not (yet) engaged in a proactive campaign to change men and to transform masculinities. Yet there is a critical perception of men and socially dominant types of manhood in the parish and, more broadly, in the Catholic Church in Zambia. This is informed by the church's concern about the socio-economic situation in Zambia (poverty, unemployment) and about the well-being of women and families, and by the concern of the church with sexual morality (which seems to be reinforced by the HIV epidemic). The parish is aware that many Catholic men actually engage in the popular masculinity of drinking, womanising, neglecting responsibilities and an "elastic" Christianity – something that can be understood from the Catholic Church in Zambia being a mainline church comprising a major part of the community. On the basis of this awareness, the parish makes efforts to "evangelise" men by trying to get them more involved in the church. This is done through the Small Christian Communities, youth activities, marriage courses, and the men's fellowship of St. Joachim. It is believed that when men become more involved in the church and committed to the faith, they will start to live up to an alternative type of manhood and critical male behaviour will be overcome.

The case study shows that in the parish there is a critical awareness of behaviour and attitudes common among men. However, these issues are rarely addressed in a very explicit way, and when they are addressed it is in a relatively nuanced manner. In the same way, certain ideals, values and virtues are emphasised among men, but no strictly defined and well-articulated ideal of manhood is promoted. This leaves space for different interpretations and perceptions (for example, on the issue of male headship) and for men to negotiate the norms. The result is that different types of masculinity occur within the parish and are considered more or less acceptable. Yet the contours are given by the notions such as responsibility, spirituality, self-control, and the family man. These notions are embodied and symbolically represented by St. Joachim. He is the pious family man whom every Catholic husband and father is to take as an example.

The parish's engagement with men and masculinity can be understood from the ecclesiology of the church as family of God. This inclusive metaphor explains why the moral norms are not strictly interpreted and applied. However, the image of the family also underlines the need to involve men at all levels of the church: the human family (as the domestic church), the community (included in the church) and the parish and church organisation itself. As the institutional church is organised in a hierarchical and

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man, you need to look after your soul. …. God will bring every dead into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil'.

patriarchal way, this may reflect on the position of the man in the family. Though the parish, and the broader Catholic Church, embraces a notion of gender equality, its gender ideology based on the theological-anthropological account of creation also leaves space for a hierarchical ordering of gender relations in which men have a primary position.

The case study shows that men live up to the ideal of Catholic manhood in different ways and in different gradations. A large number may be "Sunday worshippers" (or may not even worship on Sundays), but there are certainly a number of men seriously devoted and committed. Significantly, though the HIV epidemic has not led the parish into an active transformation of masculinities, yet it seems to have reinforced men's commitment to strive for the ideal of manhood held up by the church.

Having presented the first of two case studies, the following chapter provides the second case study conducted as part of the present research. From a Catholic parish, attention shifts in the next chapter to a Pentecostal church, namely Northmead Assembly of God.

4. MEN & MASCULINITIES IN A PENTECOSTAL CHURCH – THE CASE OF NORTHMEAD ASSEMBLY OF GOD

The Bible tells that Adam was created first,
and instructions were given to men, to the male.
We men are the head, but you have to live up to it.
We like to be the head but we don't like to live up to the responsibility.
That's our problem!
Joshua H.K Banda[1]

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Following the case study in a Catholic parish presented in the previous chapter, this chapter presents a second case study conducted in a Pentecostal church, Northmead Assembly of God. An introduction to the church is provided in the next section (§4.2). Particular attention is paid to the church's response to HIV and AIDS and to the places where the church works with men and where issues of masculinity are addressed. After this introduction to the church, the main questions will be explored: How does Northmead Assembly of God contest, (re)define and attempt to transform masculinities in contemporary Zambia, particularly in the context of HIV? In order to investigate this question, §4.3 explores which critical issues concerning men and masculinities are addressed in the church. In other words, what type of masculinity is contested? §4.4 outlines what alternative type of masculinity is promoted in the church. The central notions defining this masculinity are discussed: responsibility, headship, leadership, providing and self-control. §4.5 provides an outline of the main theological thoughts that inform and underlie the promoted ideal of masculinity. The question as to whether and how men in the church live up to this ideal is discussed in §4.6. The chapter closes with a conclusion in § 4.7.

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on various materials. The main body is twofold: sermons and interviews. A number of DVDs with sermons preached at Sunday services were purchased from the church's media desk, including the sermons of the series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century* and *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth*. Interviews were conducted with about twenty church members and with a number of pastors, the bishop and the bishop's wife in Northmead Assembly of God, as well as with the chief bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zambia. Furthermore, my analysis is informed by the conversations and observations in the period of research, when I attended church services and meetings and participated in some of the church's activities.

[1] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

4.2. NORTHMEAD ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

General Introduction to the Church

Northmead Assembly of God (henceforth referred to as NAOG) is a Pentecostal church located in Northmead, one of the suburbs of Lusaka. Founded in 1971 as a home cell group under the auspices of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada International Missions, the church has become one of the most prominent Pentecostal churches in the city.[2] Over the years it has grown into a congregation with a membership of over two thousand. The members of the church are relatively well educated and generally belong to the middle (and some to the upper) class of society. They come from all over the city and most of them live in the low-density areas of the suburbs. The majority of the people attending Sunday services are youths and young adults, among which a significant number of students.

Leadership

Since 1995 NAOG has been under the leadership of Joshua H.K. Banda, who is the church's senior pastor and a bishop in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAOG) in Zambia. On the church's website, Banda is portrayed as a high profile leader with an international status:

> Now 45 years old and in his 26th year of Christian ministry, Bishop Banda has travelled widely in Africa and abroad. (…) The Bishop has become a notable and influential voice on national issues in Zambia and is a highly sought after international conference speaker.[3]

This is supported by a recent study on Pentecostal Christianity in Zambia, which refers to Banda as one of the prominent Christian leaders in the country.[4] As chair of the National AIDS Council, he has an influential position close to the government. He can be found regularly in the media commenting on national and political affairs. Furthermore, through the church's TV programme *The Liberating Truth* broadcast on the national channel, Banda reaches people all over Zambia and abroad. Educated at the PAOG Zambia Bible College in Kitwe and at the PAOG Northwest University in Kirkland (United States), Banda's theology is firmly rooted in the Pentecostal tradition. However, his theological horizon is not strictly confined to Pentecostalism. For example, he is currently pursuing a PhD study with the interdenominational Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (UK).[5]

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[2] Northmead Assembly of God, *About Us*, http://northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=26 (accessed 6 January 2009).

[3] Northmead Assembly of God, *Biographical Profile of Bishop Joshua H.K. Banda*, http://northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=27 (accessed 6 January 2009).

[4] Cf. A.M. Cheyeka, 'Towards a History of the Charismatic Churches in Post-Colonial Zambia' in J.B. Gewald, M. Hinfelaar and G. Macola (eds.), *One Zambia, Many Histories. Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia*, Leiden: Brill 2008, 150.

[5] The research is on faith-based strategies of HIV prevention.

As the senior pastor, Banda has the final responsibility for the church and the final say in decision-making. The church's strategy is formulated under his leadership and reflects his vision. Banda is assisted by a team of eight pastors and by a number of elders and deacons. Each of the members bears responsibility for a particular ministry in the church, and together they form the church board – the church's governing body. Although the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zambia do ordain women, currently none of the pastors in NAOG is female. There are two women on the church board, in the position of deaconess. The bishop's wife Mrs. Gladys Z.M. Banda does not have a formal position on the church board but she is actively involved in the church. As Banda says, the pastorate of the church is a joint ministry for him and his wife.[6]

Classical Pentecostalism

NAOG is associated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zambia, a fellowship of over fourteen hundred 'self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating churches'.[7] The PAOG-Zambia is a member of the ecumenically oriented Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (and, significantly, not of the body for charismatic churches, the Independent Churches Organization of Zambia). The Assemblies of God movement historically stands in the tradition of North American classical Pentecostalism.[8] NAOG shares the major theological characteristics of Pentecostal Christianity, these being emphasis on personal salvation in Jesus Christ, the importance of the "born again" experience, the transformation of one's life towards the holiness ideal, and openness to charismatic phenomena such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing as evidence of the presence of God's Spirit.[9] The church perceives itself to be different from some of the charismatic or neo-Pentecostal churches in Lusaka which, according to Banda, 'focus so much on miracles that they forget about the God of miracles'.[10] NAOG has a healing and deliverance ministry, but this is certainly not the most prominent among the church's ministries.

Congregational Life

At the centre of the congregational life in NAOG are the church services. On Sunday morning two identical services are held in English, with the second being translated into a vernacular language. Each service consists of two main parts: worship and

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6 Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 9 September 2008.

7 Interview with Harrison Sakala (chief bishop Pentecostal Assemblies of God Zambia), Lusaka: 29 October 2008.

8 Cf. A.H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century*, Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press 2001, 169.

9 See J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Born of Water and the Spirit: Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa' in O.U. Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005, 389.

10 Sermon of Joshua Banda in Northmead Assembly of God, Lusaka: 12 July 2009. For the distinction between classic Pentecostal churches and the neo-Pentecostal or charismatic churches, see Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century*, 167-172.

preaching. Generally Banda is the one who preaches. The sermons are usually delivered in series on specific themes. In the sermons, all kind of social and political issues are addressed that affect people's lives or society. Examples are alcoholism, HIV and AIDS, domestic violence, issues of sexuality, the presidential elections, and the country's constitutional review process. According to Banda, the pulpit is a crucial place to address issues such as these in order to raise awareness among the people.[11] The sermons delivered in the church do not only reach the congregation but the whole country, as they are broadcast in the TV programme *The Liberating Truth*.

A third service is held regularly on Sunday afternoon. This is a meeting of one of the monthly ministries of the church: the men's ministry, the married couples' ministry, the singles' ministry and the women's ministry have their meetings on Sunday afternoon once a month. There also is a youth ministry, which comes together weekly on Saturday. For children there is a Sunday school during the church services. Furthermore there are two programmes called *Girls of Purity* and *Boys of Integrity*, with two annual weekends for girls and boys of about 10 up to 14 years old.

In order to promote cohesion in the congregation, all members are supposed to participate in a home cell group in the area of his/her residence. These groups meet weekly for Bible study, prayer and fellowship.[12] However, not all church members attend the cell groups on a regular basis, and not all cell groups function well. Apart from the home cell groups, the various ministries for men, women, youth, singles and married people also aim to bring church members together, to promote social cohesion and spiritual fellowship.

Mission

The slogan of the church is: 'Possessing the Land by Reaching Unreached Peoples & Nations'.[13] This indicates a strong missionary drive that is expressed through several evangelising and church planting activities. The missionary drive is informed by a soteriological concern, being the belief 'in the eternal conscious bliss of all true believers in Christ and also in the eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire of all Christ rejecters.'[14] However, in the vision of Banda, mission is not solely about winning souls. He says that he supports a holistic approach to the Gospel and therefore, in his perception, mission has also to deal with social issues.[15] This view has led the church to respond to several needs in society. Examples are the Circle of Hope clinic, the Lazarus Project for street children, and Operation Paseli for the rehabilitation of sex workers.

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[11] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[12] Interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 30 September 2008.

[13] Cf. Northmead Assembly of God, *Missions*, http://northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=29, accessed on 7 January 2009.

[14] Northmead Assembly of God, *Church Constitution - Excerpt of Key Articles*, (unpublished) Lusaka 2008, 2.

[15] Cf. Northmead Assembly of God, *Biographical Profile of Bishop Joshua H.K. Banda*, http://northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=27 (accessed 6 January 2009).

As part of its mission, the church also has set up the radio programme *Choosing Hope*, and the TV programme *The Liberating Truth*. This is based on the conviction that '[t]he church in the media can combat the depression, loss of focus, HIV/AIDS and many issues that our country and people are faced with.'[16]

The Response to HIV and AIDS

How does NAOG respond to, and deal with the reality of HIV and AIDS in Zambia? This is an important question, since the epidemic constitutes the background to this study's interest in masculinities. Two different types of response can be distinguished: outreaches in society, and sensitising and teaching the congregation.

HIV and AIDS Outreaches

As the church understands mission not only in terms of evangelisation but also as responding to needs in society, the church has also actively responded to the challenges of HIV and AIDS facing the Zambian society. The epidemic is said to be the greatest crisis Zambia has been faced with as it affects every family. Hence, it is considered a missionary opportunity for the church:

> On the continent of Africa there is literally no family that is untouched. So if we give attention to the area of meeting needs related to HIV/AIDS, we will truly have an opportunity to meet human needs. And in a sense we will have an opportunity to do mission. We should not look at people just as candidates for heaven; they have a life to live here on earth. And we have an opportunity to deal with that.[17]

This quote indicates Banda's holistic approach to the Gospel already alluded to. Because of this vision the church has established several projects in response to some of the challenges raised by the HIV crisis in Zambia. At the forefront of the church's response to the epidemic is the Circle of Hope clinic. This is a mainly externally funded, professional clinic, located in a densely populated area in South-East Lusaka (far from the church). It provides testing and treatment and organises community outreaches to sensitise people and to promote behavioural change. In the same area as the clinic the church has founded the Lazarus project, which strives to rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate street children and children orphaned by AIDS.[18] In the Northmead area where the church building is located, NAOG reaches out to sex workers through Operation Paseli (named after the road where the church is located, which at night is a prostitution zone). The project aims to help the women and to rescue them from their kind of work.[19]

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[16] Northmead Assembly of God, *The Liberating Truth*, http://northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=36 (accessed 7 January 2009).

[17] J.H.K. Banda, *HIV&AIDS and Stigma in the Church*. DVD Touch-a-Life Conference, Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[18] *Touch a Life. Social Trust.* Newsletter of the social projects of Northmead Assembly of God church, 2008.

[19] Northmead Assembly of God, *Operation Paseli*, http://northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=38, (accessed on 4 March 2009).

Another type of social outreach responding to the challenge of HIV and AIDS is through the media, especially the radio programme *Choosing Hope*. The objective of the programme is to give "Christian hope" to families and individuals living in a 'culture of death', and to share information about HIV in order to enable communities 'to be firm against the spread of the disease'.[20]

The projects mentioned in this paragraph indicate that NAOG is actively involved in the response to the HIV epidemic and related issues. Significantly, these projects are presented as *outreaches*, i.e. as part of the church's social mission.[21] They do not focus on the congregation and its members but rather target poor and vulnerable people in society.

Awareness, Prevention and De-Stigmatisation within the Congregation

Apart from the outreaches to infected, affected and vulnerable people in society, the church also responds in another way. The church leadership has realised that church members themselves are also at risk of contracting HIV, and from that realisation it has sought to create awareness and to encourage a preventive lifestyle.[22] Furthermore, the church leadership addresses stigmatising attitudes towards people in the congregation living with HIV.

According to Banda, when he took up the pastorate of the church in 1995 there was silence and taboo surrounding HIV and AIDS. He recounts: 'We were burying four, five people a week, every time saying that they suffered a long illness. We were not saying what that illness was, out of fear to admit that certain things were going on in our midst.'[23] Breaking the silence and facing the reality of the epidemic in the church and in the wider society became Banda's mission. He and his wife started a congregational support group with people living with HIV, which existed for a couple of years.[24] He also started to talk about HIV-related issues from the pulpit (though initially some church members considered that a "desecration" of the pulpit).[25] Furthermore, these issues are discussed in the various ministries in the church and in pre-marital counselling sessions. A couple preparing for marriage is encouraged to go for an HIV test. Clearly, the taboo and the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS have been broken.

Most of the times that HIV is mentioned in the church it is in a discourse on sexuality. This discourse seems to be reinforced by the reality of the epidemic in Zambia. Emphasising the moral values concerning sexuality is, in Banda's words, a

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[20] Northmead Assembly of God, *Choosing Hope,* idem.

[21] For example, see *Touch a Life. Social Thrust* (conference flyer), Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[22] Interview with Harold Gondwe (pastor), Lusaka: 12 November 2008.

[23] Banda, *HIV&AIDS and Stigma in the Church*.

[24] Currently this group is no longer active. It is acknowledged by Banda that this is a gap in the church's response to the epidemic: little attention is paid to people living with HIV in the congregation, although they can apply for counselling with the church's pastors. Cf. interview with Bishop Joshua Banda, Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[25] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

prevention strategy. He considers this crucial particularly because the church membership is predominantly young, and sexuality is a major issue among the youth.[26] However the teaching on sexuality aims to safeguard people not just from the risk of contracting HIV but first and foremost from "sexual sin". It is believed that 'sexual purity guarantees you freedom from being infected.'[27] In order to maintain this purity, the church emphasises the importance of abstinence before, and fidelity in marriage. Condoms are considered a threat to sexual purity, so they are rejected. Living up to the moral standards concerning sexuality is an important part of the born-again lifestyle promoted in the church. Nourishing this lifestyle starts as early as in the children's ministry. Whereas children at school learn about sexual health and reproduction in a scientific way, the church groups Girls of Purity and Boys of Integrity, provide teaching from a moral perspective.[28] Likewise the moral values concerning sexuality are taught in the ministries targeting the youth, singles, married couples, men and women.

The stigmatisation of people living with HIV is clearly denounced in the church. In a talk on HIV stigma, Banda critically addressed some stigmatising perceptions, such as the beliefs that people with HIV have had an immoral past, that they bear the consequences of their own lust, that HIV is a curse and that it shows that God's judgment is still at work.[29] Opposing these beliefs Banda states that every sickness including AIDS comes from "the enemy" rather than from God. Hence he makes it clear that people living with HIV should not be judged but should be shown compassion and love, out of the Gospel of acceptance and forgiveness. Although the connection of HIV infection with sexual immorality is made in the church and by Banda himself, the message seems to be that no matter how someone contracted the virus, this should not inform the church's attitude to that person.

Where and How are Men and Masculinities Addressed?

When the church is being introduced, particular attention needs to be paid to the activities where men are worked with and where issues concerning masculinity are addressed in the church. Therefore this section briefly introduces (the sermons preached during) the Sunday services, the youth ministry, the single's ministry, the pre-marital counselling, the marriage ministry and the *Men of Truth* men's fellowship. What is the particular characteristic and objective of these activities?

Sermons preached during Sunday Services

Preaching is a crucial part of the Sunday services in NAOG. As already mentioned, all kinds of topics concerning people's lives and society are dealt with in the sermons. Significantly, it often happens that men are specifically addressed in relation to these issues. Whatever the topic, for example such things as marital problems, sexuality, domestic violence, HIV, alcoholism, poverty or the moral decay of the country,

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[26] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[27] Northmead Assembly of God, *Choosing Hope,* idem.

[28] Interview with Bensson Mwembeshi (pastor), Lusaka: 5 November 2008.

[29] Banda, *HIV&AIDS and Stigma in the Church*.

particular reference is made to the critical role of men. Moreover, it is not just the role of men that is addressed, but the problems are analysed in relation to some prevalent types of masculinity in contemporary Zambia. Most explicitly this was done in a series of sermons delivered by Banda in 2008, entitled *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*. The series aimed to explore a vision of "biblical manhood" in the light of a perceived "distortion" of manhood and fatherhood in society.[30] Another interesting series in this respect is *Cultivating a lifestyle of truth*, delivered in 2005. The sermons deal with issues such as alcohol, sexuality, domestic violence and other topics concerning people's lifestyle, and time and time again men are addressed specifically. They are thought to have particular problems with living "a lifestyle of truth". Significantly, Banda regularly presents himself in his sermons as a role model, particularly as a model for how men in the church should deal with their wives. Apparently he considers his marriage, his role as a husband as well as his lifestyle in general as exemplary to the congregation. At least, he does not hesitate to present himself as such when he is preaching.[31]

Sunday services are a central place, and preaching is a major instrument, for men to be addressed, prevalent masculinities to be contested and an alternative ideal of masculinity to be defined. As the sermons are broadcast on the TV programme *The Liberating Truth*, they not only reach the congregation but the entire country and the wider region.

Youth Ministry

The church has a youth ministry that aims to nourish the faith of the youth and to raise them in what is perceived as a Christian, born-again lifestyle. There is a concern that the youth are not really dedicated to this lifestyle, because they belong to a second generation of Pentecostals in Zambia, or because they are attracted by the modern Western way of life. Hence they are called upon 'to be real, and not to pretend a Christian lifestyle', and to be 'a remnant of the Lord'.[32] The teaching on lifestyle is applied specifically to the area of sexuality. Time and time again in youth meetings the need to abstain from sex, to protect virginity and to keep sexual purity is underscored. The ministry is coordinated by Pastor Haggai Mweene, who understands his role as being 'a father for the youth'.[33] He points out that young people nowadays are faced

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[30] In this series Banda uses the concepts of 'fatherhood' and 'manhood' interchangeably. He frequently states that 'biblical fatherhood is rooted in biblical manhood'. That the concept of 'fatherhood' is used in the title of the series indicates the importance for men to have a family, according to the ideal of manhood in the series. In the present chapter I will speak of manhood in general when referring to this ideal, except for those cases where I discuss fatherhood in particular.

[31] In an interview, Banda admits that he considers himself as a role model of manhood. He puts this as follows: 'I want to live what I teach, to demonstrate it through my life, and I think the people here will acknowledge that.' (Cf. interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 29 July 2009.

[32] Youth meeting, 11 October 2008.

[33] Interview with Haggai Mweene (youth pastor), Lusaka: 20 September 2008.

with many pressures, and that they hardly have any good father figures at home or in society to coach them.

The weekly meetings are attended by about forty to sixty youth and young adults, aged between 16 and 25. Most meetings are like a service, with much time for worship, prayer and preaching. Four times a year a so-called youth blast is organised, offering entertainment through rap, drama, and/or musical performances. An outing weekend is planned once a year, with Bible study and worship, amusement and sports.

The youth ministry is a mixed group of young people, and the preaching is usually not gender-specific. Yet with regard to the question of how the church addresses men and redefines masculinity the ministry is interesting. After all, the norms, values and lifestyle promoted in the ministry directly concern young males in the church and impact on their understanding of themselves as young Christian men.

Singles' Ministry

For young adults not yet married there is a singles' ministry in the church, which also targets single parents and those who are widowed or who are single due to divorce or separation. In the monthly meetings and in other activities, singles share and discuss the particular challenges and opportunities of their single life. As one of the participants explains, a major challenge faced by single people, especially when they have passed the mid-thirties, is stigma, because they do not meet the social standard of marriage.[34] Another difficulty is in the area of sexuality, which is considered a "no-go area" for single people. In view of challenges such as these, the ministry aims to create a space where single persons can support each other and receive guidance through Bible study and discussion.

Just like the youth ministry, the singles' ministry includes both men and women, and the preaching and discussions are mostly not gender-specific. However, for similar reasons as the youth ministry, this ministry is also relevant to the present study.

Men's Fellowship

In the church there is a men's fellowship called *Men of Truth*. Explaining this name, Pastor Gondwe says that it wants 'to emphasise the need for men that are truthful and faithful to their marriage, their family and the community. Thus Men of Truth is designed to promote moral values among men.'[35] In order to have men live up to these standards, the fellowship has a monthly meeting with Bible study and discussions on a wide range of topics. These include wide-ranging issues – from marriage and sexuality to business and investment. Occasionally, thematic conferences are organised. In 2005 and 2006, for example, two conferences addressed the theme 'The Quest for Sexual Purity and Integrity'.[36] Furthermore, recreational outings are frequently organised to foster fellowship among men in the church. Last but not least,

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[34] Interview with Bernard Kamanga (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 30 June 2009.

[35] Interview with Harold Gondwe (pastor), Lusaka: 12 November 2008

[36] Cf. Northmead Assembly of God, *Men of Truth Recap,* http://www.northmeadassembly.org .zm/ddata/news/viewnews.cgi?category=2&id=1152286902, (accessed on 18 March 2009).

the men's fellowship contributes financially and materially to the church and – for instance – helps with renovating projects of the church building.[37]

Generally the meetings are attended by thirty to fifty men. The church leadership is concerned about the low participation of men in the ministry. According to Bishop Banda, the majority of men lack motivation to involve themselves actively in the church.[38] However, according to Pastor Boyd Banda (notice the difference!), the ministry itself is to blame, because its activities are not attractive to most of the male church members.[39] Hence in 2009 he presented a vision to transform the ministry into a more dynamic and attractive fellowship. Under the slogan "dream big" this vision aims to foster fellowship among men, to build up the church and to become a voice in the nation.[40] The vision was welcomed by the Men of Truth, but it will take some time before it is implemented. At least this indicates that there is a creative search to make the men's ministry more effective in men's lives and more visible to the life of the church.

Though numerically not that large, the men's ministry is significant to the present study as it clearly is an important place and instrument for the church to work with men, to address critical issues concerning masculinities, and to promote an ideal type of manhood.

The Marriage Ministry

Quite a large ministry in the church is occupied with the area of marriage. Pre-marital counselling is provided to couples about to be married, and monthly meetings are organised for married couples. In cases of marital problems, counselling is provided by the ministry.

The pre-marital counselling is quite an intense process, the primary objective being 'to prepare couples for marriage in order for them to develop into an ideal husband and/or wife according to biblical standards.'[41] The topics covered vary from the spiritual life of the family to family planning methods, and from the roles and duties of husband and wife in marriage to the question of how to deal with relatives in the extended family. Also the sexual aspect of marital life is discussed. Apart from the counselling as a couple, the respective husband-to-be and wife-to-be are supposed to be counselled separately by a member of the men's ministry and the women's ministry

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[37] Northmead Assembly of God, *Church Ministries*, http://www.northmeadassembly.org.zm/ministry.html (accessed on 18 March 2009).

[38] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), 5 November 2009.

[39] Interview with Boyd Banda (pastor), Lusaka: 15 July 2009

[40] Presentation by Pastor Boyd Banda at the *Men of Truth* meeting, 5 July 2009. Concrete suggestions were to establish geographical zone groups, to organise sport and recreational activities, to open a church gym, to adopt and support projects in the church and in society, to establish a chamber of commerce for communal business and investments and to organise public debates on national and political affairs.

[41] Marriage Ministry, *Premarital Counseling General Guide*, Northmead Assembly of God (unpublished material).

respectively.[42] Once married, a couple is supposed to attend the meetings of the marriage ministry. These aim 'to promote strong and healthy marriages in the church.'[43] According to one of the coordinators, 'we believe that strong marriages make strong churches and strong nations'.[44] In the meetings, a wide range of topics concerning married life are addressed, varying from joint investments and business as a couple, up to tips for "satisfying sex in a godly marriage". This indicates that the church is concerned with all areas of marital life, from the financial and economic to the sexual aspects.

The premarital counselling and the monthly meetings of the Marriage Ministry are significant instruments for the church to work with men as (future) husbands and fathers. Certain perceptions and practices concerning men's role and attitudes in marriage and the family are challenged here, and these are corrected by providing "biblical" teaching.

Conclusion

In several ways and at various places in the church, NAOG works with men, addresses issues concerning masculinities and promotes certain ideals of manhood. Preaching during Sunday services and the counselling and teaching surrounding marriage seem to be the most effective ways in terms of numbers: with these instruments the greatest number of men is reached. The respective ministries for the youth, singles and men are also significant places, but in view of the total membership of the church only a small number of men is reached by this means. The sermon series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*, as also the new plans with the men's ministry, indicate that the church is seriously concerned with men and issues of masculinity and is attempting to respond to this challenge.

4.3. Addressing The "Distortion" of Manhood

Now that the church and the places where men and masculinities are addressed have been introduced, the question arises as to which issues are addressed precisely. From an analysis of sermons, interviews and meetings, in this section a number of main topics are identified. These are: sexuality, alcohol, domestic violence, domination over women, and a more general irresponsibility on the part of men. According to Banda, these issues illustrate the "distortion of manhood" which he observes in society, i.e. he associates these issues with hegemonic versions of masculinity in present-day Zambia.

Sexuality

In NAOG, issues of sexuality are often addressed, and the moral standards concerning sexuality are underlined time and time again. As mentioned above, the concern with

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[42] While this seems to function well in the women's ministry, the men's ministry seems to have difficulties in carrying out this task.

[43] Northmead Assembly of God, *Church Ministries*, http://www.northmeadassembly.org.zm/ministry.html (accessed on 18 March 2009).

[44] Interview with Ragies Chipoya (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 7 October 2008.

sexuality seems to be reinforced by HIV, but more principally it is informed by the church's ethical codes. According to the church, God intended sexuality to be enjoyed only in the context of a marital relationship. This principle is taught in a moral-theological discourse, for instance in the following quotation from a sermon:

> Sexuality before marriage is immoral. The body is not meant for sexual immorality. That is the way people are living, as if the body was meant for sexual immorality. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Let not Hollywood make you think that tasting sex outside marriage is exciting. Engaging in sex without a true union with God and without a true union in marriage, you are fracturing your life.[45]

As this quotation illustrates, sexuality is addressed in quite a normative way. Failure to live up to the moral standards is considered immoral and sinful. According to Banda, this failure is so common nowadays that he even talks of a "culture of seduction" in society. In his understanding, this indicates that the world is entering "the final days" in which the devil uses the area of sexuality 'as a deadly moral trap' for people to depart from God.[46] The church's moral standards concerning sexuality do not only prohibit sex before marriage but also masturbation and kissing. These strict guidelines are informed by the fear of the slippery slope: one thing may lead to another. As a church member says with regard to kissing: 'As far as I know I think you have to wait. Because of the intention of kissing, it may lead to more than kissing.'[47] Because of this risk, people are called to build "defence lines" and to observe strict boundaries. Likewise, the marital vows include the promise to forsake all other women or all other men that one has seen so far and those whom one is yet to see.[48]

Male Sexuality

What is interesting in view of the present study, is that in the church men are particularly addressed with regard to sexual behaviour. Men are thought to have a particular problem in this area. The sermons on *Fatherhood in the 21st Century* denounce time and time again popular perceptions in which manhood is understood as an 'an equivalent to the male sexual organ'.[49] In other words, men are thought to be generally preoccupied with sexual conquest and to perceive women only as sexual objects. A church member puts the popular perception as follows:

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[45] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Making Relationships more Meaningful – part 1* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God (no date noted).

[46] Cf. Joshua H.K. Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 5* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2005. See also the interview with Pastor Raymond Nyirenda, Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

[47] Interview with Clemens Kabunko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[48] Northmead Assembly of God, *Standard Liturgy for Wedding Service* (unpublished material).

[49] See Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

> If you are not producing, you are not a man. You have to make a woman pregnant. (…) Among youngsters there is the sense that sleeping with a girl makes you a man. There is a saying: This is a man. Culturally it is considered in this way.[50]

Opposing perceptions like these, Banda clearly states that 'biblical manhood transcends and goes beyond human sexuality'[51] and that 'human manhood is not just defining yourself as a sex machine'.[52] Cultures and societies that do so are labelled by him as "totally distorted". The definition of manhood in terms of sexual achievement is demythologised as being inferior and immature. It is not only said to be unchristian but also unmanly: a "real" man would be able to control his sexual desires.

While men's assumed preoccupation with sexual achievement on the one hand is explained on the basis of socio-cultural definitions of manhood, Banda also points to a biological factor. In the series *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth* he presents a theory that men have a particular hormone that makes them look for women, arouses them and compels them to action:

> Men by their basic physiological and biological make up tend to have the initial attraction by the opposite side just by sex. (…) I did some reading and found out that men receive a chemical high as soon as they see some kind of a sexual image. As soon as they see a sexual image, something happens in the body of men. There is a hormone called epinephrine that is immediately released into the bloodstream as soon as men see a sexual image.[53]

This quotation indicates quite an essentialist understanding of manhood, in which it is considered natural for men to have problems controlling their sexual lusts. Men are compared with wild mustangs: both are "roaming, running free and wild", meaning that they do not commit themselves to anybody.[54]

Whatever the reason for men's presumed preoccupation with sex and their difficulty in handling it, men are challenged to take control over the area of sexuality in their lives and to adopt an alternative understanding of manhood. The emphasis on moral boundaries concerning sexuality is accompanied by a radical yet pastoral attitude towards men struggling in this area. They are not just called on to change their lifestyle, but are also encouraged that they are able to do so with the help of God:

> There are some of you gentlemen who genuinely want victory over your sexual permissiveness, over unfaithfulness, over habits that are really not fatherly. I want us to pray and believe that God will set you free. … There are some men here that think that you cannot be free from bad thoughts, from extramarital affairs, from unfaithfulness

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[50] Interview with Clemens Kabunko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[51] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

[52] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God, 2008.

[53] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 6* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2005.

[54] Banda, *Making Relationships more meaningful – part 1*.

> and things like that. I want you to know that in this day and age you can live faithfully, you can be satisfied by one woman and be happy. It can be done in the name of Jesus.[55]

Thus, the possibility of conversion is emphasised, through which a man can overcome his problems in the area of sexuality and can re-commit himself to the moral values promoted in the church.

Significantly, the church does not only encourage men to be faithful themselves, but also to prevent fellow men, such as colleagues and friends, from marital infidelity. Banda criticises the permissive attitude that, in his opinion, prevails in society and makes people shy away from addressing each other. He calls men in the church to be their "brother's keeper": 'If you have that knowledge, God holds you responsible to reach that man and to say: sir, what you are doing is wrong.'[56]

Homosexuality

As part of the discourse on sexuality, the issue of homosexuality is addressed quite frequently in NAOG. The reason for this is not the HIV epidemic – in fact homosexuality is not referred to in relation to HIV. Rather, homosexuality is mentioned in the discourse on men and masculinities, as an ultimate example of the current departure from "biblical manhood". Elaborating upon recent developments threatening 'the status and nature of fatherhood in the 21st century', Banda first of all mentions the issue of homosexuality.[57] To illustrate this, he refers to the phenomenon of same-sex marriages in Western societies, to the debate on the ordination of homosexual priests and bishops in the Anglican Communion and to some recent developments that he has observed in Zambia as tending towards a growing acceptance of homosexuality.

For Banda, male homosexuals are the counter-example of what manhood is supposed to be. He articulates his argument as follows:

> [T]he only reason why a man and a man come together in same sex relations is that because of their sexual preference they claim they are only attracted to men. It is a distortion, a serious distortion! The definition here is purely by sexual means, but God's order of marriage is not defined purely by sex.[58]

Thus because homosexuals enter into relationships out of sexual preference, according to Banda same-sex relations are only defined by sex and homosexuals are only interested in each other sexually. He contrasts this with how God has defined marriage: not just in terms of sex but also in terms of companionship, commitment and love. The crux of the argument is that Banda, having stereotyped homosexuals, calls upon the (assumed heterosexual) men in the church, insisting that they should not jump into relationships just because of sex.

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[55] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[56] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 5*.

[57] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2*.

[58] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2*.

There is a second argument as to why homosexuality is, according to Banda, a violation of God's order, and it starts from the principle of complementarity. According to this line of thought, man and woman are put in different places and are assigned distinctive roles, and hence they can complement each other. Because homosexual relationships do not allow for this complementarity, they are considered contrary to the order of creation. For example, it is said that 'biblical manhood is rooted in creation. And in creation God made them male and female. It is Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve. In creation we see a man and a woman in their respective roles.'[59] Referring to Genesis 2:24 Banda explains that according to the divine order, a man is to leave his parents in order to be united with a woman in marriage. While arguing that homosexuals are opposing this order, men are called to 'find joy and gladness and fulfilment in maintaining God's order' and to accept the roles and position God has intended for them.[60]

It seems that homosexuality is discussed in the church mainly to depict how manhood can be distorted from its presumed divine design. As Banda understands homosexuality, it represents two of his main concerns with men: their preoccupation with sexuality, and their indifference towards the male role they are to play. Homosexuality is referred to as a counter-example, in order to challenge men to live sexually straight and morally upright.

It is clear that the vision of "biblical manhood" promoted in NAOG is considered to be incompatible with the use of sexuality as the primary place for masculine performance. The latter is said to be common in present-day Zambia and has resulted in HIV, among others things. To overcome this pattern, the church strongly denounces popular perceptions and behaviour in relation to sexuality.

The Consumption of Alcohol

The drinking of alcohol is also addressed as a critical aspect of prevalent masculinities. The church's stance is quite clear: drinking alcohol is not compatible with being born again. As Banda puts it: 'If you know Jesus as the Saviour, there is no way alcohol intake can become your lifestyle.'[61] Not only excessive drinking but any intake of alcohol (even at Holy Communion) is rejected.[62] Several reasons are given for this. There is a theological-spiritual argument suggesting that the intake of alcohol is a direct threat to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Both are considered to be mutually

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[59] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*.

[60] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[61] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 3* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2005.

[62] Simple social drinking is not considered a real option. This is expressed, for example, in Banda's comment in a sermon: 'Don't tell me that there is anyone today who just drinks for the taste, everybody wants to get to a certain level. Otherwise they call you a sissy in the club, so everybody goes for the high.' See Joshua H.K. Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 4* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2005.

exclusive: either one is filled with alcohol, or with the Holy Spirit.[63] There is also reference to the social effects of alcohol. For example, the impact of alcoholism on families is mentioned, with reference to economic impoverishment and to children being neglected by their parents. Also the impact of alcohol on sexual behaviour, and the consequence this can have in the context of HIV, is highlighted. Referring to the HIV prevalence rates in Zambia and to the reality of people dying because of AIDS, Banda rhetorically raises the question: 'How, then, can we make beer so fashionable to our people?'[64]

Although it is acknowledged that alcoholism can also be a problem for women, men in particular are addressed in this area. Elaborating on the impoverishment of families due to alcoholism, Banda says that 'the majority of our men spend their time on the bottle' while they leave the responsibility of providing for their families to 'the hard-working African woman'.[65] In the same sermon he points out how alcohol causes men to intimidate women sexually, which makes women even more vulnerable to contracting HIV. Exploring these issues Banda makes a strong appeal to men to change their attitude:

> Men of Africa listen to me, as we continue in this way we will pay heavy prices before God almighty. Wake up! We pay a very heavy price and the days of drunkenness must be behind us in the name of Jesus. As we are to live as men of truth it must be behind us, and we must restore dignity to the African home.[66]

This quotation indicates that the opposition to alcohol is informed by a concern with the dignity of the family. In order to restore the family, men have to take their responsibility in their homes as husbands and fathers. They are challenged to reject everything that is a threat to the ideal of being "men of truth". In line with this, advertisements that present drinking alcohol as a sign of manhood are strongly denounced by Banda. Referring to the slogan of a beer brand saying 'As powerful as the men who drink it', he points to something that he believes to be far more powerful, and through which men can overcome their difficulty in the area of alcohol: the grace of God. 'This grace is powerful enough to keep you joyful and to keep you on a spiritual high that does not require you to get high on alcohol.'[67]

Clearly, alcohol is considered a threat to the ideal of manhood propagated by the church. As will be outlined below, according to this ideal men have to control their sexuality and to take their responsibilities as fathers and husbands in their families.

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[63] Cf. Joshua H.K. Banda in *Knowing God – part 12*. See http://www.northmeadassembly.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=269%3Atheme-knowing-god-part-12&catid=37%3Abible-study&showall=1 (Accessed 28 September 2009).

[64] Joshua H.K. Banda, *When the Grass Withers and the Flowers Fall*, http://www.northmeadassembly.org.zm/ddata/news/viewnews.cgi?category=3&id=1037458688 (Accessed 23 March 2009).

[65] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 3*.

[66] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 3*.

[67] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 3*.

According to the church, no way can alcohol help to achieve this ideal – on the contrary.

Domestic and Sexual Violence

Another aspect of dominant versions of masculinity contested by the church is domestic and sexual violence. This issue is addressed, for instance, in church services, not only in sermons but also through drama. Once, a sketch was performed to announce a marriage weekend, organised by the marriage ministry. In this sketch, a woman was swathed in bandages, indicating that she had been battered. She tries to convince her husband to attend the marriage weekend together, but he responds: 'Then they will even teach us how to stop battering!' Significantly, the sketch generated laughter of recognition from the congregation.[68]

Although it is acknowledged that women can be involved in spouse battering, mostly men are addressed in this area. Referring to statistics of the Victim Support Unit of the Zambian police, Banda not only says that domestic violence is a serious problem in society, but also that it is largely perpetrated by men. He links this with the economic dependence in many marital relationships, saying that men often misuse their economic strength over the wives, who are dependent on their husbands for their income.[69] In the series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century* the prevalence of violence against women is mentioned as an illustration of the impairment of "true manhood" in Zambia.[70] Referring to pastoral experiences from the church's marriage counsellors, several sermons mention that domestic violence occurs not only outside but also inside the church. Hence, wife battering is clearly denounced, and men are challenged to mend their ways:

> There could be wife battering husbands here today! You are living between two worlds; your conscience is seared. God wants to set you free. There is hope for you, if you will recognise that a woman has as much a right to life as you do, even if you are the breadwinner, even if you're the one that brings food into the home. (…) We have husbands who lift up their hands and sing 'Glory hallelujah'! But if you've been using your hands to batter your wife, God considers that an indecent violent and pervasive act and calls you to repentance here today.[71]

As the quotation indicates, the use of violence in the home is considered by the church as inappropriate for a Christian man. Banda even calls it 'an insult to God's divine order' which will be judged by God.[72] His argument is that in God's creation, man and woman are created equally in the image of God, and therefore the husband should not

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[68] Church service in Northmead Assembly of God, 19 October 2008.

[69] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*.

[70] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*.

[71] Joshua Banda, *Between two worlds – part II*, http://www.northmeadassembly.org.zm/ddata/news/viewnews.cgi?category=3&id=1041935291 (accessed on 24 March 2009).

[72] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

batter his wife. He underscores that according to "the biblical order", men are supposed to protect women rather than to beat them.[73]

Apart from violence of husbands against their spouses, sexual violence against siblings (incest) and against women in general is also addressed in the church. In a sermon on 2 Samuel 13, which narrates the rape of Tamar by her half-brother Amnon, Banda draws a parallel between this story and what he observes taking place in society. In his observation, contemporary men, like the ancient Amnon, often approach vulnerable women in manipulative ways, violate them, and afterwards treat them viciously and do not show any remorse. Referring to God's judgement of Amnon, he calls upon men to repent of these things.[74]

From the awareness that domestic and sexual violence occurs in the church, women are encouraged to inform a church marriage counsellor so that the church leadership can take measures against the husband concerned. Banda even indicates that the church does not shirk from informing the police in cases of violence against women in the marriage and family setting.[75] Clearly, violence against women is a major concern for the church leadership with regard to men and prevalent masculinities.

Male Domination of Women

Apart from violence against women there is a more general concern in the church about men's domination and feelings of superiority over women. This is critically addressed by the church leadership. In a sermon dealing with the relationship between men and women, Banda on the one hand teaches the notion of male headship, which he considers to be biblical, but on the other, emphasises time and time again that headship should not be understood in terms of domination. Referring to both the context of marriage and the broader context of society, he strongly denounces the way men tend to exercise the authority and power they have: 'What we have seen most times is male domination. And it stinks in the nostrils of God. It is a distortion of God's order. Because male domination implies that the woman is less than the man, but that's not biblical.'[76] This observation is supported by a church member involved in marriage counselling. She indicates that the majority of marital problems arise out of men's misunderstanding of male headship. For example, men are said not to consult their wives when decisions have to be made. Hence she says: 'I have discovered that without us as a church giving guidance, almost by default men will appear to be very dictatorial in their approach towards issues. And I am talking about Christian men.'[77]

The tendency of men to dominate women and to exercise power in an oppressive way is often explained in the church as being part of "African culture". As one of the

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[73] See Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

[74] Joshua Banda, *Between Two Worlds – part II*, http://www.northmeadassembly.org.zm/ddata/news/viewnews.cgi?category=3&id=1041935291 (Accessed 24 March 2009).

[75] Interview with Bishop Joshua Banda, Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[76] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[77] Interview with Rosy Mbuzi (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 29 October 2008

pastors bluntly says, 'from a cultural point of view a man is a tyrant.[78] Likewise Banda talks about male chauvinism as a characteristic of African culture.[79] Where it is felt that traditional culture looks down upon women as inferior beings, it is perceived that Christianity teaches the equality of men and women. Hence Banda labels male domination over women in marriage and in society as a violation of God's order. Out of this concern, the church challenges men to change their perception of and their attitude towards women. They are to respect women's dignity and to mobilise their capacities rather than to dominate.

Overall Irresponsibility

Apart from concrete issues such as sexuality, alcohol and domestic and sexual violence, a more general concern is also mentioned in the church, being that men often neglect their responsibilities and do not fulfil the roles they have as men. This irresponsibility is addressed in several areas of life.

First, there is the irresponsibility of men as fathers. The phenomenon of men making a woman pregnant without accepting responsibility for the child is strongly denounced. Men are criticised for their "hit-and-run" practice, in which they seek pleasure for only one night, out of which they may find themselves to be "surprise fathers" (i.e. they have fathered offspring without being aware of it). Banda calls upon men, saying: '[Y]ou cannot continue to act irresponsibly: if you have fathered a child out of wedlock you are responsible for that child. (…) You are being irresponsible and God calls you to repentance in Jesus' name.'[80] It is emphasised that a man should only engage in sex when he is ready for the responsibility of taking care of a child, i.e. when he has entered marriage. However, also in the context of marriage and the family, the way men exercise the father role is evaluated negatively. Men are challenged to take their role as a father in the home, and to pay attention to their children. However as a church member comments: 'Very few men are responsible, because they leave everything to women. Very few men are concerned with the way their children are growing. They leave it to the woman to do the house thing, to teach the girls and the boys.'[81]

Secondly, there is the irresponsibility of men as husbands and as heads of their families. This is addressed, for instance, in relation to the role of men as providers. Illustrating the "immature masculinity" he observes in society, Banda says: 'It is a shame to see a man sitting at home and the woman going out and bringing money back home.'[82] Similar statements are made with regard to men's role as protector in the home, when the issue of domestic violence is raised. Moreover, men are addressed for not practising their role as leader in the home in a responsible way. They are said not to take this role seriously, or to practise it in a dominating way. Referring

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[78] Interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

[79] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[80] Joshua Banda, *Between Two Worlds – part II*.

[81] Interview with Isabel Lupiya (woman in her 20s), Lusaka: 8 July 2009.

[82] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

to the several responsibilities men have as heads of their homes, Banda concludes: 'We men are the head, but you have to live up to it. We like to be the head but we don't like to live up to the responsibility. That's our problem.'[83]

Thirdly, there is the irresponsibility of men as leaders in society. Referring to statistics indicating that men are in the majority of leadership positions in Africa and all over the world, and to the political oppression and the social problems that Africa and the world are faced with, Banda clearly states: 'We seem to like authority but not the responsibility for the mess in which we are'. Hence he concludes that 'we men are doing a bad job'.[84] One of the major problems concerning men being addressed in the series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century* is the "abdication of leadership", and the series aims to challenge men to recapture their position and the related responsibilities.

It appears that the presumed irresponsibility of men in all these areas of life is a major concern for Banda, one that he shares with the congregation. It is this concern that led him to preach the series on manhood, as he explains:

> The aim in the series was to handle this from the spiritual side, because I was feeling that these men have to be addressed by a higher power. Maybe when they understand that this responsibility is given to them by God, they begin to see that when they lay back they are actually sinning against God. So that they get to see: look, we have been given a divine role, let me get up and do it.[85]

Thus, the irresponsibility is understood to be a sin against God, and the aim is to evangelise men in order for them to rise up and fulfil their "divine role".

It is significant that Banda, when addressing the overall irresponsibility of men, talks about "immature masculinity".[86] For him, this illustrates the "distortion of manhood" which he observes in Zambian society today and the characteristics of which have been outlined above. How, then, is this immaturity and distortion in his opinion to be overcome?

4.4. Defining the Ideal of "Biblical Manhood"

The previous section has described which issues concerning men and masculinities are addressed in NAOG. However the church not only challenges aspects of prevailing masculinities, but also defines an alternative type of masculinity. The present section will present this alternative ideal under the term "biblical manhood", a term occurring in the sermons on *Fatherhood in the 21st Century* more than twenty times. The title of this series presents the concept of fatherhood to capture the ideal type of masculinity. However the sermons frequently state that 'biblical fatherhood is rooted in biblical manhood', indicating that biblical manhood is the comprehensive name capturing the ideal masculinity promoted by the church. In the present section the major notions that define this ideal are identified – notions which are, of course, closely related:

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[83] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2*.

[84] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2*.

[85] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 5 November 2008.

[86] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

responsibility, headship, leadership, providing and self-control. These arise not only from the series of sermons on fatherhood but also from other sermons and talks delivered in the church and from interviews with church members. How, then, are these particular notions understood?

Responsibility

The concept of responsibility is one of the most central notions of manhood in the church. It is mentioned time and time again, not only in sermons and church meetings but also in interviews with church members. Responsibility is also the fundamental concept in the definition of "biblical manhood" presented and explored by Banda in the series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*. He derives this definition from a publication by John Piper.[87] According to the definition, 'At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships.'[88] Banda adopts this definition with approval and unpacks it in a number of sermons. The fact that this masculinity is described as "mature" means that it is understood as something that is to develop with time. Banda comments that because of this aspect, it is possible to 'restore a biblical vision for biblical manhood and fatherhood'.[89] In other words, he realises that men and masculinities can be changed. The fact that masculinity is defined by a "benevolent responsibility" means that it is concerned with, and focused on the well-being of others. As is said in a sermon: because of this benevolence, men are to serve rather than to dictate.[90] While Piper's definition relates men's benevolent responsibility only in relation to women, Banda in his sermons applies it in a more comprehensive way, in the areas of marriage, the family, sexuality, the community and society.

Of course, according to the church, women must also be responsible, as every human being is regarded as being endowed with responsibility towards God, others

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[87] John Piper is a Baptist pastor and prolific writer from the United States of America. He is actively involved in *The Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, an American organisation which, according to its website, aims to oppose "evangelical feminism" and to advocate the teaching of the Bible on manhood and womanhood and the complementary differences between men and women. On this website, John Piper is mentioned as a member of the governing council of the organisation. See www.cbmw.org (accessed on 1 October 2009).

[88] J. Piper, 'A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible' in J. Piper and W. Grudem (eds.), *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, Wheaton: Crossway Books 1991, 36. This definition was quoted and explored by Banda in parts 3, 4 and 5 of Fatherhood in the 21st Century. This definition of manhood is linked with Piper's definition of womanhood, which is also mentioned by Banda. According to this definition, 'At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in way's appropriate to a woman's differing relationships.'

[89] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*.

[90] Cf. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

and the self. Yet responsibility is a key notion defining manhood specifically. Following Piper, Banda emphasises that men have a *primary* responsibility.[91] Relating this to the varying specific responsibilities men have, Banda preaches that the man bears the primary responsibility to head the marital relationship, to provide for the material needs of the family, and to provide leadership. This perception is informed by an interpretation of the Genesis 2 creation story. According to Banda, this account presents 'a vision of true biblical manhood' where Adam as the perfect man is 'placed at a location where he had to be responsible.'[92] The following quotation from an interview illustrates how male church members understand manhood from the biblical story of Adam:

> And if you are a man, God expects a lot from you. When God made Adam, the Bible says: God made a garden and put the man in it. Adam did not find a mansion, he did not find a processing plant for juice. He found nothing, just a bush. He had to cultivate, he had to work it, to take care of it. He had to start using his engineering mind, innovation. For me that tells a lot about what God expects. God did not just tell: here Adam, everything is finished, here you are. So that is what a man should do: start from nothing, and do something. That is what every single man should do.[93]

Thus, according to this understanding, high expectations are put on men. This is not only because Adam was created first and received the responsibility of cultivating the garden. There is also reference to God calling Adam to account after "the Fall". Genesis 2 narrates how God calls Adam, saying 'Adam, where are you?'. Banda considers this to be 'question number one' to men in "God's economy".[94] This question is believed to underline men's primary responsibility, which thus appears to be an accountability to God.

Apart from the figure of Adam in Paradise, Banda also refers to Jesus Christ (as the second Adam, see §4.5) in order to underline responsibility as a crucial notion of "biblical manhood". Jesus Christ, according to Banda, is exemplary for men because he took up his God-given responsibility and hence fulfilled the divine role a man has to perform:

> Jesus Christ, when it was time to take his responsibility, he took responsibility. Then he said to his parents: I have a task. That is a picture of taking responsibility. And that is the role that a man should be able to fulfil. He had a commitment to humanity and a commitment to the restoration of people's life. And biblical manhood calls for men to rule and feed in these roles to making it better, making a better society. That role is

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[91] According to Piper, 'The word "responsibility" is chosen to imply that man will be uniquely called to account for his leadership, provision and protection in relation to women. (….) This does not mean the woman has no responsibility, as we will see. It simply means that man bears a unique and primary one.' See Piper, *A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*, 37.

[92] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

[93] Interview with Philip Chime (man in his 40s), Lusaka: 15 July 2009.

[94] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2*.

given to men. Being a man is about taking up your responsibility, and that is what Christ did.[95]

Clearly, Jesus Christ is presented here not as a model for humankind in general but as a model of manhood. He is exemplary to men because of the responsibility he took. The above quotation illustrates how wide the notion of responsibility is perceived: it is concerned with the well-being of humanity and of society.

Where Banda presents responsibility as the fundamental notion of "biblical manhood", church members indicate that it is also central to traditional understandings of manhood. In interviews men often indicate a deep sense of the responsibilities they bear as men. As a young man recounts, this sense was developed when he grew up in a town and attended the meetings of the *Insaka*: 'This is the place where people of different ages meet. The elderly men are telling the younger about being a man. (…) What they have told me is that being a man has a sense of responsibility. That sense considers you to be a man.'[96] This quotation suggests that according to the teaching in the *Insaka*, as in the preaching of Banda, the notion of responsibility is gendered: it specifically applies to men. Telling about the socialisation into gender roles during his upbringing in a rural set-up, another interviewee recounts how the boys were taught to be independent and to be responsible over others, which was 'different from what the women-folk was taught'.[97] Apparently the notion of male responsibility is not an invention of Banda, the church or Christianity, but is also found in traditional cultures. Yet it is said that Christianity makes a difference. The difference is that in the church, responsibility is taught as a command of God to men. As an interviewee says: 'It becomes a responsibility from God. (…) Whereby if I don't do as I should do, then it becomes an issue in my spirituality.'[98] This indicates that the sense of responsibility is reinforced by the church's teaching and becomes more imperative.

Various responsibilities

Responsibility is quite a general concept. In the church's teaching, the notion of male responsibility is applied to various areas of life, at the level of the individual, the level of marriage and the family and the level of the community and society. At these various levels, the notion of responsibility is often related to other concepts, such as headship and leadership.

Though male responsibility is supposed to be benevolent to others, it is also concerned with the self. In concrete terms, it demands economic independence. As a young man says: 'Graduating from a boy to a man is a stage where one is becoming responsible. Looking for a job, for something to do; no longer depending from your parents but providing for yourself.'[99] Furthermore, it demands moral discipline over

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[95] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[96] Interview with Titus Kabunko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[97] Interview with Jack Lungu (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 7 November 2008.

[98] Interview with Henry Mwale (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 15 November 2008.

[99] Interview with Gift Phiri (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008.

the self. Referring to the period in his life when he was smoking and drinking and had girl friends, someone says: 'I couldn't call myself a man because I wasn't responsible over my life.' However, he recounts that after being born again, 'I became responsible. … That is when I became a man because I started doing what God has purposed me to do.'[100] These quotations indicate that by taking responsibility over one's life – whether economically or behaviourally – one becomes a man. And only when this stage of "mature" manhood is reached, is one considered to be ready for marriage and to establish a family.

With regard to marriage and the family, men's responsibility is understood in terms of provision and leadership. This already starts before a man is married. Several young men indicate a sense of responsibility to contribute to the income of their parental home or to support younger brothers and sisters. Once married, the notion of responsibility means that a man has to provide for the material needs of the family. In the sermons on *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*, this is emphasised time and time again: a man has the *primary* responsibility to lead the relationship and to provide for the family.[101] As marriage and the family is such a central place for men to practise their responsibility, it is important for men to be married. Though realising that one can be responsible without being married, and that others are married without being responsible, a church member says: 'But marriage is an important stage in manhood. A person needs to have a family; he needs to have the responsibility over others.'[102]

The responsibility to provide for the family is quite demanding for men. As was said by a woman, 'a man who is responsible will be very busy', because he has to make sure that all the needs of the family are provided for.[103] In her turn, this interviewee understands it to be the task of women to remind men that being a responsible father does not only concern the material needs: 'We have to remind them to spend time with their children.'[104] Apart from the responsibility towards his direct family – his wife and children – responsibilities towards the extended family are also mentioned by church members. They give examples of looking after siblings and paying school fees or of supporting relatives in need. In the church, this responsibility towards the extended family is not emphasised all that much. It is rather the opposite: the high expectations on the part of the extended family are discussed in the marriage ministry

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[100] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[101] This emphasis is informed, it seems, by the realisation that women are increasingly engaged in formal employment and bring in a substantial or even the major part of the family income. The church leadership is concerned that because of this, women will contest the position of men as heads and providers of their families. For example, it is said to women: 'Even if you are economically stronger than your husband, you still must give him the role to provide, the primary provisions and income in the home.' See Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 5* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[102] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[103] Interview with Isabel Lupiya (woman in her 20s), Lusaka: 8 July 2009.

[104] Idem.

as a burden to men and to married couples.[105] The concern of the church is primarily with the nuclear family.

Lastly, male responsibility is applied at the level of the community and society. At a meeting of the men's ministry, men were challenged to 'commit their manhood to society'. The meaning of this was that men need to take responsibility not only in their family but in the entire society, 'in order to be the men God intends us to be.'[106] This responsibility in society is understood primarily in terms of leadership (see below). Responsibility in the community is understood in terms of supporting people in the neighbourhood either materially or spiritually. It also includes providing moral guidance. This is apparent, for example, from Banda's call upon men to be their "brother's keeper", meaning that they have to speak to fellow men in the community when these engage in morally illegitimate behaviour.[107]

It appears that responsibility is a fundamental concept in the church's ideal of manhood. The concept of "biblical manhood" aims to raise responsible and accountable men. Church members indicate that responsibility is a primary characteristic of traditional definitions of masculinity. Yet the church leadership presents it primarily as a Christian notion derived from the Bible's teaching on manhood as embodied in the figures of Adam and Jesus Christ.

Headship

A second key notion defining the ideal of "biblical manhood" is the concept of headship. Where responsibility is a general concept, headship especially concerns men's position and roles in marriage and in the family. The teaching on male headship is informed by the church's interpretation of the Bible. At every wedding ceremony, the New Testament reading is from Ephesians 5, which reads: 'Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.' (Ephesians 5:22-24, NIV). Referring to this Scripture, Pastor Nyirenda, who is in charge of the marriage ministry, says that the headship of man in marriage is central to God's instructions for marriage:

> These say: the man should be the head of that partnership. That is not negotiable. What is in the manual is not negotiable. We believe that marriage is instituted by God, and for us to live out this marriage we have to use Gods manual for marriage, which is the Bible. The Bible says: the man is the head of marriage.[108]

In line with this, in his sermons discussing manhood Banda also emphasises "the principle of male headship". He underlines that this principle is part of God's order for creation. Therefore he refers, again, to Genesis 2: the fact that Adam was created first

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[105] Cf. interview with Ezra Kambole (man in his 60s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008.

[106] Meeting of *Men of Truth*, Northmead Assembly of God, 9 November 2008.

[107] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 5*.

[108] Interview with pastor Raymond Nyirenda, Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

and received the instructions for life, while Eve was given to him as a helper illustrates, according to Banda, the principle of male headship in marriage.[109]

Answering the question as to what male headship implies, Banda states that 'it is the man, not the woman [who] bears the primary responsibility to lead the partnership'.[110] Apparently, the concept of headship primarily concerns the sphere of marriage. It is about the position of the husband vis-à-vis the wife in a marital relationship. The concept does not apply to the public sphere where, according to Banda, women and men are equal. In his opinion, a woman can be a pastor in church, head of a company or even president of the nation, but in marriage she is to submit to her husband.[111] Male headship is related to several roles: the husband has to be the provider, the priest, the prophet and the protector of the family.[112] Ultimately, headship is about authority. Even when the wife brings in more income than the husband, because of the principle of male headship it should be the husband who has the final say in how the resources are used.[113] The reason for this is simply that 'God has given a man the authority to be the head of the home.'[114] This principle is generally supported by church members, whether male or female. Men seriously consider themselves to be the head, and even when they are not yet married they make statements such as: 'Biblically a man is the head of the house. You can't compromise on that.'[115]

Women, even when they are very critical of the actual behaviour of their husbands, consider their husbands to be the head. They put it as simply as: 'My husband is the head and whatever I do is in submission to his vision and what he is doing.'[116] As this quotation indicates, the notion of male headship accompanies the principle of submission on the part of the wife. Indeed, this is part of the teaching of the church.[117] Conversations with women in the church indicate that they have generally internalised this perception of their role. Referring to the passage from Ephesians 5 quoted above, one of them says that 'if you are not submissive to your husband, it means you are not submissive to Christ.'[118] What this concretely brings to bear on the daily relationship between a husband and wife – whether women are just submissive and men indeed always take the lead – is a question left open. What is significant, however, is that in the church's teaching, headship and submission are acknowledged but at the same time are nuanced.

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[109] For instance, see part 2 and part 6 of Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*.

[110] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[111] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[112] Northmead Assembly of God, *Premarital Counseling General Guide*.

[113] Cf. interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 17 July 2009.

[114] Interview with Isabel Lupiya (woman in her 20s), Lusaka: 8 July 2009.

[115] Interview with Gift Phiri (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[116] Interview with Rosy Mbuzi (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 29 October 2008.

[117] In the pre-marital counselling women are taught that subjection is one of the duties of a wife to her husband. Cf. *Premarital Counseling General Guide*.

[118] Interview with Febby Chibwika (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 16 July 2009.

Balancing male headship with gender equality

In the church there is anxiety about the fact that headship tends to be understood in terms of domination over women and male superiority. This is explained from traditional Zambian cultures. Though male headship is said to be a cultural as well as a Christian principle, the differences in the understanding of the concept are emphasised. According to a church member, traditionally headship results in 'a master-slave relationship' between the husband and his wife, but in a Christian marriage it should be expressed through mutual love and respect.[119] In line with this, Banda addressed the 'push for chauvinism' which he observes in "African culture", with men as the heads looking down on their wives and treating them as inferior beings.[120] Marriage counsellors indicate that they are faced with many marital problems arising from men's misunderstanding of headship as dictatorship and domination. Because of this, the church is redefining the traditional perception of headship 'on the basis of the Bible' into a Christian version.

In this process of redefinition, headship is dissociated from male domination and re-interpreted in a more nuanced way, in terms of responsibility and leadership. Therefore two theological notions are employed. First, the concept of headship is qualified christologically, in line with the text from Ephesians already quoted. Here, the relation of the husband-head to his wife is understood in analogy to the love of Christ for the church. Hence Banda presents Christ as the model for husbands in relation to their wives. He preaches that husbands are to take example from Christ's love for the church, and thus should not dominate but rather love, protect and take care of their wives.[121] Secondly, in order to prevent husbands from having superior feelings and dominating attitudes over their wives, he emphasises that men and women are created equal. This is derived from Genesis 1:26-27, saying that God created man in God's image, as male and female. Also the narrative of Genesis 2, where woman is made from a rib of man and is accepted by man as 'bones of my bones, flesh of my flesh', is interpreted as an indication of equality.[122] Thus, where the biblical creation stories first of all are used to found the primary responsibility and the headship of men, they are also used to argue for the equality of men and women. This notion of gender equality is understood in terms of the dignity of men and women and their status before God. In the perception of the church leadership, the sense of equality missing in African cultures should encourage respect, partnership and companionship in a Christian marriage even though the husband is the head.

Where the church, on the one hand, opposes traditional understandings of headship as domination, on the other it opposes modern Western perceptions that do not allow for the principle of headship. In the fatherhood series Banda strongly opposes 'extreme feminist views' that oppose God's order of creation, and he calls

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[119] Interview with Moses Banda (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

[120] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[121] See part 4 and 6 of Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*.

[122] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

upon women not to fight but rather to accept male headship.[123] This call indicates that apparently women's submission to their husbands is not always self-evident. Indeed, in the church there is a strong feeling that nowadays men's position as the head in marriage is threatened by women becoming more educated, being employed and at times bringing in more income than their husbands. Because of this development, Pastor Nyirenda says that in premarital counselling men are to be encouraged to take the position as head: 'If the husband is not very educated, he is still the head. We therefore tell the men to be assertive, assertively taking up the role of leadership.'[124] Although the church is not against women pursuing a professional career, the concern is that they will start competing with their husbands at home and will no longer respect them as head. Therefore it is emphasised that men and women are equal but yet different. As Nyirenda puts it:

> Even if the woman brings more money, that does not give her headship. But the sad thing about it is that there is so much hype about gender, that feminism thing, that tries to zap Gods order, it tries to zap the man's position. They are equal in the sense that none is more human than the other, but their roles are different. One has been given the role to provide leadership, and one has the role to support that leadership.[125]

Thus, apart from the notion of gender equality there is a notion of sexual difference implying that women are still to respect the principle of male headship in marriage. A gender ideology of heterosexual complementarity is indicated here, where woman is supposed to complement the headship, leadership and primary responsibility of the man – at least within marriage.

It can be concluded that headship is central to the church's perception of "biblical manhood". Male headship is considered an essential biblical teaching that cannot be given up in favour of but has to be balanced with the notion of gender equality. Therefore headship is dissociated from domination and superiority and is redefined in terms of responsibility and leadership. People in the church seem to believe generally that with such an understanding, there is no contradiction between the notions of headship and equality.

Providing

One of the responsibilities that a man has as head of the home is to be the provider. This is a central aspect of the church's ideal of biblical manhood, and it is discussed at length by Banda as well as by interviewees. The attention paid to the issue of providing is informed by two concerns. The first is the observation of men's failure with regard to their providing role. Banda points critically to men hanging around in bars and leaving the role of providing to women, saying:

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[123] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[124] Interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

[125] Interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 17 July 2009.

> The characteristic of many of our both rural and urban areas is that the majority of our men spend their time on the bottle. You find these men at 10 a.m. in the bar while in the meantime the precious lady is probably at the market (…), trying to make money.[126]

Hence the call to men is to leave drunkenness behind and to take up their responsibility to provide. The second concern arises from the development of women increasingly being involved in formal employment, pursuing a professional career, and bringing in an income that is sometimes even greater than the husband's. This is considered as a threat to men's role of provider, as has already been pointed out above.[127] Where the first concern may be rather rhetorical – after all, in a middle class church like NAOG most men will not spend their time in bars while leaving the task of providing to their wives on the markets – the second concern seems to address an issue that indeed affects the church membership.

Out of the two concerns mentioned above, the church emphasises time and time again that to provide income to the home is the primary and principal task of the man. The reason for this is hardly explored. Providing is simply considered a crucial aspect of being "the head of the home". According to Banda, it is part of the African and the biblical tradition, both of which have to be appreciated; even more, in his view it is part of God's order.[128] In the pre-marital counselling the reference is to Ephesians 5,28-29. which reads: 'Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.' On the basis of this verse husbands are called to take care of their wives and to provide for them as if they were part of their own bodies.

Church members often indicate that they do indeed consider the role of providing to be a central aspect of manhood. Different from Banda, they predominantly relate it to cultural ideals of manhood. It is one of the cultural expectations of a man to provide for his wife and family, including the extended family. 'In African Zambian culture, in particular in Bemba culture, being a man means being able to provide, not only for your offspring but also for your family.'[129] Thus, culturally a man is only considered to be a man when he is economically independent (which evidently puts lots of pressure on young men).[130]

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[126] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 4*.

[127] This corresponds with the findings of Jane Soothill in charismatic churches in Ghana. She found these churches to be 'critical of married women who try to "boss" their husbands because their income matches or even exceeds that of their spouse.' Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, 207.

[128] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

[129] Interview with Gift Phiri (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008.

[130] It appears from interviews with young men, that the expectation to provide puts pressure on them to prove their manhood. Only when they are able to take care of themselves and others, are they assumed to be ready for marriage. This is quite challenging, especially when one does not have formal employment. As a young man says: 'There is no room for error. It is

In spite of the cultural and/or biblical ideal, due to modern developments married men often find that their wives are employed and also bringing money into the home. It appears that this sometimes creates tension in marriages.[131] Clearly, the principle of the husband as provider is challenged by women's increasing participation in the economy. It is interesting to see how the church deals with this, as it illustrates the negotiation with what is considered the ideal of manhood. Firstly, the church leadership allows women (and even seems to encourage them) to bring in a "supplementary income". Thus women too can provide for the family, but it remains primarily a task of men. Likewise, even when interviewees indicate that their wife's salary is quite substantial, yet they seek to maintain the role of providing as a notion of manhood. For instance, one of them says: 'For me it's not an option whether to work or not to work .... [but] my wife has a choice.'[132] In other words, as a man you have to be able to provide for the needs of the family whether your wife contributes or not. A second strategy followed to maintain men's position as provider, is that of redefining the meaning of providing. Then it is not just about the material needs of the family – which can also be provided for by the wife – but also about the emotional and spiritual needs in which the husband as head of the home has to provide. Furthermore a church members says that 'being the provider goes with leadership', meaning that in cases where a wife brings in more income than her husband, it is still the latter who is supposed to plan and prioritise how the income is spent.[133]

It appears that the ideal of men as providers is affirmed but redefined by the church. This is done because the role of provider is challenged by the increasing participation of women in the economy and their contribution to the income of the household. The church seeks to allow for this development, but at the same time realises that it might endanger the "biblical" order in which the man is the head and thus is supposed to be the provider. In order to maintain this principle of male headship, the notion of providing is emphasised but with a wider scope, as it does not specifically concern material needs but the needs of the family in general.

Leadership

Central to the ideal of manhood promoted in the church is also the notion of leadership. As appears from Piper's definition of masculinity used by Banda, leadership is one of the responsibilities that characterise "mature masculinity". Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the headship of men in the context of marriage is understood, among other things, in terms of leadership of the family. However, male leadership has a wider scope than the context of family life. It ranges from marriage and the family to

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not a test drive marriage.' (Interview with Marc Mwila (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.)

[131] One female interviewee talked openly about this. She says that she has opened her own bank account, as she wanted to be financially independent from her husband. See the interview with Febby Chibwika (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 16 July 2009.

[132] Interview with Henry Mwale (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 15 November 2008.

[133] Interview with Moses Banda (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

the community, society and the nation. In all these areas of life, it is said that men's role is to lead. This role is emphasised because the church leadership observes an "abdication of leadership" among men in society. The feeling is that 'the sons of Africa and the sons of Zambia have failed to take the lead.'[134] Against this background, Banda says that 'men need to understand their role of fatherhood in the family and society. God has given them a role to lead, not to triumph but to lead, to facilitate the society to grow.'[135] How, then, is this leadership understood?

Again, the notion of leadership is inspired by a gender ideology rooted in the biblical creation stories. This time, Banda draws from Genesis 3, which narrates "the Fall" of humankind in paradise. Different from traditional Christian interpretations of Genesis 3, which tend to blame woman for the Fall[136], in Banda's reading man is blamed. Adam in Paradise neglected his leadership role. As he had received the instruction from God not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam should have prevented Eve from taking a fruit from the tree.[137] That God after the Fall goes to Adam and calls him to account rather than Eve, is understood as an indication of the leadership that God has given to man. As biblical manhood is rooted in creation, as Banda states frequently, the leadership and accountability of Adam applies to all men. Hence, the question from God to Adam is put to men in general, and is applied by Banda to the observed crisis of male leadership in society:

> All over the world men are in the majority of leadership positions, but look at the level of oppression, so we are doing a bad job. It is a very serious problem. … God is seeking to correct that. He says to the man: 'Where are you?' Today I ask you: men, where are you? Don't blame your wife for a relationship that is not working. Don't blame your son for things that you know you have the opportunity to protect. I know that they have a role, but however, in God's economy question number one is 'Where are you?'[138]

It appears that the so-called "abdication of leadership" by men can be traced back to Adam's failure in the Fall. At the same time, the fact that God holds Adam accountable for the Fall is considered an indication of men's leadership role. Parallel to this, in the

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[134] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 5*.

[135] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 5 November 2008.

[136] Cf. A.-M. Korte, 'Paradise Lost, Growth Gained: Eve's Story Revisited. Genesis 2-4 in a Feminist Theological Perspective' in B. Becking and S. Hennecke (eds.), *Out of Paradise. Eve and Adam and their Interpreters*, Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press 2010 (forthcoming).

[137] This perception expressed by Banda corresponds with the study of Jane Soothill in charismatic churches in Ghana, and with the research of Joseph Gelfer on the evangelical men's movement in the United States. Both observe a similar interpretation of Genesis 3 blaming Adam rather than Eve for the Fall. Apparently, Banda's interpretation of the story is in line with a broader strand of Pentecostal and Evangelical-Protestant theology. Cf. J. Gelfer, *Numen, Old Men. Contemporary Masculine Spiritualities and the Problem of Patriarchy*, London: Equinox 2009, 58; J.E. Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, Leiden: Brill 2007, 186.

[138] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2*.

church on the one hand men are addressed for "the mess" in society, while at the same time they are challenged to take responsibility for this and to turn things around.

Apart from the understanding of male leadership from the biblical account of creation, the notion of male leadership is also informed by Christology. Actually Jesus Christ is presented as the second Adam, being the one who has answered God's question to men, 'Where are you?' Hence, the way Jesus practised leadership is presented as a model for men.[139] The primary aspect is that of leadership-through-service. Ephesians 5:23 is cited here, where it is said: 'Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church and *gave himself up for her*' [emphasis mine, AvK]. From this verse it is said that 'loving is about giving' and that male leadership in marriage, but also in the wider society, should be characterised by service and sacrifice.[140] Men who understand leadership in terms of power and domination are severely criticised. The second aspect taken from Jesus' model is that leadership is not concerned with superiority but seeks to mobilise the strength of others. Hence it is said that men as leaders have to create an atmosphere where initiatives of all – including those of women – are encouraged, in order for the family and for society to grow.[141]

Among men in the church, there is a deep awareness of their leadership role. 'Being a man goes with being a leader', a young man immediately responded when asked for his understanding of manhood.[142] Men understand this male leadership as providing guidance and direction to the wife and family, as controlling and influencing situations, and as the ability to realise things in society. In the family, male leadership means that a man has the responsibility 'to track a course for his family' and to 'influence things into the right direction'[143], but it is also related to managing the finances of the family. At the level of society, it is understood in terms of moral leadership, giving a good example and encouraging others to live morally upright, and "making a difference" in people's life, in the community and in the nation. The feeling is that leadership in all these areas is a crucial role that men are supposed to play. As it was said at a meeting of the men's ministry: 'We have no option but to lead. When we withdraw, when we lie back, we create a vacuum.'[144] It is clear that the notion of leadership is a very gendered concept, as it characterises manhood in distinction to womanhood. As a male church member says:

> I so much feel that God has put a higher premier, a higher demand on the man than on the woman. Saying: If you do not lead, she will not follow. So the demand for men is

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[139] See Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*. Banda derived this teaching from Piper, *A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined according to the Bible*, 38-39.

[140] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*. See also interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

[141] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 5*.

[142] Interview with Clemens Kabunko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[143] Interview with Rosy Mbuzi (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 29 October 2008.

[144] Meeting Men's Ministry, 9 November 2008.

> higher, to develop real character. To which the woman will come to complement. There has to be one leader, isn't it?[145]

The perception of a higher demand put by God on men is often explained by referring to the leadership role that God has given to Adam, and not to Eve. Although leadership is thought of as a male role, men frequently indicate that it should be practised in a way that also gives space and opportunities to women. For example, though the notion of leadership attaches decision-making to men, Pastor Nyirenda who is responsible for the marriage ministry underlines that the husband should always consult his wife and seek for consensus. Only in case of an impasse should the man use his "additional vote".[146]

When it is about leadership at the level of society, young people especially – both male and female – are addressed in the church. The youth is considered a new generation, which is to restore things that have gone wrong because of the "abdication of leadership". In one of his sermons, Banda extensively elaborates on the moral decay of Zambia, after which he challenges youth in the church by saying: 'Let's change the face of Africa in the name of Jesus. It can be done. (…) I want you to dream big, I want you to know that God can put into your hands the ability to turn things around.'[147] Although here both young men and women are addressed and are called to be leaders in society, generally the discourse on leadership is quite masculine. Leaders are seen as social and spiritual *father* figures in society, and leadership is mentioned as a crucial characteristic of biblical manhood. Clearly, leadership is a central notion defining masculinity in NAOG.

Self-Control

The last defining notion to be discussed in this section is self-control, or equivalents such as discipline and restraint. The notion of self-control is crucial to Banda's ideal of biblical manhood. Actually, self-control is supposed to help men to live up to this ideal. It should prevent men from behaving in a way considered immoral, especially in the area of sexuality. In his sermons Banda frequently denounces men's inability to control themselves. For example,

> Who says that this is the way men must behave, unable to control their sexual desire? … So who told you that men can never keep themselves pure? Who says that men cannot be satisfied by one woman, that there always must be an extra one? (...) You and I can change, today![148]

Hence, men are called to take control over their own life and to master their desires. This is presented as an issue of "changing the mind". Contesting the popular opinion

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[145] Interview with Charles Muleya (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 13 July 2009.

[146] Cf. interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 17 July 2009.

[147] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 5*. Similar remarks are made in youth meetings. For example, in the youth meeting of 11 October 2008 the young people had to shout: 'I am the one Zambia is waiting for; I am the best Africa is waiting for; I am the best of the best.'

[148] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*.

among men that they cannot control their urges, the church emphasises that men *have* strength and *can* take control. 'You have the capacity to control yourself', is the firm statement.[149] Hence the ability to control the self becomes a feature of male character.[150] Referring to Job 31:1 that reads: 'I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl', Banda challenges men to reset their minds and to make a covenant with their eyes. Where he initially explains men's sexual weaknesses as derived from the hormone epinephrine (see the paragraph on male sexuality in §4.3), he then states that this hormone needs to be conquered through keeping control over the eyes and desires.[151] It is underlined that men cannot blame the devil for their failure in this area. 'We want to demonise everything, to explain it away (....), [but] it is just a man who is failing to have control over his lusts.'[152]

The importance of self-control in order to be a Christian man is recognised by men in the church. Pointing out that for their non-Christian peers sexuality is a major place to manifest manhood, they themselves indicate that a real man should be able to control his sexual urges. Self-control is mentioned as a crucial difference between the period before and the period after becoming born again. 'Before that time it was the opposite, the promiscuous ways and all the lack of control. But now there is control, and righteous living has become a joy.'[153] This is not to say that there are no more temptations when one has been born again. Feelings are normal, is the general opinion, but it is about controlling them (see §4.6). In a youth meeting the self-control that men are supposed to develop was captured in the metaphor of male circumcision. The guest preacher delivered a talk on *Raising the Remnant for the Lord*, with "the remnant" referring to what he called 'a new generation of men and women of morality'. He especially elaborated upon sexual morality, and then he began to address men in particular: 'When we talk about raising the remnant, we seek for men that are circumcised. Circumcision is a painful process. You need to be a man of the Lord. You cannot just go on with your life!'[154] Here, male circumcision is used as a metaphor of how a young Christian man is supposed to be: capable of controlling his sexuality, saying 'no' to temptations and reserving sex for marriage. The notion of self-control, it appears, is all about a moral discipline of the body through which men are circumcised symbolically.

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[149] Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 6*.

[150] This corresponds with David Maxwell's observation from research in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zimbabwe, where he found a similar emphasis on character, especially that of the young male. See D. Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism & the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement*, Oxford, Harare and Athens: James Currey, Weaver Press and Ohio University Press 2006, 201.

[151] Cf. part 6 and 7 from Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth*.

[152] Banda, *Between Two Worlds*.

[153] Interview with Charles Muleya (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 13 July 2009.

[154] Youth meeting, 11 October 2008.

Conclusion

The present section has outlined the ideal of "biblical manhood" as promoted in NAOG. Five key notions making up this ideal have been identified and explored: responsibility, headship, leadership, providing and self-control. These notions and their meanings are well articulated in the church, in sermons and other public discourses as well as in the (pre)marital counselling. In other words, there is an explicit discourse in which an ideal of manhood is actively defined and promoted. This ideal aims to overcome the "distortion of manhood" observed in society, which is associated with problems such as alcoholism, poverty, violence and HIV.

With regard to content, the Pentecostal ideal of "biblical manhood", as its name already indicates, is claimed to be derived from the Bible. A closer look shows that some specific biblical texts are foundational, or at least are referred to most often: Genesis 2-3 and Ephesians 5. The church leadership tends to present "biblical manhood" as different from cultural perceptions of manhood, though church members point to several similarities. There is a common opinion, however, that the biblical or Christian type of manhood is less dominating and more egalitarian with respect to women, when compared to traditional versions. Though presented as biblical, it appears that the promoted ideal of manhood is informed by, and negotiates modern developments. This is illustrated, for example, in the way the idea of male headship is "balanced" with the notion of male-female equality, and in the way men's role as providers for the family is nuanced and redefined. The fact that "modernity" is not simply accepted but negotiated can be explained from the church's theology. The ideal of manhood is inspired by deeply rooted theological lines of thought. These will be outlined in the next section.

4.5. RE-CONSTRUCTING A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In the previous paragraph five key notions of the ideal of "biblical manhood" as promoted in NAOG have been identified and explored. While doing so, some of the theological thoughts that underlie and inform this ideal have already been mentioned. These lines of thought, which together form a theological framework within which masculinity is constructed in the church, are outlined in the present section.

Gender Ideology and a Creation-Based Theological Anthropology

The many references to the biblical creation stories in sermons and interviews indicate that the ideal of manhood is inspired by an ideology of gender that takes its theological-anthropological starting point in the account of creation. Another indication is that the figures of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 and 3 are literally presented in the church as the models of biblical manhood and womanhood respectively. The creation-based theological anthropology entails four notions that are crucial for the understanding of gender and thus also of masculinity: difference, complementarity, heterosexuality and equality.

There is a strong perception of men and women as fundamentally different from each other. This perception is based on Genesis 2 which, according to Banda, presents 'the first surgery of human history' through which man, who was created first,

received woman as a helper.[155] According to Banda, this "surgery" resulted in woman being made from the rib of man but as a 'differently-abled version'[156] This difference, which is applied to women as a category in general, is not only thought of physiologically, but also psychologically and emotionally. In all these areas, women are said to be weaker than men. The difference between men and women is understood especially in terms of roles. As Nyirenda puts it: '[T]heir roles are different. One has been given the role to provide leadership, and one has the role to support that leadership.'[157] In the same way Banda, following the definition of manhood and womanhood from Piper, defines manhood in terms of providing, leading and protecting women, and womanhood in terms of receiving and affirming the leadership, provision and protection by men. It appears that the notion of gender difference is used to legitimate the primacy of men in gender relations. The "fact" that Adam was created first is understood as that 'there is something higher and bigger given to men.'[158] Likewise the "fact" that it is man who names the new creature woman, is presented as an illustration of the principle of male headship.[159]

As fundamentally different beings assigned different roles, man and woman are intended to complement each other, it is believed. Marriage is considered the primary place for this complementarity to take place. In this "divine institution" a man and a woman are considered to become "one body". However it is especially the wife who is supposed to complement the husband, as the latter has the primary position. This is not only indicated in interviews, but also appears from the text of the marriage liturgy. While the groom is addressed as 'God's most elaborate creation – a man', the value and role of the bride is phrased only in terms of her contribution to the life and success of her husband: 'You can be able to lift him to the highest of God's plan for him.'[160] Clearly, complementarity is hardly thought of as a mutual concept.

The notion of complementarity corresponds with the normative assumption of heterosexuality, which characterises the gender ideology in the church. Only a man and a woman can complement each other in order to become "one body", to fulfil their respective roles and to realise procreation. Again, this heteronormativity is informed by creation theology. This appears, for example, from Banda's statement that 'in creation God made them male and female. It is Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve.'[161] Homosexuality is presented as a violation of God's order for creation. Referring to Genesis 2:24 which says that a man will leave his parents in order to be united with a woman, marriage is not only said to be a divine institution but is also indicated as being unchangeably heterosexual.[162] According to this line of thought, in

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[155] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[156] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 5*.

[157] Interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 17 July 2009.

[158] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*.

[159] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[160] Northmead Assembly of God, *Standard Liturgy for Wedding Service*.

[161] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*.

[162] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

marriage a man and a woman become whole, because of their complementarity. Together they reach their fullest potential that they have as bearers of the image of God. Same-sex relations, on the other hand, do not allow people to mirror this image and are therefore rejected.[163]

Apart from the notions of gender difference and complementarity, and the related assumption of heterosexuality, the church also derives the notion of gender equality from creation theology. This equality is based on Genesis 1:27 which says that God created humankind in God's image as male and female. It is also derived from Genesis 2:23 where Adam recognises Eve as 'bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh'.[164] Clearly, in the church's perception this equality does not break down the fundamental difference between men and women. They are "different yet equal". The equality is that they both bear and represent the image of God, meaning that 'none is more human than the other'.[165] In this context Banda refers to George Orwell's *Animal Farm* where all animals are equal – but some are more equal than others. In Banda's argument, the world is *not* an animal farm because it is God's world, and therefore men and women are in principle equal.[166] It does not become clear, however, how the notion of gender equality is to be reconciled with the concept of male headship and leadership. Though the sense of equality is used to give space to the emancipation of women in society and to the acceptance of female pastors in the church, in the context of marriage male-female relations are understood in terms of male headship versus female submission. And even outside marriage, men in general are said to have a primary responsibility, as God has placed a higher demand on men. This suggests that actually, in the view of the church, God's world *is* an animal farm where men and women may be equal but with the former in fact being more equal than the latter.

To conclude, the creation theology of gender that prevails in the church results in an essentialist and heteronormative understanding of gender. Here, men and women are clearly distinguished categories with certain natural, distinctive but complementary characteristics. It is acknowledged that in God's creation men and women are equal. In a sense, this contradicts with the principle of man being the head and having a primary position and responsibility, which is also approved of. Clearly, there is a contradiction in the gender ideology of the church. But it is also obvious that men, in the ambiguous space between headship and equality, are prevented from dominating attitudes and from misuse of their power at the expense of women and children.

Jesus Christ as the Second Adam

As mentioned above, in the church Adam is presented as the exemplary model for manhood. At the same time, Adam is blamed for "the Fall" of humankind because he neglected his leadership role. In the theology of the church, the Fall changed

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[163] The same is the case with singlehood, of course. This issue is not disapproved as explicitly as homosexuality in the church, however, but is handled with far more nuance.

[164] Cf. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[165] Interview with Raymond Nyirenda (pastor), Lusaka: 17 July 2009.

[166] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*.

everything, not only for Adam and Eve but for humanity in general. From that time, sin came into the world and God's perfect order of creation was violated. This reality is referred to as the "Adamic nature". Significantly, this phrase is applied especially to men. It is used, for example, as an explanation of the critical issues concerning men and masculinity in society that are addressed in the church.[167] Evidently, the figure of Adam after the Fall has become problematic as a model for manhood. In order for men to overcome their current sinful and inferior Adamic state, Banda explores a soteriology of male redemption, for which he creatively employs the Pauline theology of the first and the second Adam (cf. 1 Corinthians 15). Here, the first Adam refers to the figure of Adam in Genesis 2-3, and the second Adam refers to the person of Jesus Christ. In Banda's interpretation, Jesus Christ has come as the second Adam to restore the ideal of manhood that was impaired by the failure of the first Adam. It is believed that Jesus is the one responding to God's question, 'Adam, where are you?' and that therefore Jesus Christ is the new archetype for manhood. As Banda puts it in a sermon: 'God decided to keep a provision for the re-innovation of masculinity through the fact that the second Adam came, so he could deal with our Adamic nature. So there is a restoration there, where we can see what God desires in fatherhood truly restored.'[168] It is said that Christ, as the new model for manhood, shows men how to take up responsibility, to practice leadership-through-service, and to be wholeheartedly committed to the ones entrusted to them. Likewise, following Ephesians 5:25 the sacrificing love of Christ for the church is presented as the example for husbands in relation to their marriage and family. In all these aspects, Jesus Christ shows how God has intended manhood to be. What has been lost with the Fall of the first Adam is restored by the second.

Jesus Christ as the second Adam is not only believed to restore the ideal of biblical manhood, but also to liberate men from their so-called sinful, Adamic nature and to nurture them into the ideal of manhood he presents himself. In this perception, the root problem of the Adamic nature, which causes men to sin, is solved with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hence it is said that men do not have to live 'under the mould of a default type of manhood' any longer but can be elevated to a higher level.[169] In one of the sermons on fatherhood, Banda employed the concept of Christ as the second Adam in order to appeal to men to change their lifestyle:

> Today I call you, because I don't see how a man who has truly come to know Jesus, can be of the kind of attitude and circumstances that we see around. Something is wrong. The second Adam does a special work. (…) The second Adam can break the mindset and that curse that makes men think that they must act like animals out there, unable to control their sexual desires. We are better than that, we are higher than that, and we are more elevated than that because God gave us a provision in the second Adam. I

[167] Dealing with the problems caused by men in society, in a sermon it was said: 'What we are struggling with, is the state of men after the Fall into an Adamic nature.' See Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*.

[168] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*.

[169] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

> want men here today to agree in their hearts and to understand that this Jesus can set you free. Today and now.[170]

Referring to certain mindsets of men, to prevailing opinions in the media and society, to curses that may run through the lineage and to certain habits passed on from father to son, this sermon points to the power of the second Adam, which can break down all the realities in which men can be entrapped.

With his application of the Pauline symbolism of the first and the second Adam, Banda stands in the tradition of Pentecostal theology.[171] However he further develops this tradition in an innovative way. Classically, the Adam-symbolism is applied to the Fall and redemption of humankind in general, but Banda applies it to *man*kind in particular. He employs the theme of the first and second Adam to develop a theological framework for the redemption and transformation of masculinity.[172] In this framework, Jesus Christ is presented both as the new archetype of manhood and as the one who liberates and elevates men into the "true masculinity" that he embodies himself.

Being Born Again and the Ideal of Holiness

In NAOG, as in Pentecostal theology in general, 'born again' is a central theological concept, just as is the closely related notion of holiness. Time and time again, the importance of being born again and living a holy life is emphasised.

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[170] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*.

[171] At least with regard to African Pentecostal theology, it is said that the figures of the first and the second Adam have 'enormous spiritual and political powers'. See O.U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism. an Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press 2008, 221. Kalu summarises this theology as follows: 'He [Adam] had the authority to name all of God's creation and govern the garden. But he lost all of his authority. God sent a second Adam through Jesus Christ and Christians, as His disciples, have a divine mandate to work with the triune God to recover the chair that Adam lost.'

[172] Jane Soothill in her study of gender in charismatic churches in Ghana also points to the Adam symbolism, as a theological discourse in which men and masculinities are addressed. She refers, among other things, to the preaching of the influential charismatic leader Mensa Otabil of the International Central Gospel Church. According to Soothill, 'the theology of the new churches blames Adam who neglected his leadership position and allowed the devil to come into the garden and trick Eve.' (Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, 186.) This indicates that Joshua Banda, with his use of the Adam symbolism in this way, is part of a broader line of thought in Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in Africa. However, Soothill's account does not indicate that the Adam-symbolism in her case studies is as prominent as I have found it in Northmead Assembly of God. Further, Soothill only points to one part of the symbolism, the reference to the figure of Adam in the paradise story of Genesis, and does not mention the second part of the symbolism, being the figure of Christ as the second Adam in the Pauline epistles of the New Testament. This indicates that Banda uses the Adam-symbolism in a more elaborate and systematic way; for him, it is a theological framework not only to address men and issues of masculinity critically but also to transform masculinities constructively.

Born again

Being born again is a prerequisite to becoming a member of the church.[173] Consequently, the whole membership can be expected to be born again, but actually this is often questioned in sermons. According to the church's theology, being born again should result in a different way of life. However, as is shown in §4.3, the church is aware of many critical issues in the behaviour of the church members, especially in the behaviour of men. When these issues are addressed in the church, it is questioned whether people are really born again. Observe, for instance, the following quotation from a sermon in which men's "macho-masculinity", expressed through sexual conquest and domestic violence, has just been addressed:

> There has to be a true encounter between you and Jesus. You can't claim to be a born again Christian man and do what I described earlier. Where it seems to be no difference for you: your language has not changed, you still beat your wife, you still act recklessly. Then something has not happened, you haven't met the true Christ.[174]

As this quotation indicates, being born again is understood in terms of a meeting, the "true encounter", with Jesus Christ and is considered a unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience. Indeed, this experience is well remembered by church members and they are eager to narrate it. From these stories it appears that in the born-again experience, one accepts Christ as a personal Saviour and commits one's life to Christ. This event is mentioned as a moment of change. On the one hand, this is a change in one's mind and orientation in life, which indicates a decisional or agential aspect of becoming born again.[175] On the other hand, this change is said to be initiated by God, as God has the power to release people from the "bonds" in which they can be caught. As Banda preaches: 'There is a God in heaven who came in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who, when allowed entrance into your life, is the deliverer, is the hope of glory, he can set you free from an unhealthy passions and desires'.[176] More down to earth, the change that is initiated by God is put in terms of forgiveness of sins and conversion.

The change that takes place when becoming born again results in a second beginning of one's life. As a church member says: 'When being born again you start with an empty page. Justified in Christ. I am a secondary virgin.'[177] It appears that the born-again experience is understood as a crucial marker of the beginning of Christian life. The born-again event makes a distinction, both in a person's life (between the period before and after becoming born again) and between people (those who are and who are not born again). In other words, being born again functions as a symbol of Christian identity, at the level of both the individual and the group. This symbol seems to function in quite a powerful way. It encourages people to make a radical new start

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[173] Northmead Assembly of God, *Church Constitution - Excerpt of Key Articles*.

[174] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*.

[175] See for instance the interview with Robert Cherwa (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[176] Banda*, Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 3*.

[177] Interview with Charles Muleya (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 13 July 2009.

in life, to leave their former friends behind, and to participate in a born-again group where people together follow Christ and experience the Holy Spirit.

Holiness

As a marker of the beginning of Christian life, the born-again concept is closely related to the notion of holiness that, according to the church, characterises Christian life. Holiness points to the process of sanctification by which one's life becomes pleasurable to God. Hence it especially concerns one's behaviour and lifestyle. Theologically, the importance of holiness is informed by two lines of thought. First, there is a reference made to the biblical commandment to believers to be holy because God is holy (cf. Leviticus 11:44 and 1 Peter 1:15-16). This verse is understood to mean that only when a person is holy is he or she able to be connected with the holy God.[178] Thus holiness is a pre-condition for the relationship with God. On the other hand, it is believed that in the relationship with God, God's holiness is reflected upon the believer. As Banda puts this dialectic: 'When we are close to God, God demands us to be holy and at the same time his holiness is reflected upon us. (…) It is something to strive for and something to receive. He gives us the capacity by our union with him.'[179] Ultimately, in Banda's line of thought human holiness is rooted in our creation in the image of God.[180] However, because of the Fall of humankind, this reflection is damaged. Only through becoming born again and living according to God's intentions, can the reflection of God's holiness in one's life be restored, it is thought.

The second theological concept, and quite a prominent one, is the New Testament metaphor of the human body as a temple of the Holy Spirit and as part of the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20). This perception of the body reinforces the urgency to keep the body "clean" and "pure" by preventing it from being involved in sin. For example, it is said that sex before marriage desecrates the body as a temple of the living God.[181] On the other hand, positively formulated, this perception of the body enables a person to 'glorify God with the body' through living in what is considered as a God-pleasurable way.[182] From the account of church members it appears that the perception of the body as a temple is applied especially in the area of sexuality. Sexual misconduct is perceived not only as a sin against God's will, but also as a sin against one's own body (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18). Although it is said that every sin can be forgiven by God, it is believed that 'when you sin against your body it leaves a scar', and therefore it should be avoided.[183]

It is significant that the metaphor of the body as a temple is somewhat gendered, in the sense that men in the church are not only called to sanctify their own bodies but

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[178] Cf. interview with Robert Cherwa (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[179] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 28 July 2009.

[180] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[181] Pastor Raymond Nyirenda in the meeting of the single's ministry, 28 September 2008.

[182] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 8* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2005.

[183] Interview with Moses Banda (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

are also given a responsibility towards women's bodies. For example, young men are called on not to explore the bodies of their fiancés before marriage.[184] In line with this, a male church member talking about his relationship says: 'When I would insist on sex, I am not respecting her body'.[185] In order for men to keep their bodies clean and to protect the bodies of the women they relate to, in the church they are called to build "defence lines" and to develop self-control over their bodily desires. At the same time it is stated that God helps and gives strength to believers to sanctify the body. 'When the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit will help to protect that temple, to clean it and prevent it from certain things that you want to defile your temple with.'[186] It appears that holiness is an ongoing process of sanctification and transformation of one's life, which is initiated through the born-again event. Along this process, men are believed to grow towards the ideal of "biblical manhood".

Judgement of God

The theological concept of divine judgement is not very prominent in preaching, but is crucial in the accounts of church members. Banda only now and then refers to this thought. When he uses the idea of judgement, it is to underline the urgency of following the lifestyle promoted in the church. For example, when preaching about drinking alcohol, he says that according to the Bible, drunkards shall not enter into the kingdom of God.[187] Likewise, in the series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*, where Banda extensively elaborates upon the responsibilities of men in marriage, in the family and in the community, he uses the notion of divine judgement to motivate men to take up these responsibilities. See, for instance, the following quotation from an argument about men's role in marriage:

> It is the man who has the primary responsibility to lead the partnership in a God-glorifying direction. Which means: gentlemen, we will be judged before God for how we lead in this partnership. And from the beginning you know, we have not done too well in leading this partnership, we have not done very well as men. And we must remember that we will be judged in this area.[188]

Although there is reference to judgement, this notion is hardly an articulated line of thought. It does not become clear how divine judgment is considered to take place. Talking about homosexuality, Banda refers to Sodom and Gomorrah as an illustration of God's punishment for sin. However he does not indicate that today God is punishing people in this way. Banda explicitly rejects, for example, the understanding of HIV as a manifestation of God's judgement at work.[189] The reference above to drunkards not entering the kingdom of God indicates that Banda understands judgement in

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[184] Joshua Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 8*.

[185] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

[186] Interview with Gift Phiri (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008

[187] Joshua Banda in *Knowing God – part 12*.

[188] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6*.

[189] See Banda, *HIV&AIDS and Stigma in the Church*.

eschatological terms: it is about entering the kingdom of God or not, about going to heaven or to hell. As it is put in the church's constitution: 'We believe in the eternal conscious bliss of all true believers in Christ and also in the eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire of all Christ rejecters.'[190]

As the quotations above indicate, the notion of divine judgement is clearly part of the church's theology, but it is not very prominent in preaching. However, among church members I found it to be a reality they often refer. They live in the awareness that they are answerable to God and will be judged by God for everything they do. Actually, the awareness of God's judgement over a person's life is mentioned as a motivation for becoming a Christian. For example, recounting his born-again experience somebody says: 'I realised that I should have gone to hell. So I thought: let's give up this bad behaviour, this bad life.'[191] Once born again, the realisation that God will judge one's actions reinforces the commitment to live up to God's instructions for life. Good moral conduct is not just an issue of outward appearance to others, but primarily of accountability to God. '[Even] when nobody knows you, you must remember that your primary responsibility is to God.'[192] It appears that the awareness of accountability to God and of divine judgement is a crucial part of the religious framework in the church. It is within this frame of thought that the church calls on people to live up to the prescribed way of life, and tries to get men involved in the ideal of "biblical manhood".

4.6. LIVING UP TO THE IDEAL

Up till now, this chapter has analysed the ideal of masculinity as defined in the church, the theological lines of thought that underlie and inform it and the critical aspects of prevalent masculinities it seeks to overcome. The question arises as to how men in the church live up to this ideal. The question behind this interest is, of course, whether the church is really able to change men and to transform masculinities. Is "biblical manhood" just an ideal or does it really make a difference in view of HIV and gender violence in Zambia? For the fact of clarity, the effect on actual behaviour has not been investigated in the present study – that would have required a different kind of research. However, interviews give an idea of how men in the church look at themselves and are looked at by others when it comes to the question of whether and how they live up to the promoted ideal of manhood. This is explored in the present section. First, attention is paid to a lack of commitment among men that is often addressed in the church. Second, the focus is on the serious intentions of men to live up to the ideal of "biblical manhood". Third, attention is paid to the challenges and difficulties indicated. Fourth, the section concludes with a paragraph on the "sword of Damocles" that seems to motivate men to live up to the ideal.

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[190] Northmead Assembly of God, *Church Constitution - Excerpt of Key Articles*.

[191] Interview with Robert Cherwa (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[192] Interview with Henry Mwale (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 15 November 2008.

A Lack of Commitment?

Men's commitment to the ideal of Christian or biblical manhood is questioned critically in the church. This doubt is informed by the general lack of participation of men in the church observed by the church leadership. Indicators of this are, for example, the small number of men participating in the men's ministry (especially when compared to the women's ministry), and the lack of practical engagement of men with the church. According to Banda, men generally perform worse than women, which he explains from a lack of motivation.[193] According to Banda, this is not a specific problem for his church or for churches in Zambia or Africa in general, but a universal phenomenon. He aimed to address this "recessive attitude" in the series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*. As he says in one of the sermons:

> In church, when we ask for volunteers, there are more women than men. Make an altar call and there are more women than men. Today I am making an altar call for men only. Listen, this is about recapturing our position. The world needs us gentlemen, to perform a better role that what we are performing.[194]

Clearly, the suggestion here is that men are not performing the role they are supposed to perform. In other words, men are seen as not living up to the ideal of manhood that the church seeks to promote. What is significant in the above quotation is that men's lack of involvement in the church is understood directly in terms of men not assuming their role in society. Apparently in order for a man to live up to the ideal type of manhood he is supposed to be a committed Christian and church member.

The concern of the church leadership about men's lack of involvement and commitment is shared by some church members. They give different explanations. For example, men are said to be so busy, that they 'use every minute to make money and don't want to spend time in the men's fellowship.'[195] However, it is also suggested that men prefer other ways of spending their leisure time, such as watching football or visiting friends or relatives. An interesting explanation is the materialism and career-making among men. Recounting how her husband strayed from the church and lost his commitment to the Christian faith, a woman says:

> But when he started ascending in his profession, when things became better, the need for God stopped. (…) He was overtaken by the flow of material things, and in the process he was in wrong company. He started having friends at work who were not believers. That is what affected him. Not just that he chose to go away from church, it just started small and he thought to overcome it, but he didn't manage. Men don't know how to balance wealth and God. I have seen it. It happens to so many men.[196]

The quotation indicates a kind of secularisation occurring among men who are professionally and economically successful. The husband referred to strayed from the

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[193] Interview with Joshua Banda (bishop), Lusaka: 5 November 2008.

[194] Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st century – part 1*.

[195] Interview with Ezra Kambole (man in his 60s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008.

[196] Interview with Febby Chibwika (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 16 July 2009.

church completely, while in other cases this may take different forms. The concern of the church is that for many men the church is not a top priority. As one of the pastors puts it: 'Men think that church is for Sunday, that it has nothing to do with their life.'[197] By this he means that men, even when they are involved in the congregation and identify as Christians, are not seriously committed in their daily life to Christian values and principles or to the ideal of "biblical manhood". A church member speaks here about "a life of pretence", suggesting that for men in the church Christian life is often keeping up appearances.[198] Again, this is addressed critically in the church, for instance in the preaching and in the marital counselling. However, 'at the end of the day it is up to you what you do with it. (…) There are certain men, even if they teach them, they just don't do what they have been taught. So it is the willingness of men where is the problem.'[199]

Apparently it cannot be assumed automatically that male church members live up to the so-called ideal of Christian or biblical responsible manhood as promoted in the church. There are gradations in the commitment to this ideal, and in the involvement in the church. The problem might be, however, that the church leadership perceives both in a close relation: the commitment of men to the ideal of manhood is evaluated by their involvement in the church. However this link might be too simplistic. In personal conversations some male church members complained about the high demands of church membership: men are not only expected to attend Sunday services but also the home cell groups, to participate in the men's ministry, in the marriage or singles ministry, and so on. Several men indicated that they do not know how to meet all these expectations while at the same time fulfilling their responsibilities in the areas of their marriage, family and employment. In other words: the fact that men generally do not meet the expectations of the church's leadership concerning their involvement in the church, does not necessarily mean that they are not committed to the Christian faith and its related ideal of manhood as understood in the church. A healthy suspicion is always good, but the commitment of male church members to live up to the ideal cannot be questioned completely. This is apparent from the serious intentions they indicate to have.

Serious Intentions

Though it cannot be taken for granted that men generally live up to the moral teaching of the church and to the promoted ideal of manhood, in interviews many male church members at least show a serious intention to do so. They indicate a willingness to take seriously the church's teaching on moral norms and behaviour, and they point out that this distinguishes them from fellow men in society. How serious the commitment may be is illustrated by the following quotation from an interviewee talking about the period before he entered into marriage: 'So in terms of relating to ladies and going beyond, I haven't had any intimate relationship, that was definitely out of order

[197] Interview with Boyd Banda (pastor), Lusaka: 15 July 2009.

[198] Interview with Gift Phiri (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008.

[199] Interview with Isabel Lupiya (woman in her 20s), Lusaka: 8 July 2009.

because I set my mind to pleasing God in that area, it was something I decided consciously to do.'[200] For this man, living up to the norm of sexual abstinence before marriage has been an issue of what in the previous section was called self-control. It is about taking a conscious decision and setting the mind, out of a desire to please God by fulfilling what is considered as God's commandment. In different ways, other interviewees also indicate a similar serious dedication to the ideal.

It appears that the commitment that men have to what they perceive as a Christian lifestyle is strongly (re)affirmed by their born-again experience. In interviews men often distinguish between life before and after becoming born again, and the difference is often described in terms of moral behaviour. For example, recounting his born-again story, a young man says:

> Before that [becoming born again] I used to drink, I used to smoke, I was a bad boy, I was womanising, had a lot of girl friends. After a certain incident in my life, I decided that the life I was leading was not a good life. … I thought: let me just give up alcohol and drugs and this kind of life, and become a Christian. From my upbringing I was a Christian, my family are Catholics, but I wasn't serious with that. … But then I had that incident, and I decided to change.[201]

The interviewee indicates that in the born-again event one becomes a seriously committed Christian, resulting in a radical change in lifestyle. The commitment to Christian life is understood in terms of obeying the commandments of God, following Jesus Christ, becoming more serious, focused and careful in life. The time before becoming born again is referred to as "the former life", which indicates that people seriously think that they have left behind "the sins of the past".[202]

Though interviewees generally indicate that they are committed to a born-again lifestyle, this does not mean that they uncritically follow the moral teaching of the church. Someone says, for example, that choices concerning behaviour and lifestyle are ultimately between the individual and God.[203] Hence he explains why he sometimes goes to bars, not to womanise or to get drunk but to meet with friends. This indicates a sense of individual moral agency, which does not necessarily detract from but rather might reinforce the intention to make choices that are thought to please God.

When elaborating upon the impact of Christianity on their life, some men put this in terms of a transformation of their perception of manhood. One says, for example, that he has been "remodelled" as a man. Explaining this, he points out:

> I had to learn right and wrong because of God. I've had to learn to live the Christian culture, of what the expectation of the man should be. I am expected to be good

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[200] Interview with Moses Banda (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

[201] Interview with Robert Cherwa (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[202] It also illustrates, of course, how a religious discourse – in this case, the Pentecostal "born-again" discourse, functions to frame life stories and to interpret certain events occurring in this story.

[203] Interview with Gift Phiri (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 21 October 2008.

> standing in society. I am expected to be a model for young people. I am expected to exemplify a godly character, trying to do everything that God wants me to do.[204]

In the same way, someone else says that 'being a Christian has really helped to mould me into a better man', because it has reinforced his sense of responsibility and the control over his sexuality and other urges.[205] It seems that Christian life, in the perception of these men, results not just in a change of their behaviour but hence also of their type of manhood. They seem to perceive themselves now as mature men, because of the responsibilities they fulfil and the self-control they practise. As someone says, by observing the Christian values the "true identity of being a man" is discovered.[206] It appears that the type of manhood promoted in the church really is an alternative ideal to these men that they try to live up to consciously. It is realised that this is not a stage that is achieved automatically when becoming born again, but that it is a process. This is put powerfully in the saying: 'Being a man, for me, it has to take God. You have to accept Christ, and that is when God is going to make a man out of you. … I can't say: I have arrived. I have my mistakes. I am still a man in the making.'[207]

The Weakness of the Flesh

Where male church members on the one hand indicate their serious intentions to live a Christian way of life and to follow the teaching of the church, on the other hand they also point out that they have their weaknesses when faced with temptations. This results in an ongoing struggle, balancing between what is perceived as the Christian moral code of conduct and the "fleshly" desires. To live as a Christian man, a church member says, feels like being Spiderman, as you have to look constantly for the delicate balance. He illustrates this with the issue of kissing:

> From the pulpit it is told: don't do it, because one thing leads to another. But we do it, the majority of the guys do it. And we end up feeling sorry about it. Because they say 'Don't do it'. It's a constant struggle. Good and evil. You can't constantly regulate yourself. … You want to do it, and the next day you don't want to do it. Indeed I do it, but that is as far as it goes.[208]

What is striking in this quotation is not only that kissing apparently is an issue of good or evil and that it leaves a sense of guilt. The quotation most aptly shows how the church's ideals of "biblical manhood" and a "born again lifestyle" result in men constantly struggling to live up to the ideal while negotiating their desires. They may give in to the desire of kissing, but "that is as far as it goes", meaning that they continue to struggle with other desires.

Several interviewees indicate that they have developed strategies to cope with temptations. The first is the strategy of self-control. For some, this is an issue of setting

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[204] Interview with Marc Mwila (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

[205] Interview with Jack Lungu (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 7 November 2008.

[206] Interview with Clemens Kabunko (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 3 November 2008.

[207] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[208] Interview with Marc Mwila (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

the mind in order for feelings not to reach a critical level. It is said that certain critical energies can be channelled by concentrating on other things. Prayer, for example, is mentioned as a way to control the self. Talking about dealing with temptations, somebody said: 'You handle it through prayer and also by taking time out, concentrating on other things. You go out to meditate, just being with God and thinking about the things of God.'[209] Other interviewees say that they involve others in order to prevent themselves from engaging in "sin". For example, someone says that he has established a network of friends all over the country. When visiting another town for business purposes, he says that he meets with one of these friends rather than go to bad places.[210] Another example is provided by a young man. From the realisation that he is weak in the area of sexuality, he says that he has consciously opted for a girlfriend who supports the principle of abstinence before marriage. 'As for me, as a man it is dangerous to be close to a girl, unless you are with somebody who has principles. … It comes to women to be strong in this area. I don't know for others, but I am weak in this area, I am not strong.'[211] Thus, it appears that the awareness of this and other weaknesses makes men develop strategies in order to stick to the principles they consider to be part of Christian life.

Although men often indicate that it is challenging to live a Christian way of life and to follow the teaching of the church, they also show a certain optimism about the possibility of doing so. They consider it to be difficult but not impossible. Several interviewees refer to Banda as an exemplary figure who shows that it is possible to live up to the ideal. For example, it is said that Banda by his exemplary life shows that 'you can actually do it. He is able to indicate that the pressure can be faced, and it is actually not impossible for you to actually overcome it.'[212] Thus, for this interviewee Banda is the living proof that indeed it is possible to resist temptations and to overcome difficulties and to live a Christian life. Referring to him, a woman points out that men in the church no longer have any excuse when they misunderstand their roles or mistreat their wives.[213]

The Sword of Damocles

The motivation for men to live up to the ideals of Christian life and biblical manhood as promoted in the church seems to be informed by different reasons. First and foremost there is a religious motivation. Men often indicate a deep desire to live a holy and responsible life, in accordance with God's commandments. Talking about this they frequently refer to certain male figures in the Bible who are inspiring models of manhood. For example, David because he admitted his mistake, asked God for forgiveness and improved his life; Joseph because he handled situations wisely and took responsibility; Jesus because he had a clear direction in life and stood up for what

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[209] Interview with Bernard Kamanga (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 30 June 2009.

[210] Interview with Henry Mwale (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 15 November 2008.

[211] Interview with Robert Cherwa (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 27 July 2009.

[212] Interview with Moses Banda (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

[213] Interview with Febby Chibwika (woman in her 40s), Lusaka: 16 July 2009.

he believed in. On the contrary, the figure of their own father is mentioned by some interviewees as a bad example, functioning as a counter-role model that encourages them to engage in a different type of manhood.[214] For instance, referring to his father who left his family and separated from his wife, someone says: 'It made me aware in my mind that I should always care for my wife and take care of her and not do something that will split up the family and destroy the family.'[215]

It appears that the motivation of men to live up to the ideal is reinforced by two realities that function as a kind of "sword of Damocles". These are HIV and the belief in divine judgement. The HIV epidemic has reinforced the commitment of men to live up to the teaching in the area of sexuality. Many of them have seen friends and relatives die because of AIDS. The confrontation with the harsh reality of the epidemic has a strong impact upon their lives. As someone recounts: 'I used to be careless. I thought AIDS is just for those who are unfortunate. But when it was coming closer, to my family and to friends, I changed.'[216] Someone else told me that the presence of HIV has led him to realise that 'a few minutes of passion can mean death, can ruin your dreams.'[217] It seems that male church members, against the background of the HIV epidemic, have come to understand that the church's emphasis on sexual abstinence can make a difference between life and death and is therefore highly urgent. Clearly, personal health motives reinforce men's religious motivation to abstain from sex or to be faithful in marriage.

Though HIV may be something to fear, interviewees indicate that the epidemic should not be the sole or primary reason to live up to the moral teaching of the church. They point to "the fear of God" as the most paramount motivation to do so: '[B]eyond HIV/AIDS and beyond attracting these other STDs, there is somebody that I am actually answerable to.[218] The sense of accountability to God does, of course, not only concern the area of sexuality but all compartments of human behaviour. All deeds that are considered to be immoral are thought of as sin, meaning that they critically impact upon one's relationship with God. There seems to be a constant awareness that 'for everything you do you are going to be judged.'[219] As pointed out in § 4.5, the fear of this divine judgment over one's life is a major stimulus for men to become born again and to live up to the church's ideal of "biblical manhood".

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[214] This corresponds with the observation from Soothill that 'male interviewees often cited their father's behaviour as an influential factor in their decision to make a break with the past and become born again. Polygamy, extra-marital sex and domestic violence were the most commonly cited behavioural patterns that men associated with their fathers and wanted to avoid themselves.' See Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, 186.

[215] Interview with Henry Mwale (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 15 November 2008.

[216] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

[217] Interview with Marc Mwila (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 22 October 2008.

[218] Interview with Moses Banda (man in his 30s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

[219] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 13 November 2008.

4.7. MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN NAOG – A CONCLUSION

In NAOG, addressing men and transforming masculinities is an explicit project in which the church is engaged, as is illustrated for example in the sermon series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*. Not only in this series and other sermons, but also in numerous church activities and ministries, issues concerning men and masculinity are addressed. The transformation of masculinities is mainstreamed in the congregational life and mission in general. Although HIV is often mentioned, the transformation project is not solely informed by the epidemic, nor does it merely aim at preventing men from contracting HIV. Rather it is informed by a broader social analysis of the role of men at the level of family and society. Men are associated with many problems observed in society, such as violence against women, drunkenness, broken marriages, weak families, HIV and moral decay. This is explained theologically from the "Adamic nature" of *man*kind: men fail to live up to the responsibility and role they are created for by God. Hence, men are addressed in the church from a spiritual angle and are challenged to recapture their God-given position and to live up to the related responsibilities. This evangelisation of men is part of the broader missionary vision of NAOG, being to 'possess the land for Christ'. Through promoting an alternative masculinity, which is named "biblical manhood" and is defined by the notion of responsibility, the church seeks to stop the social and moral decay it perceives in Zambia and to restore the nation.

Even though the HIV epidemic is not the only direct motivation to transform masculinities, it is clear that the epidemic has functioned as a catalyst. Especially the extensive attention paid to issues of sexuality, with a strong emphasis on sexual morality, seems to be informed by the HIV crisis in Zambia. In line with the born-again theology and the notion of holiness, the church seeks to radically transform a socially prevalent type of masculinity, performed through sexual achievement, into a Christian type of masculinity characterised by a control of the body and a deep concern with sexual purity and moral uprightness. The church, however, is not just concerned with men's sexual morality. The notion of responsibility central to the church's ideal of "biblical manhood" is applied to all areas of men's lives. It provides a base from which critical male behaviour can be addressed and men can be challenged to change.

The crucial question is, of course, whether men indeed live up to the ideal. The case study indicates that this cannot be taken for granted. There is reason for a healthy suspicion. It also shows, however, that many male church members at least have a serious commitment to the ideal of manhood promoted in the church. The strength of the approach in NAOG might be that not only are critical issues concerning men and masculinities addressed and moral norms are taught, but also that an alternative, positively formulated vision for manhood is provided. Not only the do's and don'ts for Christian men are emphasised, but also the unique responsibility and the crucial role they are to fulfil. This may reinforce men's self-esteem and give them a particular status, which makes it attractive for men to engage in the transformed masculinity even when they have to give up some of the popular aspects of prevalent masculinities in society. Furthermore, the promoted ideal of "biblical manhood" is embedded in the

wider theology of the church, with central notions such as being born again, the sanctification of life, and the idea of divine judgement. With the symbolism of the first and the second Adam, a framework is even developed to theologise a transformation of masculinities. The church's appeal to the agency of men to change is 'embedded in the familiar and culturally powerful narrative of Christianity', which might increase its transformative power.[220]

The ideal type of masculinity promoted in the church fits into a wider gender ideology. This ideology, based on a theological anthropology of creation, has an essentialist understanding of gender in which there are intrinsic natural differences between men and women. Precisely because they are different, man and woman are to complement each other in marriage. Because of the literal reading of Scripture and the lack of historical-critical hermeneutics, concepts such as male headship and female submission are accepted in the church as the God-given creational order. By this the church clearly reaffirms a gender hierarchy. At the same time, the church leadership teaches that men and women are equal. This causes a contradiction in the gender ideology of the church. It appears that the idea of equality is fostered among men in order to prevent them from adopting dominating attitudes towards and inferior perceptions of women. Concepts such as headship and leadership are maintained since they are considered to be truly biblical and part of "God's order", but at the same time these concepts are redefined and nuanced in terms of responsibility and service. It seems that in its masculinity politics the church makes use of patriarchal notions of masculinity to challenge men to fulfil the related roles and responsibilities. In this way, masculinity is believed to become "benevolent", that is: to benefit women, families, the community and society at large. This is supposed to make a difference in the context of HIV and other social problems facing society.

Reading the above case study, the reader may have started automatically to compare the case of Northmead Assembly of God with the case of Regiment parish, which was presented in the previous chapter. Furthermore, s/he may have started to compare the approach to men and masculinities in the case study churches with the approach of the African theologians, which was outlined in chapter 2. In these chapters I have deliberately refrained from comparative comments, in order to present the case studies on their own terms. The next chapter, however, will engage in a comparative approach to the ways theologians and churches deal with men and masculinities in the context of HIV.

[220] This embedding is mentioned by Judith Newton as one of the reasons for the success of a men's movement like the Promise Keepers in realising change among men. Cf. J.L. Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men's Movement*, Lanham and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield 2005, 231-232.

5. MASCULINITIES IN LOCAL CHURCHES AND AFRICAN THEOLOGY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL DISCUSSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws the lines of the previous chapters together. The preceding chapters have presented the approach to men and masculinities of some African theologians, a Catholic parish and a Pentecostal church. The intention was to analyse and present these approaches on their own terms. The present chapter takes a step forward by comparing the different approaches and discussing them critically in relation to each other. It deals with the third sub-question of the research: 'What convergences and divergences appear from the analyses of and visions for masculinities provided by the theologians and the local churches, and what questions and challenges do these raise for the further study of and engagement with masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic?' This question is explored in three steps.

First, the two case studies, presented in chapter 3 and 4, are compared to each other (§5.2). A comparative approach is used to highlight the similarities and the differences of the two churches when it comes to their respective analysis of and vision for masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS. The findings of the case studies in a Catholic parish and a Pentecostal church will be compared and discussed in relation to broader scholarly discussions on Catholicism and Pentecostalism in Africa. This shows that the case studies, though unique, are not isolated, and that the findings have wider significance and relevance.

Second, a further intersection of the discourses studied in this research is made, by comparing the case studies with the way the African theologians analyse and reflect upon masculinities against the background of the HIV epidemic (§5.3). The question is how the engagement with men and masculinities in the case study churches relates to the approach of men and masculinities developed by these gender-critical theologians.

Third, from the comparative analysis of the case studies and the theologians, some critical questions can be put, both to the theologians and to the case study churches, regarding their approach to men and masculinities. In §5.4, some fundamental issues are put to the theologians. As outlined in chapter 1, though I am not an African theologian myself I consider it possible to engage with these theologians in a critical and constructive academic discussion. The questions I raise result from my analysis of the case studies. They concern particularly the way the theological scholars analyse and evaluate religious constructions of masculinity such as those in the case study churches. In §5.5 I also raise some critical questions to the churches. It is not my intention in this section to evaluate the case studies myself – as explored in chapter 1, I consider this problematic – but to identify some of the issues that emerge from the analytical and evaluative work of the African theologians. The chapter closes in §5.6 with a conclusion.

5.2. COMPARING THE CASE STUDIES

In the present section, the ways in which Northmead Assembly of God (NAOG) and Regiment parish address men and masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS are compared. What are the similarities and the differences? And how these can be understood in relation to the characteristics of Catholicism and Pentecostalism as different strands of African Christianity?

A Shared Concern with Men's Moral Lifestyles

It appears from the case studies that both churches correspond in their concern with men and men's behaviour. Out of this concern, they address similar issues, such as men's sexual lifestyles and excessive consumption of alcohol, men's disrespect of and violence towards women, men's overall irresponsibility, and men's lack of involvement in the church and commitment to the faith. Apparently, the churches have quite a negative perception of the "Zambian man" and the prevalent type of masculinity in Zambia. According to the representation of men in the church discourses, masculinities in Zambia are generally characterised, among others, by a drive to sexual excitement, a lifestyle of enjoyment in bars with alcohol and girls, spending money for amusement rather than for the family, domination over women in marriage and the family, and a demonstration of power and virility. In the churches, this male behaviour and the related hegemonic ideals of masculinity are not analysed thoroughly. They are explained alternately from "African culture" (especially in NAOG), from social factors such as poverty and unemployment (especially in Regiment parish), as well as from the media, modernisation and "Western culture". Both churches consider it to be their task to address the above-mentioned male behaviour. Though to different extents, they both oppose and contest popular notions of masculinity by promoting Christian values. Clearly, the concern with men in the churches is a concern about men's private and public moral lifestyles. These are evaluated negatively because they are incompatible with the Catholic-Christian values (Regiment parish) or with the born-again ideal of holiness (NAOG).

Obviously, the critical perception of men in both case studies is reinforced by the HIV epidemic. Without HIV and AIDS, the churches would probably still address "immoral" sexual behaviour and teach men values concerning sexuality, but the HIV epidemic has made it a priority. Though they do not present an elaborate gender analysis of the epidemic, both churches seem to perceive men's sexual behaviour as more critical than women's. Subsequently, men's sexual lifestyle is a major item in the discourses that address men and masculinity. These discourses seek to correct men's observed tendency to extramarital sexual activity by teaching the moral values of abstinence before and fidelity in marriage and by presenting self-control as an essential characteristic of manhood. The use of condoms is prohibited, as this would contradict the values promoted.

Clearly, the discourses on sexuality and HIV that target men are in both churches *moral* discourses. Though the churches do not uphold the belief that HIV is a punishment from God for sexual immorality, they still address it as a consequence of

sexual irresponsibility and, indeed, immorality.[1] This is remarkable, as the leadership in both churches also acknowledges structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and gender inequality. Out of this awareness, Regiment parish has established a community school and a youth training centre, and NAOG has established an HIV clinic and the Lazarus project. However, when HIV is addressed *within the congregation*, they primarily opt for a moral discourse. Apparently, the level of individual behaviour is considered the level where the church can influence its members. The fact that men particularly are addressed might be a result of the awareness of the gendered dimension of HIV, but it seems to be rather an indication of the concern with men's moral and sexual lifestyles. Significantly, in both churches this concern is informed by a particular understanding of male sexuality: in Regiment, booklets presents men's "carnal desires" for sexual satisfaction as part of the "masculine pattern" (see §3.3, on sexuality) while in NAOG, Banda points to the hormone epinephrine that makes men to act like sex machines (see §4.3, on sexuality). This biological factor is not presented as an excuse, however, as it is said that men have the ability – through the grace of God – to control their desires by the mind.

Though the critical perception of men and male behaviour in both churches is reinforced by the epidemic, it is informed by a broader awareness of social problems facing Zambia, such as alcoholism, broken marriages, the impoverishment of families, and disease. Both the sermons in NAOG and the letters of the Zambian Catholic bishops clearly demonstrate a general concern with the poor state of Zambian society. Significantly, this situation is explained (more or less explicitly) in relation to men, male behaviour and dominant versions of masculinity. With the notion of responsibility being essential to the ideal of manhood in both churches, the churches somehow blame men and their irresponsible behaviour for Zambia's deprived conditions.

An Overlapping Alternative Vision of Masculinity

Apart from their corresponding critique of men and male behaviour, the case study churches also show considerable resemblance in the ideals of masculinity they promote. Central to the definition of Pentecostal masculinity in NAOG as well as of Catholic masculinity in Regiment parish are notions such as male responsibility, male headship and self-control. With these notions, the churches seek to promote an ideal of masculinity that is opposite to the type of masculinity popular among men in

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[1] Of the several discourses on HIV and AIDS distinguished by Barbara Schmid, both churches seem to engage primarily in the 'medico-moral discourse' which promotes HIV prevention 'through individual-centered behaviour change' but which opposes the use of condoms as a public health prevention method (B. Schmid, 'AIDS Discourses in the Church: What we Say and what we do' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 125 (2006), 96-97). It is widely suggested that this type of discourse on HIV and AIDS seems to be the most common in churches. For example, Sue Parry from research on HIV and AIDS messages in churches in South Africa found that 'the content of the message may be a narrow focus on preaching abstinence and faithfulness, with regard to HIV/AIDS, not acknowledging the many other issues at play in the complexity of the pandemic' (S. Parry, *Responses of the Churches to HIV and AIDS in South Africa. A Mapping Study*, Geneva: WCC 2005).

Zambia today. They develop a male ethics of responsibility for oneself and the community, and particularly for one's marriage and family. Through several church programmes they seek to promote this ethic among men.

In both churches, men can be found who take the church's teaching seriously and try to apply it in their lives. In so doing, they come to embody a type of masculinity that is different from the hegemonic ideals of masculinity in society.[2] What the sociologist Bernice Martin notices with regard to men in Pentecostal churches, in my observation also largely applies to practising Catholic men in Regiment parish:

> Pentecostal men must put themselves under novel restraint. Much of what the church expects of them would stigmatize them as unmanly among their unconverted peers: giving up alcohol, drugs, gambling, sexual adventures, and the opportunity to sire children in many households, putting the family and fellow believers before themselves, and so on.[3]

It appears from the case studies that men put themselves under this restraint because it assigns them a new identity and dignity, not just as Christians but also as men. In both churches several men expressed the feeling that since living up to the ideal of Christian masculinity they are more appreciated by their wives, are respected in the community, are assigned tasks in the church, and will be blessed by God. This seems to compensate for the possible loss of "manly status" among peers. In Regiment parish, the new dignity given to men is clearly expressed by the members of the men's group of St. Joachim: in their blue uniforms they embody the ideal of Catholic manhood and are highly esteemed in the parish.

Significantly, in the churches the ethical notion of responsibility is related to the concepts of male headship and leadership derived from the Bible and, to a lesser extent, from culture. The combination of concepts such as male headship and leadership with an ethic of responsibility that involves men in marriage and family life

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[2] In my understanding, for men to live up to a certain code of ethics, such as the ethics of male responsibility, male headship and self-control that is promoted in the case study churches, results in the production of male identity, i.e. masculinity. Theoretically this can be understood from the notion of gender or masculinity as being performatively constructed, i.e. 'a display of certain characteristics that men ought to display' (M. Ntarangwi, *Gender, Identity and Performance: Understanding Swahili Cultural Realities through Song*, Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press 2003, 253). This insight is developed by Judith Butler who considers gender to be an act in the sense that it requires a repetitive performance. Explaining this, she says: 'This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation. Although there are individual bodies that enact these significations by becoming stylized into gendered modes, this "action" is a public action.' (J. Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (2 ed.), London/New York: Routledge 2006, 191 but see 185-193).

[3] B. Martin, 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion' in R.K. Fenn (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, Malden: Blackwell 2001, 55.

bears resemblance to the process of the "domestication of men" observed by sociologist Bradford Wilcox in evangelical Protestantism in the United States, and to the "reformation of machismo" observed by anthropologist Elizabeth Brusco in evangelical Christianity in Colombia.[4] Though in totally different contexts, the correspondence of the various processes is that a certain authority is ascribed to men, which is linked with an ethic of male familial involvement and of more peaceful and constructive male behaviour. Apparently, this is a more commonly used strategy in religious communities and movements to transform hegemonic forms of masculinity. Most times in literature this strategy is associated with Protestant-evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, but the case study in Regiment parish indicates that a similar approach can be found in Catholic circles.[5]

Concerning the alternative vision of masculinity, it is furthermore significant to note that in their definition of the "Christian" ideal both case study churches depart from what they consider as "tradition" or "culture" on exactly the same issue. Though the churches differ in their appreciation of "traditional culture" (which will be outlined below), they correspond in their critique that traditional cultures in Zambia do allow dominating attitudes of men towards women, specifically of husbands towards their wives. The cultural notion of male headship, in their opinion, entails male superiority and domination of women, while the Christian version, they say, is about responsibility, protection and servant leadership. In line with this, both churches describe gender relations, for example in marriage, in terms of equality, mutuality and companionship, and they contrast this with traditional customs. It is believed that Christianity, compared with the traditional set-up, supports more equal relations between a husband and wife and between men and women in general. Promoting a nuanced version of male headship and supporting a sense of gender equality, the case study churches engage in a pattern of Christian masculinities observed by some scholars, being the development of a "soft patriarchy".[6] In view of the case studies, the

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[4] W.B. Wilcox, 'Religion and the Domestication of Men' in *Contexts* 5:4 (2006), 40-44; W.B. Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 2004; E.E. Brusco, *The Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Colombia*, Austin: University of Texas Press 1995.

[5] A similar observation is made with regard to the Catholic Church in Peru and El Salvador (see A.L. Peterson, M.A. Vasquez and P.J. Williams, 'The Global and the Local' in A.L. Peterson, M.A. Vasquez and P.J. Williams (eds.), *Christianity, Social Change, and Globalization in the Americas*, Piscataway: Rutgers University Press 2001, 216). Refining Brusco's argument on the reformation of machismo in evangelical churches, these authors point out that 'in both progressive and relatively conservative parishes, Catholic pastoral programs can have many of the same consequences that Brusco and others have described for Evangelical Protestants, such as domesticating men and generating more peaceful patterns of behaviour.'

[6] Joseph Gelfer observes an ideology of soft patriarchy in both the Evangelical and the Catholic men's movement in the United States, though the Catholic version in his opinion is "softer" than the evangelical (cf. J. Gelfer, *Numen, Old Men. Contemporary Masculine Spiritualities and the Problem of Patriarchy*, London: Equinox 2009, 57-58, 87). See also Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* who observes the

concept of soft patriarchy can be used to indicate that the churches not support a brutal form of patriarchy that confers indefinite power to men and legitimates male supremacy. Rather it is a nuanced type of patriarchal ideology, which upholds patriarchal concepts such as headship and leadership but employs these concepts to remind men of their "God-given" responsibilities, and which challenges men to respect women and to contribute constructively to their marriages, families and communities. The soft version of patriarchy allows the churches, on the one hand, to respect what they consider as the "biblical order" of men and women, and on the other hand to oppose and correct the dominating and destructive male behaviour they observe in society.

A Shared Understanding of Gender and Masculinity from Creation

In terms of theological anthropology, the ideal of masculinity promoted in the churches is informed by a gender ideology based on the account of creation, with Genesis 2 as a foundational text. According to this understanding, God has created humankind as male and female and has designed both with different but complementary characteristics. This gives rise to a dualist perception of gender and to normative and essentialist perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Actually, according to the theology of these churches there is no such thing as "gender" (as a socially and culturally variable construct): there is only "sex" (as a biological given that distinguishes men and women as differently created human beings).[7] Of course the churches are aware that empirically there are different types of men. However in their perception there is principally an essential type of "manhood" (as well as of "womanhood") designed by God as the creator. An illustration of this is Banda's talk about "restoring" manhood: socially prevailing types of masculinity are considered

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emergence of a soft patriarchy in American evangelical Protestantism. In the context of the United States, "soft patriarchy" refers to a more or less conservative ideology that opposes modern and liberal ideas of gender equality. In the case studies, it also has an aspect of conservatism towards "modernity", but at the same time it is somewhat progressive as it seeks to correct patterns of male domination and fosters a sense of gender equality.

[7] Following Elaine Storkey, the understanding of sexual difference in both churches can be mentioned as "pre-modern". Outlining the pre-modern Christian theology of the sexes, Storkey says: 'Many theological writers through the centuries saw difference as total, most deterministic. It maps out our relative place in reality. It decides what God has created men and women for, recognizes what sins we are responsible for, determines what roles we may play, judges what gifts we may exercise. A pre-modern perspective in theology carries with it a welter of assumptions which interpret difference as all-embracing; it is the God-ordained structure of human identity, through which we are given our functions, feelings, places and perceptions.' (E. Storkey, *Created or Constructed? The Great Gender Debate*, Sydney: New South Wales University Press Ltd 2000, 84-85). The cases of the churches in the present research show that these pre-modern perceptions of sexual difference are still vital. At the same time, it should be realised that the gender ideology of both churches is more complex. Though the creation-framework provides them with a strong pre-modern basis, the concern with gender equality, for example, shows the negotiation with modernist perceptions.

deviations from the original version intended by God, which is to be restored.[8] Although in Regiment parish the discourse is far less elaborate, the perception of masculinity is informed by a similar understanding of sexual difference as rooted in God's creation of humankind as male and female. Remember, for example, how one of the booklets says as a result of God's definition, 'as a boy you will behave completely differently from a girl, because you are living your masculinity.'[9]

The dualistic understanding of gender implies that in both churches being a man is considered as something essentially different from being a woman. It is believed that gender differences are to be respected, and radical feminist understandings of gender equality are criticised for ignoring these differences. Indeed both churches support a notion of gender equality, based on the idea of humankind being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), but this equality is understood in a restricted way. It is about an equal human dignity (Regiment) or equality in personhood (NAOG), which respects the "fundamental difference" between man and woman. This difference, however, is understood more or less hierarchically in both churches, and it is informed by the same account of creation. The creation narrative in Genesis 2 saying that Adam was created first and that Eve was created from Adam's rib is interpreted as a divinely ordained natural order that is to be maintained. This results in an anthropological scheme of male primacy, understood in terms of responsibility, headship and leadership, which has to be accepted and respected by women. Clearly, both churches represent what feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether has called the 'ambiguous structure of Christian anthropology'.[10] The ambiguity is that while the equality of the sexes is recognised, at the same time sexual difference is ordered hierarchically.

Apart from dualistic and hierarchical, the gender ideology in the case study churches is also heteronormative. According to this ideology, because man and woman are created different, they are to complement each other in order to be fully human together. Marriage is considered the institution where this complementation is to take place. In NAOG, the normative heterosexuality is further reflected in the overt discourse opposing homosexuality and same-sex relationships. In Regiment parish, homosexuality is hardly mentioned in public discourses, but the central notion of male-female complementarity indicates that the gender ideology in this church, as in NAOG,

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[8] Cf. Joshua Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 4*. DVD produced by the Media Desk of Northmead Assembly of God, Lusaka 2008.

[9] J. Kiura, *About Boys*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2007 (1993), 8. Significantly, Kiura further underscores her essentialist understanding of gender when she continues by saying: 'This sexual nature is yours from the moment of conception until death. You may undergo changes as you mature but your sexuality does not change. You remain male.'

[10] R. Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk. Towards a Feminist Theology*, Boston: Beacon Press 1983, 93. Putting this ambiguity into words, Ruether says: 'On the one hand, deeply rooted in Christian thought is an affirmation of the equivalence of maleness and femaleness in the image of God. This has never been denied, but it has tended to become obscured by a second tendency to correlate femaleness with the lower part of human nature in a hierarchical scheme of mind over body, reason over passions.'

is inherently heteronormative (which is not surprising in view of the Roman Catholic Church's position on homo/sexuality).[11] Certainly, in this respect the case study churches are no exception in African Christianity, as appears for example from the detailed study by Masiiwa Ragies Gunda of Christian discourses on homosexuality in Zimbabwe. Gunda among others observes that there is an 'overwhelming use of the creation stories to justify the normativity of heterosexual sexual practices.'[12] This also applies to the case study churches. They demonstrate the power of the creation stories to function as a "foundational myth" of a heteronormative and hierarchically ordered understanding of gender.

It is often suggested that the Pentecostal and Catholic types of Christianity are "worlds apart". Indeed, there are significant differences between the two, and some of them will be identified below from a comparative discussion of the case studies. However, the first part of this comparison has also revealed some striking convergences between at least one Catholic parish and one Pentecostal church as far as their engagement with men and masculinities is concerned. They not only critically address the same male behaviour but also promote a largely corresponding alternative ideal of masculinity. The reason for this, as explored above, is that they both stand in a long Christian tradition of thinking about gender, which takes its anthropological starting point in the theological account of creation. Furthermore, the biblical hermeneutics employed by the churches does not allow them to engage with the creation stories or with other biblical texts, such as on male headship and female submission, in a more critical way. As a consequence, the churches reflect the above-mentioned ambiguity about gender that characterises Christianity in general. This explains why the case study churches engage with "soft patriarchy" when developing their ideals of masculinity.

Different Discourses and Ecclesiologies

Apart from the similarities named above, there are also some obvious differences in the way the case study churches deal with men and engage in a transformation of

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[11] The idea of complementarity between the sexes that is central in Catholic anthropology and that can also be found in Regiment parish is often used in Catholic circles as an argument against homosexual relationships. For example, Tanzanian Catholic theologian Laurenti Magesa refers to an 'essential complementarity' of man and woman because of the 'innate sexual qualities which God has endowed each sex', and hence he argues that 'this is perhaps where homosexuality falls short: not only on the biological level, but more essentially on the psychological and spiritual levels. If homosexuality means the total rejection of either woman or man, or either the feminine or masculine, then one must say that it is theologically and spiritually seriously flawed.' See L. Magesa, 'The Challenge of African Woman Defined Theology for the 21st Century' in N.W. Ndung'u and P.N. Mwaura (eds.), *Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa. Theological Reflections of the 21st Century*, Nairobi: Paulines 2005, 100.

[12] M.R. Gunda, *The Bible and Homosexuality in Zimbabwe. A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Political, Cultural and Christian Arguments in the Homosexual Public Debate with Special Reference to the use of the Bible*, Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press 2010, 205.

masculinities. For example, though they largely correspond in their negative depiction of men, the churches differ in the way they address men and contest the type of masculinity considered problematic. In NAOG there is a far more explicit discourse in which issues concerning men and masculinity are addressed critically, and in which men are challenged to change their lifestyles. At times, this discourse employs dramatic language, with terms such as distortion, deception, abdication, and violation being used in reference to socially prevalent types of manhood. The case of NAOG, then, confirms the finding of Jane Soothill from research in Ghana that charismatic or Pentecostal discourses particularly address 'the role played by irresponsible males in what is perceived by the churches as the social and moral crisis in African family life.'[13] In NAOG, the social and moral crisis is even considered in a wider way: it is not just a crisis in the family but in society at large. Opposite to this is Regiment parish, where a dramatic discourse on men and masculinities is absent. Compared with NAOG, the discourse that addresses men and masculinity issues is far less prominent in the parish. Furthermore, this discourse is more nuanced on several issues, for example when it comes to the consumption of alcohol.

The difference between an explicit, somewhat dramatic discourse and a more implicit, nuanced discourse can be explained on the basis of the different ecclesiologies of both churches and the resulting fundamental difference in church types. Regiment parish is part of the Catholic Church, which is a mainstream church in Zambia comprising a substantial part of the population. Furthermore, the Catholic Church has an inclusive ecclesiology, understanding itself not as separated from but as closely connected to the community. A sociological result of this is that numerous men who identify as Catholics actually embody, in various degrees, the type of masculinity popular in society. Though the church may be fairly critical of this hegemonic masculinity, it will not radically oppose it but rather seek to "evangelise" it gradually, because the church understands itself not in contrast with but as part of society.[14] A Pentecostal church such as NAOG has a completely different ecclesiology. In line with the theology of holiness, the church is considered a "holy place" in the midst of a "sinful world".[15] One has to become "born again", that is: to leave his or her former life

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[13] J.E. Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, Leiden: Brill 2007, 186.

[14] Cf. the saying of Ghanaian Catholic theologian P. Addai-Mensah, *Mission, Communion and Relationship. A Roman Catholic Response to the Crisis of Male Youths in Africa*, New York: Peter Lang 2009, 172: '[T]he church is not a haven of saints. Rather, it is a place where people come in to encounter the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be formed so that they can be transformed into the image and likeness of God.'

[15] According to Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen in his introduction to ecclesiology, Pentecostal/charismatic churches differ from Catholic and other "older" churches in their concern for holy living for *all* members of the church (rather than for the clergy or canonised saints). 'While the older churches never dismissed the call for holiness, in the eyes of the younger churches they did not emphasize it enough. So the idea of the believer's church arose.' See V.M. Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2002, 90.

behind, before he or she can join the church. Hence, there is a strong tendency to demarcate the lines between the church and "the world". This is demonstrated, among other things, in a discourse that strongly contests the popular, "worldly" versions of masculinity and promotes a radically different, Christian vision typically called "biblical manhood".

The observed difference between Regiment parish and NAOG transcends both case studies and points to a fundamental difference between Catholicism and Pentecostalism in general. Comparing both strands of Christianity globally, the sociologist David Martin points out that where Catholicism is characterised by territoriality, birthright membership and continuity, Pentecostalism presents a church model based on individual choice, strict group boundaries, conversion and discontinuity. 'This means', says Martin with regard to Catholicism, 'that it places a sacred canopy over the average and the religiously relaxed, and lacks a defined and incisive edge.'[16] Though Martin's representation is somewhat simplistic (as he admits himself), yet it helps to understand the different starting positions and strategies of churches to function as moral communities and to bring about change in the behaviour and lifestyle of their members. The case studies show how this impacts on the ways men are critically addressed and the measure to which prevalent masculinities are contested in churches.

A Strict Ideal versus a Broad Direction

When it comes to the alternative to hegemonic masculinity promoted in both churches, the difference between an explicit and quite radical versus a more implicit and nuanced discourse appears again. In NAOG, a Pentecostal ideal of masculinity is presented under the name of "biblical manhood", with the claim that it is derived from the Bible (and suggesting that it is opposed to "African culture"). This ideal is defined and elaborated in the preaching. It is further promoted in the various ministries of the church, such as the youth ministry, the men's ministry and the marriage ministry. In Regiment parish, on the other hand, there is no precise definition of an ideal of masculinity. If there is such a thing as "Catholic manhood" – and I have tried to reconstruct its meaning – it is a diverse outcome of men's commitment to the tradition of faith and the moral values of the church rather than an articulated ideal. Rather than being preached about, it is symbolically represented by ancient figures such as St. Joachim and St Joseph. These embody the virtues considered characteristic of Catholic men. The difference in discourse leaves men in Regiment parish, compared to men in NAOG, with more space to navigate and negotiate the ways they understand and perform masculinity within a range that is more or less acceptable to their church. Compared with the well-defined and actively promoted ideal of masculinity in NAOG, Regiment parish allows for relatively diverse masculinities. However, the comment of Joseph Gelfer with regard to the Catholic men's movement in the USA can be applied to Regiment parish as well: 'The relative diversity is more a happy accident reflecting

[16] D. Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish*, Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing 2002, 17-18.

long-held traditions than a proactive campaign to challenge society's expectations about gender.'[17]

Not specifically writing on masculinities, Robert Garner has observed that Pentecostal churches are more successful than "mainline" churches in HIV prevention. He explains this by four key factors: indoctrination, religious experience, exclusion and socialisation. He considers the first factor, indoctrination (which is to be understood 'without pejorative undertones' as 'the methods and depth of the group's educational programme') the most powerful.[18] This underscores the importance of the explicit discourse and well-defined ideal of masculinity that is found in NAOG.[19] Moreover, the "indoctrination" with teaching on manhood in this church is further strengthened by the above-mentioned exclusivity of the church in relation to society at large, the social spaces in the church where men are encouraged (and encourage each other) to live up to the ideal of Christian manhood and by the fact that this ideal is defined in relation to the major religious experience of becoming born again and the subsequent process of sanctification that is characteristic of Pentecostal spirituality. In other words, NAOG's engagement with masculinities and their transformation largely meets the four factors for successful HIV prevention mentioned by Garner. This is in line with Ezra Chitando who – though quite critical of Pentecostal masculinity, as will be explored later – praises the engagement of Pentecostal churches like NAOG for inculcating "progressive masculinities". From research in Zimbabwe Chitando observes that the 'Pentecostal engagement with masculinities offers a lot of promise in the struggle against the HIV epidemic'.[20]

Does this mean that Regiment parish, or the Catholic Church in general, compared with NOAG and other Pentecostal churches, is less effective in realising change among men because it does not promote a well-defined ideal of masculinity and does not engage in a proactive campaign to transform masculinities? The present research does not aim to investigate the effectiveness of churches in their engagement

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[17] J. Gelfer, 'Identifying the Catholic Men's Movement' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 16:1 (2008), 54. According to Gelfer, the Catholic men's movement in the USA, compared with the evangelical Promise Keepers movement, does not actively promote a specific ideal of manhood, but rather allows different types of masculinity within a certain range.

[18] R.C. Garner, 'Safe Sects? Dynamic Religion and AIDS in South Africa' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38:1 (2000), 48.

[19] Though the promotion of a clear ideal of manhood is likely to add to the effectiveness of a transformation of masculinities, there is also a risk involved that the ideal is too high and becomes unrealistic. In that case, for people to live up to the moral standards might become no more than an issue of "keeping up appearances" (cf. J. Sadgrove, ''Keeping Up Appearances': Sex and Religion Amongst University Students in Uganda' in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37:1 (2007), 116-144).

[20] E. Chitando, 'A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic' in *Missionalia* 35:3 (2007), 121. By "progressive masculinities" Chitando refers to the Pentecostal effort to socialise boys and men to be 'counter-cultural in terms of their values', especially their values concerning matters of sexuality, violence and gender relations (p. 117).

with men and masculinities, but a few comments can be made. It has already been observed that the ideal of masculinity promoted in Regiment parish, largely corresponds with NAOG. The parish also provides social spaces for men to be educated in this ideal and to encourage each other to live up to it. However, the level of what Garner calls "indoctrination" is obviously lower than in NAOG. Additionally, in contrast to NAOG, Regiment parish does not seem to impose strict social and/or spiritual sanctions on those who violate the norms set by the church. On the one hand, this may imply that the parish is less prepared effectively to transform masculinities in the face of the HIV epidemic and other social challenges. However, on the other hand, Regiment parish, precisely because of its inclusive ecclesiology and rather broad ideal, may be well positioned to reach men in the community – particularly those men who might be frightened away by the radical approach of NAOG – and to "evangelise" them gradually. Thus, in different ways and for different target groups, both churches may be relatively competent to effect change in men and to bring about a transformation of masculinities.

An Individual versus a Communitarian Approach

With regard to the ideal of masculinity promoted in both churches, a substantial overlap has been observed above. However, this ideal also differs on some significant points. One of the differences is whether men are addressed and masculinity is defined with a more individual or a more communitarian approach. An indication of this difference is the reluctance demonstrated by the parish priest in Regiment parish to target men as a special group to be addressed. Explaining this, he says that in Catholic thought 'the starting point is the family' rather than issues of gender or men and women as individuals.[21] This is a highly significant comment, especially in contrast to the explicit discourse on masculinities in NAOG and the direct ways Banda calls upon men as individuals. Though the single comment of the priest should not be overstated, it indicates a difference in the approach to men and the scope of masculinities between the two case study churches.

In Regiment parish, the starting point is the family rather than the individual. In chapter 3 it was stated that the concept of the family is rather broad, as it points to all levels of the church as the family of God: from the nuclear and extended family to the community and society. The individual is thought of only as a member of the human community. As a result, the ideal of masculinity is the model of the "family man", with family being understood in this broad way.[22] Masculinities are defined and evaluated in terms of men's contribution to the community. This approach can be understood from the way African cultures traditionally understand the relation between the individual and the community. Referring to the traditional philosophical principle that 'I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am', Ghanaian Catholic theologian

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[21] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: July 29, 2009.

[22] This may apply to laymen as well as to priests, though in different ways. A layman is supposed to be a family man in his family, whereas a priest in a certain sense is a family man in the parish (cf. church as the family of God).

Peter Addai-Mensah underscores the need for the church 'to point out to male youths that individualism is not according to their nature' and that young men need to understand their existence in relation to, and as contributing to the existence of others.[23]

In NAOG, the approach is precisely the other way around. The starting point is the individual who has to be "born again" and has to live a holy life. Certainly, the ideal of masculinity in the church emphasises the role of men in the family, the community and society. However, fulfilling these roles is considered the responsibility of the individual, while in Regiment parish there is an idea of an organic community where men (and women) play their roles.

The observed difference between the two churches can be understood in relation to a fundamental divergence between Pentecostalism and Catholicism observed in the literature. According to scholars of religion, Pentecostalism in Africa and in other parts of the world advocates "modernity", among other things through the promotion of individualism. In the words of sociologist David Martin, Pentecostalism reflects the 'major narrative of modernity' as it represents individual self-consciousness and agency, and underscores a new religious identity which implies a break with social bonds[24], while Catholicism embodies 'the realities of organic community, located in territory and uniting religious with social identity'.[25] Where African Pentecostalism is said to be concerned with 'rebuilding the individual'[26], Catholicism in Africa embraces the idea that in 'African culture and tradition the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental'[27] and hence insists upon the 'promotion of the family and protection of the sacredness of family life'[28].

Though the association of Pentecostalism with modernity and of Catholicism with tradition are, of course, simplifications of reality, yet this broad difference seems to be reflected in the case study churches, for example, in the different perception of the familyNAOG tends to focus on the nuclear family, while Regiment parish tends to have

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[23] Addai-Mensah, *Mission, Communion and Relationship. A Roman Catholic Response to the Crisis of Male Youths in Africa*, 103.

[24] D. Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory*, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate 2005, 141. See also Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish*, 17ff.

[25] Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory*, 144.

[26] O.U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism. An Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press 2008, 213-215. This is not to say that Pentecostalism is not concerned with a rebuilding of society or the nation. As appears in the chapter on NAOG, clearly there is such a concern. However, the starting point is the individual, and a rebuilding of the nation is thought to be realised through a spiritual and moral renewal of individuals.

[27] John Paul II, 'Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and all the Lay Faithful to the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000' in (1995).

[28] Catholic Bishops of Zambia, 'You Shall be My Witnesses: Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Zambia to Mark 100 Years of Catholic Faith in Zambia (9th July 1991)' in J. Komakoma (ed.), *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and Other Christian Leaders in Zambia. Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*, Ndola: Mission Press 2003, 253.

a broader scope. In both churches there is reference to the demands made by relatives in the extended family, and church members indicate that they feel these as a serious responsibility. However, in NAOG, both in the formal discourse and in the accounts of church members, the duties to the extended family tend to be considered problematic. There is a sense that a man as head of his family first and foremost should concentrate on his marriage and small family, rather than sharing his resources with relatives (yet he is supposed to contribute substantially to the church, which might suggest that the church replaces the extended family).[29] In Regiment, on the other hand, these demands are considered as inherent to a man's position in the community and cannot, therefore, be neglected (though people realise that practically it is often very difficult for men to respond to these demands, due to economic hardship).

The Relation between "Traditional" and "Christian" Manhood

As mentioned above, the difference between an individual-centred and a community-centred approach and between a focus on the nuclear and the extended family, can be understood (though somewhat simplistically) in relation to the broad orientation of Pentecostalism towards "modernity" and of Catholicism towards "tradition". As anthropologist Birgit Meyer indicates, the different appreciation of what is perceived as African tradition and culture distinguishes Pentecostalism from Catholicism and mainline Protestant Christianity in Africa:

> While other groups in society, among them leaders of the Catholic and Protestant mission churches, try to come to terms with local traditions and to reconcile new and old ideas in order to develop a genuinely African synthesis, pentecostalists oppose this

[29] Scholars of African Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity generally associate this strand of Christianity with "modern" marriage trends such as a focus on the nuclear family. For example, David Maxwell, in his research into the Zimbabwean Pentecostal Assemblies of God, observes such a shifting focus, especially among second-generation urban Pentecostals. In his opinion, 'the church becomes the believer's extended family while ties with kins diminish as energies are refocused on the nuclear family.' See D. Maxwell, Af*rican Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism & the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement*, Oxford: James Currey; Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press; Harare: Weaver Press; 2006, 201. Birgit Meyer suggests that the more or less radical rejection of the extended family in Pentecostalism is informed by the perception that the devil operates through blood ties (see B. Meyer, 'Christianity in Africa: From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches' in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004), 460-461). Though in NAOG there is novery elaborate discourse on the devil – illustrating that the church is in the tradition of classic rather than neo-Pentecostalism – nonetheless there is reference in the church to "generational curses", understood as cycles of immorality and irresponsibility passed on from one generation to another. These references serve specifically to call upon men to break with the example of their fathers who were involved in drunkenness, violence to their wives and children and irresponsibility to their marriage and family.

revaluation of tradition and culture. They emphasize the 'global' character of this variant of Christianity and the necessity to break away from local traditions.[30]

It appears from the case studies that the observed different appreciation of culture directly affects the way the relation between "African" and "Christian" manhood is considered in local church communities.

In NAOG, the ideal of "biblical manhood" is typically defined, especially by the church leadership, in contrast to the type of masculinity that is considered as traditional Zambian or African. While the latter is associated with extramarital sex, domination over and violence towards women, laziness, irresponsibility and so on, a Christian man is supposed to be "born again" and to live a totally different type of life. This corresponds with Soothill's observation that Pentecostal churches hold African culture, specifically the traditional perceptions of the superior status of men, responsible for the moral and social crisis they perceive in African societies and families nowadays.[31] The churches demand a definite departure from tradition, and this is considered as having particular implications for male converts. For them, 'a break with the past is conceptualised in terms of their attitudes towards women and the rejection of role models established by their fathers.'[32] The departure from local traditions and the orientation towards global Christian discourses is further illustrated in Banda's definition of "biblical manhood", elaborated in several sermons, which he borrowed from the North American evangelical author John Piper.[33]

In Regiment parish the continuity rather than the distinction between Christianity and African culture is highlighted. This is in line with the Catholic idea of inculturation, which presumes a basically positive attitude towards "African culture" and its compatibility with Christianity. Drawing from the concept of inculturation, Addai-Mensah argues that for the Catholic Church in Africa, in the light of the "crisis of male youth" there is a missionary responsibility to employ the religious-cultural traditions in the formation of identity among young men.[34] Though traditional cultures and

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[30] B. Meyer, '"Make a Complete Break with the Past." Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse' in *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28:3 (1998), 317.

[31] Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, 189.

[32] Ibid.

[33] This case also illustrates the global exchange within world Christianity. Publications of the North American Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, in which Piper is involved, find their way to a local Pentecostal church in Lusaka, Zambia and directly impact on the discourse on gender in this church. It raises the question of globalisation of gender ideologies within world Christianity in the 21st century. Of course, such a globalisation also takes place in a transnational institution such as the Roman Catholic Church. Discourses on gender in Regiment parish reflect wider Catholic thought on gender. However there is a tendency to mediate these in relation to "local cultures", i.e. to translate Catholic teaching into the vernacular.

[34] '[I]f the church is to respond effectively to the plight of male youth in Africa, it must attend to the cultural dynamics of Africa Religious Tradition (ATR) mindful of the fact that having been born into the religio-cultural reality of ATR, young men are not well-served by denying this

religions thus are perceived positively, the project of inculturation is intended to be a *critical* correlation between "gospel" and "culture". In the process, the gospel accepts some elements in African cultures but rejects others and thus brings about a Christian transformation of culture.[35] In Regiment parish this is also applied to the "traditional" type of masculinity: on the one hand, its assumed notions of responsibility and provision are embraced, while on the other hand its assumed notions of male supremacy and domination are criticised because they do not recognise the equal dignity of men and women. Some parishioners also reject the notion of male headship for this reason (significantly, this concerns particularly the parishioners involved in Marriage Encounter – a movement considered to be more "middle class" and "modern").

It could be concluded that Regiment parish promotes a Christianised version of traditional masculinity, while NAOG promotes a modern Christian masculinity. However this would be a simplification. Though there is certainly some truth in this, it is too generalising to say that Pentecostalism advocates "modernity". On several issues it negotiates rather than represents modernity. A significant example in the light of the interest of this study is the notion of men as providers. More than in Regiment parish where this notion is mostly simply confirmed, in NAOG it appears to be a delicate issue in the discourse on men and masculinity. This is to be understood from modern developments that seem to affect a middle-class church such as NAOG more than a lower-class church such as Regiment parish, namely the increasing level of education among women, women's subsequent involvement in formal employment and their pursuit of a professional career. These socio-economic changes are brought about by modernity and urban life, and they impact on gender relations in marriage. The strategy of NAOG with regard to this issue is ambiguous. On the one hand, the church allows women to be educated, employed and pursuing careers, and even encourages this. There are two main reasons for this: it results from the church's notion of gender equality that both men and women can utilise their talents and capacities in the public domain, and the contribution of women to the household income is appreciated because it helps to strengthen the nuclear family economically. On the other hand, however, the church does not fully agree with "modernity" on this issue, as it wants to maintain the male role of providing. This is not primarily because it is thought to be

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reality or relegating it to the background of their lives. In the past, ATR contributed to the formation of their ancestors, in the present its philosophical insights and traditional religious wisdom must be recognized as a critical component of their identity formation from birth to adolescence and from adulthood to the grave.' See Addai-Mensah, *Mission, Communion and Relationship. A Roman Catholic Response to the Crisis of Male Youths in Africa*, 176.

[35] Cf. L. Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation. Transforming the Church in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 2004, 144: '[Inculturation] begins to happen when the gospel discovers itself in a culture, accepting the elements that reveal the face of God already present, and rejecting those that do not.'

"African" but because it is regarded as "biblical".[36] Thus the church ends up allowing women to contribute a substantial or even the major part of the household income, while at the same time insisting they respect their husbands as heads and main providers in the home.[37] In order to make the latter reasonable, the male role of providing is redefined by the church: the emphasis moves from providing for the economic needs of the family to the need for spiritual and moral leadership. In this way, NAOG negotiates with "modernity", accepting modern developments while at the same time seeking to uphold "biblical" gendered principals.

As much as NAOG and Pentecostalism in general do not merely advocate but negotiate modernity, Regiment parish and the Catholic Church in general do not simply represent "tradition" and oppose modernity. The project of inculturation can be considered as a particular Catholic way of negotiating Christianity, African cultural traditions and modernity.[38] For example, the concept of male headship is redefined in terms of responsibility in order to overcome its traditional connotations with domination. People in the parish relate this to Christianity, but one cannot help thinking that is has something to do with modern developments and changes in gender relations well. Otherwise why precisely the parishioners involved in the "modern" movement of Marriage Encounter tend to reject the concept of headship completely?

Thus, both Regiment parish and NAOG are found to be engaged with modernity. However the churches negotiate modernity in different ways, which can be explained from their different appreciation of "African culture". In both churches, a Christian ideal of masculinity is defined that moves between the local and the global, between tradition and modernity, but with somewhat different outcomes. These outcomes vary on the scales of a (dis)continuity between Christian and African identity, and of an orientation towards modernity or tradition.

Religious Leaders as Role Models of Manhood

A final but significant difference between the two case studies concerns the role played by the leaders of the churches in the promotion of the ideal of manhood. In NAOG, a prominent role is played by Banda. The fact that men and issues of

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[36] Cf. Joshua Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3*: 'The principal income is for the man. That's the biblical order. He is provider and protector of the homestead.'

[37] Just as NAOG, charismatic churches in Ghana are found by Soothill to be 'critical of married women who try to "boss" their husbands because their income matches or even exceeds that of their spouse.' (Soothill, *Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power: Charismatic Christianity in Ghana*, 207). Soothill explains this from the situation of economic decline where "traditional" masculinities are threatened because men are not able to be the breadwinners as tradition expects of them. At the same time, women engage in the informal sector and may bring in the greater part of the income. Though similar cases are referred to in NAOG, the concern in this church with the male role of providing does not seem to be informed primarily by the situation of economic hardship but rather by modern development of women's increased involvement in *formal* employment.

[38] Cf. A.J. Paolini, *Navigating Modernity: Postcolonialism, Identity, and International Relations*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1999, 173-175.

masculinity are addressed so explicitly and that the church actively promotes an alternative ideal of masculinity has largely arisen from his concerns and vision. As the senior pastor of the church which *is* his personal ministry, he is in the position to put his vision into practice, for example by delivering a series of sermons on *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*. Furthermore, as the prominent, charismatic and high profile leader of the church, he functions as a role model for church members in general and particularly for men. Banda not only preaches about "biblical manhood" but, according to both men and women in the church, he also embodies this ideal himself. Hence, male church members can take him as an example, and female church members are provided with an example to refer to when correcting their husbands. Next to Banda, and to a lesser extent, other pastors also seem to function as role models for church members, with the youth pastor being an example to young men specifically.

Different from Banda is Nsanzurwimo as the priest in charge of Regiment parish, whose position is far less prominent. As a parish priest in a worldwide, hierarchically organised and liturgically centred church, his power is limited and his role is first and foremost to celebrate the sacraments. Moreover, he might function as a spiritual role model to his parishioners, but because of his celibate lifestyle it is difficult for male parishioners to take him as an example in other areas, especially in the critical areas of sexuality, marriage and family life. A further complication may be that Nsanzurwimo, as a member of the Missionaries of Africa, does not originate from Zambia. In contrast to Banda, Nsanzurwimo does not seem to function as a role model of manhood. Male parishioners may identify with him as Catholics, but probably not specifically as Catholic *men*.

It might be that among Catholic men, the bishop rather than the parish priest is a primary figure with authority and a role-model function.[39] This is indicated, for example, by the eagerness of members of St. Joachim to provide assistance in diocese-related gatherings where the archbishop of Lusaka is acting. However, like the parish priest, the archbishop too seems to be a spiritual role model rather than a model of masculinity. Compared with the charismatic pastors in a Pentecostal church such as NAOG, the celibate clerics in a Catholic church such as Regiment parish seem to be less appealing and recognisable to their believers as models of masculinity. However the Catholic Church has its saint figures that function as role models representing certain male virtues. Though originating from ancient times, their traditions are revitalised in the light of today's challenges. Compared to the charismatic Pentecostal church leaders, the advantage of these saint figures as role models may be that their status is canonised as sacred and that there is no risk that they might fall from their pedestals.

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[39] This is suggested by Joseph Gelfer with regard to the Catholic men's movement in the United States of America in comparison with the evangelical Promise Keepers. According to Gelfer, 'Evangelical men's ministries' primary concern is the pastor leading the church in which the ministry takes place (promise five of the Promise Keepers). In Catholic men's ministry this focus generally switches to the Bishop of the diocese overseeing the ministry.' (Gelfer, *Identifying the Catholic Men's Movement*, 52.)

Conclusion

In the above section, the two case study churches have been critically compared. Both churches largely correspond in their concern about the moral lifestyles of men, which is reinforced by the HIV epidemic. Furthermore they promote an overlapping alternative Christian ideal of masculinity, informed by a gender ideology based on the "order of creation" and by similar types of biblical hermeneutics. Upholding the "biblical" idea of male headship while also recognising the equality (or equal dignity) of men and women, the churches present a type of masculinity that is "soft patriarchal" and is characterised by an ethic of male responsibility applied to the various areas of life.

Apart from these similarities, some significant differences have also been identified. In accordance with the distinct characteristics of Catholicism and Pentecostalism in Africa and globally, the case study churches differ in the way that they define their Christian type of masculinity in (dis)continuity with what they consider as traditional culture, and in a different orientation towards developments and values brought about by modernity. Furthermore NAOG, being a church in the Pentecostal tradition of holiness, tends to demand more commitment from its members to the church's moral standards, and hence also addresses male church members in a more explicit and radical discourse and promotes a stricter ideal of manhood, compared with Regiment parish, which is in the Catholic tradition of an inclusive ecclesiology that does not strictly demarcate the boundaries between the church and "the world". This difference also impacts on the question of whether and how men live up to the ideal of manhood promoted in their respective churches. In Regiment parish, men may interpret and relate to this ideal in a more flexible way than (is allowed) in NAOG. However, in both churches there is a critical perception of men's commitment, just as there is a group of men who seem to be seriously committed.

Having compared the case study churches with each other, the question arises as to how their approaches relate to the approach to men and masculinities presented by the African theologians discussed in chapter 2. This is explored in the next section.

5.3. Comparing the Case Studies with the African Theologians

Chapter two of this thesis outlined the way a number of African theologians engage with the issue of masculinities as a result of the HIV epidemic. It became clear that these theologians analyse and reflect on gender, masculinities and HIV within an analytical framework of patriarchy. On the basis of this framework they criticise religions in general and Christian churches in particular for reinforcing patriarchal masculinities. At the same time, churches are mentioned as key to the transformation of masculinities towards gender justice. A key question, then, is how the case study churches actually relate to the theologians' approach. Where do the churches and the theologians converge in the way they address men and masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic, and where do they diverge? This question is central in the present section that compares the analyses of and visions for masculinities provided by the theologians and found in the case study churches.

A preliminary remark is that in spite of the various differences between the two case studies, in this section the churches are generally taken as representing one approach which is compared with the approach of the theologians. This is not to ignore the differences between the churches (nor among the theologians), but rather to highlight the convergences and divergences of churches as representing one type of African Christianity, and the theologians another type. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, it is the critical space between the discourses of "African theology" and "African churches" that has the specific interest of the present study, as far as issues of masculinities (and, broader, gender) are concerned. This space is explored in the present section.

A second preliminary remark is that in the present section, Ezra Chitando appears as a major dialogue partner among the African theologians. In the field of African theology, he is in the forefront of the emerging study of masculinities in the context of HIV. As outlined in chapter 2, however, his approach to masculinities is in line with the approach to issues of gender and HIV in general presented by the African theologians discussed.

A shared Concern about Men and Masculinities

Among the African theologians under discussion, Ezra Chitando has expressed most explicitly that the HIV epidemic challenges African churches to rethink their mission towards men.[40] He considers it crucial for "AIDS competent churches" to challenge hegemonic masculinities and to engage in an "evangelisation" of men and a transformation of masculinities. The case studies of the present research show that some local churches indeed have been challenged to engage in a mission towards men. This is most obvious in Northmead Assembly of God, where the transformation of men and masculinities is an explicit project in which the church has deliberately engaged, but to a lesser extent it is also true for Regiment parish. Both churches, as concluded above, show a critical awareness of the role played by men in the problems facing society, and from this concern they try to change men and to promote alternative visions of masculinity. As far as this criterion is concerned, Regiment parish and NAOG can be considered as examples of the AIDS competent churches Chitando is looking for.

With regard to specific critical aspects of masculinities in the context of HIV and AIDS, African theologians point to issues such as men's engagement in violence against women, their domination of women, and male sexual behaviour. Significantly, it is precisely these issues that are also addressed in the church discourses. Take, for example, the call of Beverley Haddad to churches to break the silence on violence against women and to challenge men to take responsibility for their sexual

[40] E. Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2007, 40ff.

behaviour.[41] Both case study churches meet this call, as has become clear from the former chapters: they address men's perpetration of domestic and sexual violence, they challenge men to behave sexually in a responsible way and they promote men's control of their unbound sexual desires. Where theological scholars such as Chitando, Chirongoma and Moyo employ the concept of machismo to capture the hegemonic masculinity that in their opinion is destructive in the context of HIV and AIDS[42], expressions of this machismo among men are critically addressed in the churches. It can be concluded, then, that the churches and the theologians largely correspond in their perception of the role of men, and of the critical aspects of prevalent masculinities, in the context of the HIV epidemic and other challenges in society.

A Shared Quest for Alternative Masculinities

Apart from addressing men and contesting hegemonic forms of masculinity, the case study churches as well as the theologians try to engage men in an alternative masculinity. With regard to the churches, this is most obviously the case in Northmead Assembly of God, where there is an explicit discourse on what is called "biblical manhood" and where male church members in several ways are actively challenged to engage in this ideal. But it is clear that, just like NAOG Regiment parish also upholds an ideal of masculinity different from popular versions. So when Chitando says that 'churches need to engage with men in order to transform dangerous ideas about manhood in Africa', both churches meet this need, though in different ways and to different extents.[43]

As mentioned above, with regard to Pentecostal churches Chitando indeed acknowledges their engagement with the transformation of masculinities. He clearly evaluates it positively in view of its impact in contexts of HIV:

> Pentecostals seek to empower men to realise that abstinence and faithfulness are realistic options in the HIV era. The Pentecostal teaching on mutuality and communication in marriage is also critical in the HIV era.… The Pentecostal engagement with masculinities offers a lot of promise in the struggle against the HIV epidemic in Zimbabwe.[44]

Chitando speaks about the Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe, and does not refer to churches from other Christian traditions. However, he seems to suggest that in their

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[41] B. Haddad, 'Choosing to Remain Silent: Links between Gender Violence, HIV/AIDS and the South African Church' in I.A. Phiri, B. Haddad and M. Masenya (eds.), *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2003, 155.

[42] Cf. E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma, 'Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14:1 (2008), 58; F.L. Moyo, 'Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2005, 131.

[43] Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 46.

[44] Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*, 121.

engagement with masculinities, Pentecostal churches distinguish themselves from other churches. This also applies to the Pentecostal church in the present study: more than Regiment parish, Northmead Assembly of God is explicitly engaged in a transformation of masculinities as a response to the HIV epidemic and other social challenges. However both churches foster values such as abstinence and fidelity among men, and teach notions like equality, mutuality and communication in marriage. Where Chitando concludes that Pentecostal churches play 'a major role in challenging men to adopt masculinities that do not threaten the well-being of women, children and men'[45], the present study shows that a Catholic church such as Regiment parish also plays a significant role, albeit in a way that is different from a Pentecostal church such as NAOG. As both case study churches engage constructively in a mission towards and among men and seek to realise change, it can be concluded that they somehow meet the basic demand of Chitando and other theologians that churches should challenge hegemonic masculinities and promote alternative types.

An Individualist versus a Structuralist Analysis

Though Chitando acknowledges the major role played by Pentecostal churches in a transformation of masculinities, his overall judgment on the engagement of these churches with masculinities in the context of HIV is very critical. His critique is of great significance to the present study, as it clearly illustrates some of the most fundamental divergences between the theologians and the case study churches (both the Pentecostal and the Catholic) in their analyses of and visions for masculinities.

One of the critical issues mentioned by Chitando concerns the difference between an approach that analyses men primarily as individual moral subjects, and a structural approach of men as gendered subjects involved in powered gender relations. As mentioned above, the case study churches correspond in their concern about men's moral lifestyles and they both seek to change the moral behaviour of men. In that sense, they both address and transform masculinities at the level of the individual. Significantly, Chitando in his critique of Pentecostal efforts to transform masculinity praises this focus on the individual but at the same time evaluates it as insufficient:

> One of the most persuasive aspects of African Pentecostal rhetoric on masculinities in the context of HIV is its focus on the individual. He is encouraged to undertake a commitment to become 'a new man'. However, this might downplay the reality that numerous factors can constrain a man's capacity to act differently. Thus, there is a clear need for Pentecostalism to address structural factors, while encouraging individuals to become new creations. Socio-cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity need to be deconstructed.[46]

According to Chitando and other theological scholars such as Tinyiko Maluleke and recently Jairos Hlatywayo, it is urgent for churches to adopt a structural approach to

[45] Ibid., 124.

[46] Ibid., 123.

men and masculinities, in order to take into account that problematic male behaviour is informed by deeply rooted structures of gender and power in society.[47] From this perception, and in line with the approach of classic liberation theology[48], they engage in a more thorough and critical analysis of masculinities. Here, the focus is not just on the critical behaviour of individual men, but primarily on the social structures in which this behaviour is embedded. The case study churches hardly do so: though they are concerned with the way men engage in gender relations, they are not concerned with structures of gender and power as such. They indeed address the abuse of power by men such as through violence or domination. However, rather than analysing this critically in terms of structural and powered gender inequalities, they seek to correct it by insisting upon men's responsibilities.

The observed difference between the churches' individualist versus the theologians' structuralist analysis of men and masculinities corresponds with their different understandings of the HIV epidemic. Though the churches demonstrate some awareness of structural issues underlying the epidemic, they tend to deal with HIV primarily from people's moral attitudes concerning sexuality. Hence they address people at the level of individual behaviour, teaching them the Christian moral values and insisting on responsibility and self-control. In so doing, they particularly address men, as these are perceived as having great difficulties in this area. The theologians on the other hand, as explored in chapter 2, have developed an HIV and AIDS liberation theology that explains the epidemic primarily from unequal social and economic structures. In the tradition of liberation theology, these are interpreted theologically in terms of "social injustice" and "structural sin". The need for social transformation is emphasised time and time again, as this is considered the only adequate strategy to respond to HIV. According to the theologians, one of the key social structures in urgent need of transformation is gender inequality or patriarchy. It is precisely on this issue of

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[47] Cf. J. Hlatywayo, 'Dangerous Masculinities: An Analysis of the Misconception of "Real Manhood" and its Impact on Vulnerabilities to HIV among the Ndau of Chipinge in Zimbabwe' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming), see the section on 'patriarchal systems: power structures'; T.S. Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy* (Paper for the 'Evil of Patriarchy Conference, 6 March 2009), http://www.iam.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=258&Itemid=99 (accessed 3 March 2010). As outlined in chapter 2, this structural approach to men and masculinities is in line with the tradition of African women theologians who have always addressed gender inequality as embedded in social, economic and political structures and in cultural and religious ideologies.

[48] See, for instance, how Gustavo Gutierrez describes the understanding of sin in liberation theology in distinction to traditional Christian understandings: 'In the liberation approach sin is not considered as an individual, private or merely interior reality – asserted just enough to necessitate a "spiritual" redemption which does not challenge the order in which we live. Sin is regarded as a social, historical fact. …. Sin appears, therefore, as the fundamental alienation, the root of a situation of injustice and exploitation.' (G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation. History, Politics and Salvation*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1973, 175.)

patriarchy that the theologians and the churches most fundamentally diverge in their approach to men and masculinities.

Transforming Masculinities within or beyond Patriarchy

As just mentioned, Chitando criticises the Pentecostal engagement with masculinities in Zimbabwe as inadequate because it only focuses on the individual and his behaviour. In his opinion, this does not take into account the powered structures of gender in which masculinities are embedded and that give rise to problematic male behaviour. Further exploring his critique, it appears that Chitando's real concern is that Pentecostal churches maintain and reinforce one of the main structures that in his opinion underlies the epidemic: patriarchy. Though the churches are praised for realising change in men's behaviour, their contribution to the transformation of masculinities towards gender justice, which Chitando considers necessary in view of HIV and AIDS, is considered negatively. This clearly appears from the following quotations:

> While the Zimbabwean Pentecostal movement has sought to restructure masculinities and promote responsibility, there is need to adopt a more radical approach in the wake of the HIV epidemic. The Pentecostal approach is still rooted in the paradigm of the male as the leader. … In essence, men are being asked to be more considerate towards women and children. Men are being asked to become benevolent dictators, and women to embrace the patriarchy of love. This does not promote gender justice in the HIV era.[49]

> Pentecostal teaching on men as breadwinners and heads of households can, inadvertently, sponsor gender-based violence. … While Pentecostals encourage women to be economically empowered, they are not willing to challenge the myth of male headship. The HIV epidemic calls for courage in redefining gender roles.[50]

The critique expressed here can also be applied to the case study churches of the present research. As concluded above, NAOG as well as Regiment parish analyse and address men and masculinities first and foremost at the level of the individual. At this level they seek to change men, and they do so by promoting an alternative ideal of manhood. Central to their definitions of this ideal, indeed, are notions such as male headship and leadership. In other words, the churches engage in what Chitando calls 'the paradigm of the male as the leader' and they reinforce what he calls the 'myth of male headship'. According to Chitando, this does not promote gender justice but rather maintains patriarchy. Even though he brings in a nuance and speaks about a 'patriarchy of love', this apparently does not soften his evaluation.

With his rejection of concepts such as male headship and leadership in Christian discourses on masculinity, Chitando engages with the tradition of African women's theology. As early as 1979 Mercy Oduyoye presented the concept of headship as in

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[49] Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*, 122.

[50] Ibid., 124.

crucial need of a feminist deconstruction.[51] Recently Sarojini Nadar, in her account of a South African men's movement (the Mighty Men's Conference), has engaged in such a deconstruction. She finds the discourse in this movement to be full of "rhetoric" of male headship and responsibility, and as an African woman theologian she evaluates this from the viewpoint of her 'feminist hermeneutic of suspicion'. Hence she concludes:

> [A] theology of headship and submission is simply yet another way of promoting violence (in its varied forms) through the insidious myth that men as the stronger sex need to protect women, or to "defend the weak." This is what Mary Stewart van Leeuwen has called soft patriarchy, it seems innocent enough – i.e. "men taking responsibility" is hardly an unpalatable idea, but if "taking responsibility" means asserting dominating and coercive measures, including those in the religious domain, to maintain power, then our justice antennas have to be tuned in, so that we are not deceived by this palatable patriarchy, masquerading as "restoring masculinity."[52]

It is not clear to what extent the discourse in the Mighty Men's Conference corresponds to the discourse that the present research has found in the case study churches. Yet at least it is clear that the churches, just like the men's movement of Nadar and the Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe that Chitando writes about, employ concepts such as male headship and responsibility and promote an ideology that can be labelled as "soft patriarchy". In other words, various Christian discourses that seek to change men and to transform masculinities, do so within a context of patriarchy, upholding patriarchal concepts but redefining them in terms of responsibility, protection and love. Furthermore it is clear that scholars such as Chitando and Nadar do not evaluate this strategy positively, because they envision a transformation of masculinity *beyond* patriarchy in order to bring about gender justice. This has to be understood from the fundamental critique the theologians under discussion have of the ideology of patriarchy. One can think of the reference of Philomena Mwaura to patriarchy as a sin, Tinyiko Maluleke's statement on patriarchy as being evil, or Musa Dube's reference to patriarchy as 'violence normalized and inflicted daily on the souls of women and girls'.[53] This critique results in the radical rejection of anything that smells of patriarchy. Most likely, this also implies a negative

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[51] M.A. Oduyoye, 'The Roots of African Christian Feminism' in J.S. Pobee and C.F. Hallencreutz (eds.), *Variations in Christian Theology in Africa*, Nairobi: Uzima Press 1979, 42. According to Oduyoye, the concept of headship 'does not affect marital relations only; for the whole of human relations suffer because headship is still cast in the mould of ancient political systems with their despots and kings and queens.'

[52] S. Nadar, 'Who's Afraid of the Mighty Men's Conference? Palatable Patriarchy and Violence against Wo/men in South Africa' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010.

[53] Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy. Paper for the 'Evil of Patriarchy Conference'*, 1; M.W. Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, Scranton and London: University of Scranton Press 2008, 140; P.N. Mwaura, 'Gender Mainstreaming in African Theology. An African Women's Perspective' in *Voices from the Third World* 24:1 (2001), 175.

evaluation by the theologians under discussion of the types of masculinity promoted in Regiment parish and NAOG.

Regarding the divergences in the ways African theologians and the case study churches analyse and reflect upon masculinities, this might be the most fundamental: the churches address men and seek to transform masculinities within an ideology that can be considered patriarchal, while the theologians aim at the 'liberation of men from patriarchy'[54] in order to achieve gender justice. According to the theologians, only a radical transformation is adequate enough to overcome the unequal structure of gender and power underlying the HIV epidemic. In their opinion, it is not just certain types of behaviour on the part of men that have to be changed, but the constructs of masculinity and the structures of gender that inform, facilitate and/or legitimate this behaviour. This radical and structural approach of the transformation of masculinities in the context of HIV is in line with the approach that African women theologians have had with regard to the transformation of gender relations. As Rose Uchem states unequivocally:

> It must be clarified again that what has been said in this dissertation is not about individual women or men, but an analysis of a system of structural and cultural injustice against women, which also holds men in bondage. …. Sure, there are many nice men of goodwill who are truly good to women, but nice-ness is not enough. The subject at hand is a structural and systematic evil in a world, into which people are born, all set up for them. Therefore it needs more than personal and interpersonal nice-ness. Nice people need to have their social consciousness sharpened; learn how to recognize and question unjust social structures and how not to collude with unjust systems.[55]

It is clear that churches in our case studies, like many other churches, do not engage with such a radical project as is articulated here. Therefore their efforts at transforming masculinities are, in the end, evaluated negatively by the theologians, even though they realise that these efforts may be preventive in the context of HIV. For the theologians, HIV (or any other concrete social problem) is not the primary concern that leads them into a quest for transformed masculinities. Their real concern is with what they call gender injustice or patriarchy. The HIV epidemic, in the words of Chitando, only 'provides an opportunity' to overcome the problem of patriarchy and to achieve gender justice.[56] Therefore for the theologians it is imperative that transformed versions of masculinity go beyond patriarchy. The churches, on the other hand, concerned with micro-ethics concerning men's behaviour rather than with

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[54] E. Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 92-93, 96-97; Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 139-140; M.A. Oduyoye, 'Acting to Construct Africa: The Agency by Women' in R. van Eijk and J. van Lin (eds.), *Africans Reconstructing Africa*, Nijmegen: Theologische Faculteit KU-Nijmegen 1997, 38.

[55] R.N. Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. An Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, Enugu: Snaap Press 2001, 230.

[56] Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*, 122.

structures of gender, do not see a problem in patriarchy as such and therefore employ patriarchal concepts to bring about change among men and to transform masculinities.

Understanding Gender and Masculinity from Creation versus Re-Creation

The efforts of the churches to transform masculinities within patriarchy, and the endeavour of the theologians to overcome patriarchy, are informed by their respective gender ideologies. These have different theological foundations. In case of the churches, their gender ideology is strongly based on the theological doctrine of creation. More specifically, it is informed by a literal and normative reading of the Genesis creation stories. As mentioned above, this results in an ambiguous gender ideology that on the one hand supports a notion of gender equality but, on the other, maintains a hierarchical gender order. The churches not only teach that man and woman are created different (and therefore need to complement each other), but also that man was created first and therefore has a primary position in the order of the sexes. Following on from this, in both churches masculinity is defined by, or at least associated with, notions such as headship, leadership and a primary responsibility. These notions indicate a sense of male primacy, which is part and parcel of any patriarchal gender ideology.

As already mentioned in chapter 2, the African theologians under discussion also refer to the Genesis creation stories. Like the churches, they understand Genesis 1:27 as the key to a theological basis for gender equality. In their publications, time and time again it is stated that both women and men are created in the image of God. Different from the churches, the theologians do not limit their understanding of gender equality to a sense of equal human dignity that still allows a man to be the head in marriage. Rather they claim the full potential of the idea that men and women are created equally in the image of God.[57] Furthermore, the theologians differ from the churches in their biblical hermeneutics, as they present a fundamental critique of the creation story of Genesis 2 and its popular interpretation. Rather than taking this story as foundational to their theological understanding of gender, they criticise the story and/or its popular interpretations for being patriarchal and androcentric, and they call for a critical deconstruction and re-reading.[58] Most fundamentally, in contrast to the churches the theologians do not understand gender from the theological doctrine of creation but from the idea of re-creation brought about by Jesus Christ, i.e. from

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[57] Cf. M.A. Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press 2001, 44-46.

[58] Most radically the text is denounced by Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. an Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, 181. Some other scholars seem to be critical of the popular interpretations of the text rather than of the text itself (cf. A. Nasimiyu-Wasike, 'Genesis 1-2 and some Elements of Diversion from the Original Meaning of the Creation of Man and Woman' in M.N. Getui, K. Holter and V. Zinkuratire (eds.), *Interpreting the Old Testament in Africa*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers 2001, 177-178; T. Okure, 'Women in the Bible' in M.A. Oduyoye and V. Fabella (eds.), w*ith Passion and Compassion. Third World Women Doing Theology*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis 1988, 48-52.

Christology and eschatology. Indeed, in NAOG the perception of Jesus Christ as the second Adam also occurs, but this is understood in terms of a *restoration* of God's original intention: the image of "biblical manhood" presented by Adam in Genesis 2 is thought to be restored and fully embodied in Jesus Christ. The African theologians under discussion, however, understand the re-creation in Christ in terms of a *new creation*. See, for example, Isabel Phiri who opposes a literalistic (mis)reading of the Genesis creation stories that subordinates women to men, by pointing to 'the promise of Galatians 3:28'. This verse reads that in Christ there is neither male nor female. Phiri interprets it as a reference to 'the new life as God intended it to be, a life full of partnership between men and women.'[59] According to Phiri, through the re-creation in Christ a 'liberated community of men and women' will be established, and the church is to anticipate this future.[60] Likewise Rose Uchem envisions 'a new world order, modelled on Christ and not on androcentric ideologies justified with the Adamic myth'.[61] In this new order, she says, marriage is no longer defined by the headship model but by a partnership of equals and a shared leadership which does not serve the 'inherited privilege of one sex, the male sex.'[62] As appears from these quotations, the idea of a re-creation through Christ is employed by the theologians to overcome the patriarchal ideologies of gender informed by an account of creation. It provides them with a basis for calling for a radical equality and justice in gender relations.

In terms of gender theory, the difference between a perception of gender as rooted in creation or in re-creation can be categorised with the concepts of essentialism and constructivism. The account of creation gives rise to an essentialist understanding of gender in the churches: as it is believed that God has created humankind differently as male and female and has attached distinct characteristics to both sexes, it is also presumed that there is something that can be qualified as a true essence of manhood and womanhood as part of the order of creation. The essentialist stance of the churches enables them to define a positive ideal of manhood (cf. "biblical manhood" in NAOG) promoted among men. In both case study churches the definition of this ideal is informed among other things by the creation story of Genesis 2. The theologians, on the other hand, consider gender as socially constructed rather than as designed by God. This enables them to deconstruct ideologies and structures of gender critically. Furthermore, due to their orientation towards re-creation, they do not consider gender constructions as fixed but rather as open for transformation. On the basis of the account of re-creation they articulate a broad vision for gender relations, captured in the concept of gender justice understood in terms of equality and partnership. However, they hardly define a specific positive ideal of masculinity. Apparently, it is easier to define masculinity on the basis of an essentialist

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[59] I.A. Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM 1997, 156.

[60] Ibid., 151-160.

[61] Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. an Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, 189.

[62] Ibid., 228.

understanding of gender as rooted in creation than on the basis of a critical perception of gender as in need of deconstruction and reconstruction.

Masculinity Politics and Biblical Hermeneutics

As appears from the above paragraph, the case study churches and the theologians deal with the Genesis creation stories in different ways. In the churches these stories are read literally and taken as normative for the understanding of gender and masculinity. The theologians on the other hand have a far more critical approach, not only to popular interpretations of Genesis 1-3 but also to the biblical text itself. As Phiri points out, 'African women theologians are re-reading the Genesis creation story in the light of source and redaction criticism. This has necessitated going beyond the texts as well as a literalistic reading of the passages.'[63] Presenting a similar critical approach, Uchem calls for revisiting the creation stories, in order to oppose readings that take the accounts as factual, literal and historical.[64] Explaining this, both Phiri and Uchem point to the way the stories have been foundational to the understanding of women as inferior beings secondary to men.

The difference between the churches and the theologians in how they deal with the Genesis creation stories is illustrative of their diverging biblical hermeneutics.[65] From the case studies it is clear that the churches themselves differ in the way they use the Bible. In NAOG the Bible is often quoted in preaching as well as in conversations with church members, while in Regiment parish this hardly ever happens. In both churches, members indicate that the level of knowledge of the Bible is a major difference between Catholics and Pentecostals. However, both churches correspond in their perception of the Bible as the holy and normative "Word of God". This influences their hermeneutics, as it principally does not allow a critique of biblical texts. The theologians under discussion, on the other hand, have a somewhat different hermeneutical approach to the Bible. To quote Oduyoye, they affirm 'the Bible as a source for God-word'.[66] This brings in a slight but significant nuance. When the Bible is *a source for* the word of God, the task is to distinguish in the biblical text where God is speaking and where God is not speaking. As put by Oduyoye, the Bible needs to be read 'with a critical eye' in order to 'discover in it the Triune God as liberator of the oppressed, the rescuer of the marginalized and all who live daily in the throes of pain, uncertainty and deprivation.'[67] Though African women theologians have employed different hermeneutical concepts and approaches, their interpretation of the Bible is

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[63] Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, 155.

[64] Uchem, *Overcoming Women's Subordination. an Igbo African and Christian Perspective: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women*, 179-180.

[65] In this context, I understand 'hermeneutics' basically as the principles and processes of understanding and interpreting the biblical text by readers and in relation to their context.

[66] Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, 48.

[67] Ibid., 50.

generally characterised by this quest for liberation and justice.[68] As outlined in chapter 2, this hermeneutics results in a critical sensitivity to and deconstruction of patriarchal traditions in the biblical texts. The concrete implications of this are illustrated in the way the theologians deal with the Genesis account of creation, but also in the way they look at the notion of male headship (and female submission) as mentioned in some of the Pauline epistles of the New Testament. Drawing from their critical biblical hermeneutics, the theologians tend to reject this notion. The churches, however, can hardly do so because they read the Bible as a normative text. Rather than rejecting it, they redefine the idea of male headship in order to dissociate it from its connotation of domination. As has been explored above, the theologians acknowledge this redefinition but evaluate it as not radical enough. Hence, they blame the churches, in the words of Sarojini Nadar, for their 'hermeneutical immobility' and state that 'more holistic, liberating ways of engaging with Scripture must be developed if the Church is to become a place of gender justice and equality.'[69] Clearly, biblical hermeneutics constitutes a major divergence between the African theologians who are concerned about gender issues and the case study churches (and, most likely, many other African churches)

The present research demonstrates that different hermeneutical approaches to the Bible have direct implications for the political strategies to transform masculinities and gender relations. When the Bible is read in a literal and normative way, it is easy, in the words of Banda, 'to discuss afresh from a biblical angle what fatherhood really means in our society' because 'the Bible gives such important guidelines'.[70] The theologians, having a far more critical approach focused on the deconstruction of patriarchal traditions, have more difficulty in deriving a positive ideal from the Bible. They make use of biblical texts to address critical issues among men – for example, the story of the rape of Tamar in order to address sexual violence –, but these stories function as counter-examples rather than as constructive models.[71]

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[68] Cf. M.W. Dube, 'Talitha Cum Hermeneutics of Liberation: Some African Women's Ways of Reading the Bible' in A.F. Botta and P.R. Andinach (eds.), *The Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2009, 133-146; M.W. Dube, 'Circle Readings of the Bible/Scriptoratures' in J.A. Smit and P.P. Kumar (eds.), *Study of Religion in Southern Africa. Essays in Honour of G.C. Oosthuizen*, Leiden: Brill 2005, 77-96.

[69] S. Nadar, 'On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions' in I.A. Phiri and S. Nadar (eds.), *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, Geneva: World Council of Churches 2005, 21-22.

[70] Joshua Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 1*. DVD produced by the Media Desk of Northmead Assembly of God, Lusaka 2008.

[71] E.g. see G. West, "The Contribution of Tamar's Story to the Construction of Alternative African Masculinities" 2009).. See also T.S. Maluleke, 'Men and their Role in Community' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *Africa Praying. A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 190-193.

Conclusion

From the above section it appears that the case study churches and the theologians share a concern about men and masculinities – a concern reinforced by the HIV epidemic. Hence both the theologians and the churches are engaged in a quest for alternative, transformed masculinities that are not destructive but rather constructive in the face of HIV and other problems in society. In spite of the common concern and the shared quest, the theologians and the churches differ in their analysis of the problem, and in the way they envision a transformation of masculinities. Ultimately, the fundamental divergence is that the churches focus on the behaviour of men as individual moral subjects and seek to raise responsible men, while the theologians focus on men as embedded in powered relations of gender and seek to transform masculinities structurally, i.e. beyond patriarchy. It can be concluded that the churches and the theologians are engaged in different paradigms: a traditional Christian paradigm of looking at ethics and understanding gender, and a liberation theological paradigm. This directly impacts upon the way they understand and respond to HIV, the level at which they analyse and address men and male behaviour and the way they envision a transformation of masculinities. The visions of alternative masculinities provided by the churches and the theologians also emerge from different paradigms, i.e. different theological-anthropological understandings of gender and different biblical hermeneutics. The result is that the churches present "soft patriarchal" visions of masculinity, while the theologians call for a radical deconstruction of patriarchy and aim to transform masculinities towards gender justice.

The conclusion that the churches and the theologians engage in different paradigms when it comes to their approach to men and masculinities is not necessarily problematic. It is quite logical that the praxes and discourses in local church communities are different from the analyses and reflections of academically trained theological scholars. The issue at stake, however, which is of great significance to the present study, is that the theologians, being aware of the different approach to masculinities by the churches, evaluate this approach negatively. This may be a result of the so-called "church-enabling task" that African theologians have assigned themselves, which includes a critical edge to the praxis and preaching in churches.[72] Yet the negative evaluation raises some fundamental questions, not only about the way the case study churches engage in a quest for transformed masculinities but also about the normative framework on the basis of which the theologians evaluate the churches' approach as inadequate. These questions will be raised in the next sections, first with regard to the theologians and second with regard to the case study churches.

5.4. SOME CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO THE THEOLOGIANS

The primary interest of the present investigation of masculinities is the HIV epidemic. Do the religious constructions of masculinity studied here enhance life in the face of

[72] Cf. T.S. Maluleke, 'Half a Century of African Christian Theologies: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-First Century' in O.U. Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005, 474-475.

HIV or do they put women, children and men at risk? As mentioned in the above section, the African theological scholars under discussion admit that the type of masculinity as promoted in the case study churches could be preventive and constructive in view of HIV. Yet it was observed that they are likely to be critical of the transformation of masculinities as practised in the churches: this strategy does not "liberate men from patriarchy" and therefore does not contribute to gender justice.

In the present section, I raise some critical questions concerning the way the theologians analyse and evaluate the types of masculinity as promoted in the case study churches. These questions concern particularly the conceptual framework on the basis of which the theologians analyse these masculinities as being "patriarchal" and therefore evaluate them as being inadequate.

The Normative and Monolith Concept of Patriarchy

For African theologians working on issues of gender, in particular on masculinities, the major critical concept is that of patriarchy. As shown in chapter 2, this is in line with the tradition of African women's theology, which from the very beginning has presented a fundamental critique of the patriarchal nature of African cultures, societies and religions. The HIV epidemic has only reinforced this critique, since in the opinion of the theologians the epidemic has revealed the dangerous and even deadly face of the patriarchal organisation of gender. Hence they formulate their vision for a transformation of gender relations and masculinities: women need to be empowered and men need to be liberated from patriarchy. Only this strategy, the theologians believe, will help to achieve gender justice, which they consider the key to overcoming HIV.[73]

As mentioned above, in the conceptual framework of patriarchy and gender justice, the types of masculinity promoted in the case study churches are evaluated negatively because they do not help to overcome patriarchy and therefore would not help to achieve gender justice. This evaluation, in my opinion, needs to be questioned on the basis of the detailed analysis of the discourses on masculinity in both churches presented in chapters 3 and 4. As I have concluded above, these masculinities indeed can be described as "patriarchal", in the sense that they maintain notions such as male headship and leadership. However they can hardly be considered as aggressive, destructive, dangerous or deadly – to mention some of the adjectives with which some theologians refer to patriarchal masculinities. The ideals of masculinity in the churches can be better defined as "soft patriarchal", indicating that it is not a brutal form of male dominance that is promoted but rather a nuanced form of male responsibility in the circles of marriage, the family and the community. Significantly, the distinction between different forms of masculinity that may all be patriarchal but yet give rise to different performances and have different impacts is not made by the theologians. Indeed, a scholar like Chitando evaluates Pentecostal masculinity as constructive in

[73] Cf. N.J. Njoroge, *Gender Justice, Ministry and Healing. A Christian Response to the HIV Pandemic*, London: Progressio 2009; I.A. Phiri, 'Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 8:2 (2002), 79.

view of HIV and AIDS and as supporting the well-being of women, children and men, but he still rejects it for being patriarchal and therefore inadequate to combat the epidemic.[74] The issue at stake is that Chitando conceptualises patriarchy in a very monolithic way. In his opinion, patriarchy in general is a 'particularly dangerous ideology' in the context of HIV, and the theologies that sustain it 'have exposed many women to HIV infection.' [75] Similar massive statements can be found in the work of other scholars working in this area.[76] Njoroge explicitly rejects a more nuanced understanding of patriarchy when she states: 'Reductionist ways of understanding gender inequality demonstrate either naivety or a deep-seated ignorance of the oppressive and dehumanising nature of patriarchy and sexism in our families, societies and religious communities.'[77]

The black-and-white thinking demonstrated in the above quotations is understandable from the background of the African theologians seeing their role as prophetic.[78] They do not distinguish but rather combine academic work with activism for social transformation. Hence they prophetically denounce the "injustice of patriarchy" and call for gender justice. However though patriarchy might be a helpful concept in a *prophetic* discourse, it is less appropriate as an *analytical* category to investigate masculinities in the context of HIV. Maluleke indicates that scientifically it is not helpful to consider patriarchy as evil, but yet he too continues to use the concept in a monolithic and normative way.[79] That the concept analytically is not helpful can be illustrated, for example, with regard to the theology of male headship found to be influential in both case study churches. Is this theology, only because it is patriarchal, a theology that exposes women to HIV infection, as is indicated by Chitando and Moyo, among others?[80] Clearly, such a conclusion is too simple to make sense. After all, in the churches' theological understanding, male headship does not mean domination over and oppression of women but rather responsibility, service, sacrifice and love of men in relation to women and their families. Indeed, these notions of masculinity can be

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[74] Cf. Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*, 122-125.

[75] Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 8.

[76] Cf. Dube saying that 'Patriarchy, regardless of whether we justify it as culture, religion, scripture, or law, is violence normalized and inflicted daily on the souls of being infected and thrown into the grave of HIV&AIDS.' (Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 140).

[77] Njoroge, *Gender Justice, Ministry and Healing. A Christian Response to the HIV Pandemic*, 3-4.

[78] Cf. Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 87; Dube, *The HIV & AIDS Bible. Selected Essays*, 3-17; M.W. Dube, 'The Prophetic Method in the New Testament' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 43-58.

[79] Maluleke, *An African Theology Perspective on Patriarchy. Paper for the 'Evil of Patriarchy Conference'*, 1.

[80] Cf. Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*, 122 and 124; Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 8; Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 129ff.

considered patriarchal and can be criticised from a (pro-)feminist hermeneutic, but analytically there is no direct link to an increased risk of HIV infection among women. Rather they can be considered HIV preventive and constructive. Though Chitando acknowledges this, it does not bring him to nuance his concept of patriarchy and to distinguish between different patriarchal masculinities.

As already mentioned in chapter 1, more recent theories of gender have come to criticise classic feminist understandings of patriarchy for being too monolithic.[81] The concept of patriarchy does not take into account the variations in gender asymmetry in different contexts. Recently a scholar such as Musa Dube has taken notice of this critique and has begun to challenge the way African (women) theologians analyse gender. Where Dube herself, in an earlier publication, presents a simplistic concept of gender as a construct that 'disempowers half of humanity – women'[82], in a recent publication she challenges the tendency 'to present the African woman monolithically' as being powerless, vulnerable and subordinated.[83] Though Dube still employs the concept of patriarchy, she apparently seeks to create space to analyse in a more detailed manner the complex ways in which power is distributed and exercised in patriarchal configurations of gender. The study of masculinities would also benefit from this. The monolithic conceptualisation of patriarchy makes it difficult for the theologians under discussion to take into account that there are multiple masculinities that, though maybe all patriarchal, impact differently on the ways men engage in gender and sexual relations, and thus have different effects in the context of HIV and on the lives of women. The case studies indicate that there is need for a more complex conceptualisation and nuanced evaluation of patriarchy in African theological debates on gender and masculinities. This would enable scholars to acknowledge the variation of masculinities within patriarchy and would increase their sensitivity to more subtle processes of transforming masculinities that take place in the churches. It would also draw attention to the nuances in patriarchal masculinities: the power attached to men does not necessarily lead to violence, domination and oppression, as the theologians under discussion tend to suggest, but can also be employed constructively (precisely the point that the theologians seek to achieve).

The Constructive Power of "Patriarchal" Notions

As a result of the monolithic conceptualisation of patriarchy as an evil or sin, the theologians under discussion reject any notion of masculinity that reeks of patriarchy.

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[81] Cf. Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 48. For a discussion from feminist theology, see S. Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2000, 77-79.

[82] M.W. Dube, 'Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 88.

[83] M.W. Dube, 'HIV and AIDS Research and Writing in the Circle of African Concerned African Women Theologians 2002-2006' in E. Chitando and N. Hadebe (eds.), *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2009, 183.

This can be most clearly illustrated with the notion of male headship in marriage. For the theologians, this is a major symbol of patriarchy, as it symbolically orders the marital relationship in a hierarchical or asymmetrical way and gives men power over women.[84] As such, it is in sharp contrast with the objective of the theologians to redistribute power in gender relations in order to overcome patriarchy and to realise gender equality. This objective is informed by the perception that a lack of power makes women vulnerable to HIV. The hypothesis behind this is that men are likely to abuse the power attributed to them by patriarchal notions. Therefore women need to be empowered in order to achieve autonomy and control over their own lives and bodies. Though this hypothesis is probably based on critical experiences and observations, the direct association of the notion of male headship with increasing HIV risk and violence against women can be questioned on t he basis of the case studies.

The case study churches, in their definition of an alternative ideal of masculinity, adopt the notion of headship. Like the theologians, the churches are aware that the idea of male headship may lead to male domination and abuse of power. However, because the churches have a different biblical hermeneutics they cannot simply reject a notion such as male headship in marriage that is supported by some texts in the Bible. A rejection of this concept would not only conflict with their idea of the Bible as the normative Word of God, but would also directly affect deeply rooted theological metaphors that parallel male headship in marriage with Christ's headship of the church. Related to this, in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, a rejection of the concept would also directly affect the exclusively male church hierarchy. Therefore, rather than rejecting it, the churches redefine it and make use of the concept of headship in order to remind men of the related "God-given" responsibilities. They develop a strategy similar to that of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5, when he says not only that 'the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church' but then applies this analogy to call upon men, saying 'husbands, love your wives just as Christ loves the church and gave himself up for her.' Where feminist theologians have criticised Paul and where the African theologians criticise African cultures and Christianity for the patriarchal symbol of male headship, apparently this symbol can also be employed in a constructive way, thereby enabling a criticism of male behaviour and the promotion of alternative ideals of masculinity.

Clearly, ideals of masculinity defined by the notion of male headship can be considered "patriarchal": they put men in a position of power and support male primacy. This power is symbolic – after all, headship is a discursive construct – but will somehow impact on social-material relations. As just mentioned, the theologians are very suspicious of men's patriarchal power. However, in the churches it is underscored time and time again that men should not misuse their power and position but rather should use it to the benefit of others. In other words, a constructive use of power is

[84] This is in line with the general perception in feminist theology that 'patriarchy constructs a social-symbolical order in which men dominate women' (N.K. Watson, *Feminist Theology*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing 2003, 27). Clearly, the idea of headship can be considered as expressing and constructing this order symbolically.

promoted, and a patriarchal notion such as headship is used to mobilise a positive agency among men. As appears from the case studies, in both churches men can be found who, from the idea of headship, seriously face up to their "God-given" responsibilities in their marriages, families and communities. The theologians, from their monolithic understanding and critique of patriarchy and their suspicion of any patriarchal notion of masculinity, tend to overlook this. Such sensitivity would be helpful, however, to prevent a simplistic representation and to enable a detailed and nuanced analysis of religious constructions of masculinity such as those promoted in the case study churches.

Masculinities and Gender Justice in "the Interim"

Though the constructive use of patriarchal notions of masculinity is not theorised by the theologians under discussion, two authors briefly indicate some space for a more nuanced understanding of patriarchal concepts. Isabel Phiri, analysing some essays of girls on men's role in the fight against HIV and AIDS, found the girls uncritically adopting the idea of male headship, but also redefining its meaning: 'They saw this headship as coming with responsibility to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. … This position was viewed as positive because it can be connected to authority in stopping gender based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS.'[85] The quotation indicates that according to these girls constructive masculinities can be developed on the basis of a patriarchal concept such as male headship. Though Phiri notices this, she hardly reflects on its implications. She comments that 'in the context of HIV/AIDS, although men control women's sexuality, [that] power can be used positively for the men to deliberately choose to abstain from sex in a relationship.'[86] An implication of this observation, in my opinion, would be that a transformation of masculinities does not necessarily have to go beyond patriarchy in order to be preventive and constructive in the HIV era. Though it is not surprising that Phiri does not draw this conclusion, it is surprising that she does not even discuss the question that evidently appears from her analysis of the girls' essays.[87]

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[85] I.A. Phiri, 'A Theological Analysis of the Voices of Teenage Girls on Men's Role in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa' in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*:120 (2004), 38, 40.

[86] Ibid., 38.

[87] At another level, the discrepancy between the strategy envisioned by these girls and the strategy to transform masculinities developed by theologians such as Phiri raises the issue of representation. As outlined in chapter 2, African women theologians intend to bring in women's experiences and to articulate women's concerns in African theology. However, while the women theologians have great difficulty with a concept such as male headship, Phiri's article suggests that at least some of the women they claim to represent do not have such difficulty. Phiri may explain this from the theory of the "internalization of patriarchy" (cf. Phiri, *Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa*, 76), but in modern feminist theory such an explanation is considered problematic as it presumes a superior position of the intellectual over the women she speaks for, and does not pay attention to the agency of women within patriarchy. The claim of representation made by African women theologians

Recently, Ezra Chitando has briefly touched on the question of whether a transformation of masculinities necessarily has to go beyond patriarchy. While in earlier publications he firmly rejects patriarchal notions such as male headship and radically opposes patriarchy, a recent publication indicates a more nuanced view. Referring to the cultural notion of men as protectors of their families, Chitando comments: 'It is likely that most African women theologians would call for more efforts to deconstruct the notion that men are protectors. However, in the interim the idea can be utilized to encourage men to be more responsible in their sexual lives.'[88] This is a very noteworthy statement, especially when one calls to mind Chitando's critique of the Pentecostal movement in Zimbabwe for not radically deconstructing patriarchy. Chitando does not further elaborate on his comment, but apparently he has come to a more nuanced understanding of patriarchy. He seems to realise that some patriarchal notions of masculinity can be used to transform masculinities in a way that is preventive to HIV and that enhances life among women, children and in communities, though this is not the ultimate ideal he strives for.

Significant in the above quotation is Chitando's reference to "the interim". This may indicate a more gradual understanding of gender justice. Where the theologians under discussion tend to present "patriarchy" and "gender justice" as two mutually exclusive realities where men have to be "liberated from patriarchy" in order to achieve gender justice, the idea of an interim creates space for a more fluid understanding. Even in a context and ideology that can be considered patriarchal, certain masculinities could help to achieve greater justice in gender relations in that they are more or less life-giving, promote the humanity of women and children, and benefit the community. Clearly these "patriarchal" masculinities can help to make a difference in the face of HIV, sexual violence and other life-threatening phenomena. Indeed, they do not meet the criterion of the "fullness of life" that African women theologians dream of, because they do not fully respect the equality between women

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has been questioned and contested by Carry Pemberton who speaks of the theologians as 'the voiced elite' vis-à-vis 'the mute majority' of women in Africa (C. Pemberton, *Circle Thinking: African Women Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill 2003, 166-168). Though in my opinion Pemberton's critique is too suggestive, she does raise a critical issue that is hardly tackled by African women theologians. One of the few Circle-members who have reflected extensively on the delicate position of the woman theologian as an "activist-intellectual" who claims to represent and speak for "grass-roots women" is South African theologian Beverley Haddad (see B. Haddad, 'Practices of Solidarity, Degrees of Separation: Doing Theology as Women in South Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 6:2 (2000), 39-53; B. Haddad, 'Constructing Theologies of Survival in the South African Context. The Necessity of a Critical Engagement between Postmodern and Liberation Theory' in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 14:2 (1998), 5-18). According to Haddad, it is crucial for the theological scholar to collaborate with and to be partially constituted by the women she claims to speak for, while at the same time the theologian brings in an 'oppositional critical consciousness.' (see Haddad, *Practices of Solidarity, Degrees of Separation: Doing Theology as Women in South Africa*, 50).

[88] Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed*, 50.

and men. However, as these theologians also realise, gender justice as the fullness of life is a 'utopian vision' and an 'eschatological hope'.[89] It is not yet fully realised, and it cannot be fully realised at once.

Thinking along with the African theologians for a while, I would argue that the transformation of masculinities takes place in the interim, the temporal and social space between what is to be overcome and what is to be achieved. This awareness could provide a theological base for the theologians under discussion for a more nuanced evaluation of and constructive engagement with the "soft-patriarchal" masculinities that are found in the case study churches, while at the same time maintaining a critical sensitivity. Thus, not only a less monolithic and more complex conceptualisation of patriarchy is needed but also a more gradual understanding of gender justice. Maybe a distinction between "minimal" and "maximal" justice in gender relations can be helpful for such an understanding and for a more nuanced evaluation of religious construction of masculinities.[90] With regard to masculinities in the present context of HIV, the minimum norm of gender justice would demand that they do not harm but rather enhance health and life among women, children and men. As appears from the present thesis, this is the shared concern of the theologians and the case study churches. Even beyond the HIV epidemic, in their vision of masculinity the churches partially meet several concerns expressed by the theologians, such as domination over women and violence against women, and irresponsibility to the family. This is to be acknowledged and appreciated as contributing to the ideal of gender justice. Maximum justice in gender relations, on the other hand, could go beyond these concerns and require a more radical transformation of masculinities. With such a nuanced concept of gender justice, the theologians would be able to uphold their personal commitment to gender equality, while at the same time analysing and evaluating gender and masculinities in a nuanced way.

5.5. Some Critical Questions to the Churches

The argument above, where I have put critical questions to the theologians and their approach of men and masculinities, may give the impression that I am sympathetic to the case study churches and support their ideal of "soft patriarchal" masculinities. To be clear: this is not the case. The only point I want to make is that the way churches engage in masculinity politics should be analysed more carefully, and that a careful analysis of the case studies reveals that these politics and the resulting masculinities are far more ambiguous, and therefore should be evaluated in a more nuanced way, than is suggested by the theologians. In the previous section the generalising analysis

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[89] Cf. Phiri, *Life in Fullness: Gender Justice. A Perspective from Africa*, 79; Phiri, *A Theological Analysis of the Voices of Teenage Girls on Men's Role in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*, 43-45.

[90] Feminist theologian and ethicist Margareth Farley proposes such a distinction in her account on justice in sexual relations, but I think it can be also applied more generally to gender relations. See M.A. Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*, London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group 2006, 215ff.

and evaluation provided by the theologians has been explained from the monolithic concept of patriarchy they employ. Therefore the next chapter proposes an alternative conceptual approach. Yet before turning to that task, the present section will put some critical questions to the case study churches. Methodologically this is more delicate than putting critical questions to the theologians. As explained in chapter 1, the African theologians contribute to a global academic discourse, and though I have a different background I can engage critically with their groundbreaking work. To evaluate the case study churches is more difficult, however, because from what basis and with what criterion should I do so? The issues I would raise are likely to reflect my own perceptions as a Western scholar, which I then apply normatively to case studies in African Christianity. Being aware of the problem mentioned in the introduction, "seeing self through others", I raise two critical issues to the churches while drawing from the work of the theologians, and linguistically formulating these issues in the form of questions.

Are the Churches doing enough?

The first question that can be put to the case study churches is a very simple one: are they doing enough? "Enough" is a normative concept, but what I mean is whether they are doing as much as possible. As outlined in chapter 2, the African theologians discussed in this thesis have emphasised the urgent need for churches to engage with issues concerning gender, men and masculinities in the face of social challenges such as HIV and gender-based violence. Specifically with regard to men and masculinities, Chitando presents such an engagement as a crucial aspect of what he calls "AIDS competent churches":

> The HIV epidemic challenges African churches to rethink their mission towards men. Yes, many denominations do have active men's groups, but how many members do they have? More crucially, are such groups promoting gender equality? Are they challenging conventional forms of masculinity? How can hegemonic masculinities be deconstructed among Christian youth and men? Such questions are critical as African churches strive towards AIDS competence.[91]

The case studies in Regiment parish and in Northmead Assembly of God have demonstrated that these two churches indeed have engaged in a mission to men, and that they have come to challenge hegemonic forms of masculinity. The ways they do so have been explored at length in the chapters 3 and 4. The question is, whether Chitando and other theologians would consider these churches, in view of their engagement, as "AIDS competent". The churches may work with men, may address critical male behaviour and may contest hegemonic ideals of masculinity, but do they do so to a sufficient extent and in an effective way? Have they really incorporated the "mission towards men" at all levels and in all aspects of the church life? To raise the question is to answer it.

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[91] Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 40-41.

To start with the first case, Regiment parish seems not to seize all the opportunities to address men and issues concerning masculinity. It has been observed, for example, that these issues are hardly addressed explicitly, nor are they elaborated on, in sermons at Mass or in the pastoral letters of the Catholic bishops of Zambia. Furthermore, it appears to be very difficult for the parish to involve men in the church activities. Men are under-represented at Sunday Mass and in the Small Christian Communities. There is a men's fellowship, the St. Joachim Men's Organisation, but it only covers a small number of men. Apparently other men are not attracted by this organisation or they are frightened away by its financial and/or moral demands. Though attempts have been made to establish a broader Catholic men's organisation in the parish, these efforts have not yet succeeded. According to Chitando, 'creative evangelism' is needed, where churches reach out to men at the "worldly" places where they are often to be found.[92] This need is acknowledged by the parish priest but, as the priest himself admits, the parish has not yet developed such a strategy.[93] Moreover, when it comes to the ideal of masculinity promoted in the parish, it appears that indeed certain moral values and virtues for Catholic men are taught but in a relatively nuanced and not too strict way. This provides men with space to negotiate on these ideals in their own lives, resulting in a wide range of masculinities that are more or less acceptable to the church. As concluded above, the parish indeed addresses critical behaviour among men, including issues concerning sexuality, gender-based violence, and the relation to women, but does not pro-actively engage in a campaign to promote a particular ideal of masculinity in order to overcome the problems caused by, and associated with hegemonic masculinities. Facing the question of whether the parish is doing enough or as much as possible, then, the answer cannot be unequivocally positive.

With regard to Northmead Assembly of God, the question of whether the church is doing enough can be answered more positively. In this church the pulpit is used (and through the pulpit also the national TV) to address issues such as gender-based violence and HIV as part of the struggle to transform masculinities, in line with the recommendations of Chitando.[94] The sermon series *Fatherhood in the 21st Century* demonstrates that the church indeed engages in a pro-active campaign to address and contest critical issues concerning men and masculinities and to promote an alternative ideal. The pulpit is only one of the instruments used in this campaign, as the "mission towards men" is incorporated into several departments of church life such as in the youth, singles, marriage and men's ministry. However, critical questions can also be raised. As in Regiment parish, for NAOG it is difficult to involve men in church activities. Compared with the women's ministry, the men's ministry is small and lacks vitality. Plans for revitalisation are being developed but are yet to be implemented. Additionally the church has yet to develop a strategy of "creative evangelism", where efforts are made to reach places where men actually are rather than trying to get them

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[92] Ibid., 49.

[93] Interview with Fr. Marc Nsanzurwimo (parish priest), Lusaka: July 28, 2009.

[94] Cf. ibid., 21 and 47.

into church. Furthermore, the question can be raised as to whether the enormous concern of the church with people's holiness and the subsequent emphasis on moral issues do not frighten away men or create an atmosphere where men only outwardly support a certain lifestyle and are busy with "keeping up appearances".[95] The church promotes a demanding ideal of masculinity wrapped in a moral and spiritual-theological discourse, but it hardly offers men a place to openly share the vulnerabilities and challenges they face when trying to live up to this ideal.

In view of the case study churches, then, it appears that they indeed engage in a mission to men, but that they should constantly rethink this mission and further develop their strategy to address issues concerning male behaviour, to really get in touch with men, and to actively and effectively transform masculinities. They do something, or even quite a lot, but they could do more.

Why Uphold a Patriarchal and Heteronormative Ideology?

Where the first question concerns the extent to which the churches engage with men and masculinities, the second question concerns the content of their engagement. As is concluded above, in their quest for transformed masculinities the case study churches fall back on a gender ideology that is (soft) patriarchal and heteronormative. This is remarkable in view of the work of the African theologians under discussion. With regard to patriarchy, they argue that in the context of HIV this is a particularly dangerous ideology. As Chitando says, '[t]heologies that sustain it have exposed many women to HIV infection. … The churches in Africa need to challenge patriarchy as it exists in church and society.'[96] Heteronormativity as such is not discussed by the theologians, but the taboo of homosexuality in churches has also been addressed by Musa Dube as dangerous. As she states, 'the discrimination of homosexuals and the silence that surrounds us does not only expose them to HIV/AIDS infection and lack of quality care, it affects all of us—even heterosexuals, for we are a community.'[97] Drawing from the work of these scholars, even though realising that they use a concept such as patriarchy in a monolithic way, the question to the case study churches can be: Why do they uphold such an ideology? Why do they legitimise and reproduce structures of inequality that are said to be critical in the context of HIV and gender-based violence, and which do not unambiguously respect the equality of women and men and of homosexuals and heterosexuals? Probably the churches would respond by saying that their perceptions of gender and sexuality are derived from the Bible, which is the Word of God. And the Bible, in their opinion, teaches that men are supposed to be the head in marriage, and that homosexuality is an abomination. Though biblical-theological arguments like these need to be questioned and challenged – and this is a formidable task for African theologians – in the end they also

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[95] Cf. Sadgrove, *'Keeping Up Appearances': Sex and Religion Amongst University Students in Uganda*, 116-144.

[96] Chitando, *Acting in Hope. African Churches and HIV/AIDS 2*, 8.

[97] M.W. Dube, 'Service for/on Homosexuals' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *Africa Praying. A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 208.

need to be respected. However, though the churches will refer to the Bible, from a hermeneutic of suspicion one may wonder whether other factors are also playing a role.

Take, for example, the emphasis in the churches on the notion of male headship. Is this only because of the Pauline teaching in Ephesians 5, as Banda wants us to believe? Or is it, perhaps, also to protect and safeguard the dignity and status of men as head of the home, as Fulata Moyo suggests?[98] Is it not likely that headship is such an important symbol for men because it puts them in a certain position and ascribes them a certain power that they do not want to share with women? Another example is the negotiation on gender equality. In both case study churches the equality of men and women is, on the one hand, acknowledged but, on the other, is understood in a limited way. Is this only to respect the essential difference between the sexes which God, according to a particular reading of the creation stories, has intended with the creation of humankind? Or, as some African women theologians have suggested, is it also because a too radical understanding of gender equality is a threat to the male dominated church structures, which are in the interests of the current church leadership?[99] The question at stake is why men seek to maintain certain positions, privileges and perceptions: is it out of a genuine desire to be "servant heads and leaders" in their families, the church and the community, or is it also because it serves their own interests and feeds the male ego? If the latter plays a role, could it be that this also influences the interpretation of the Bible by the bishops and pastors and priests who in the case study churches are all male?

When it comes to the issue of homosexuality, the question can be put to Banda in NAOG whether there are not more urgent issues to address than the ordination of a gay bishop in the USA or the blessing of same-sex couples in Europe. And, more critically, the question is whether it is helpful to reinforce the taboo on homosexuality through gay-bashing in sermons, while he and his church want to be effective in HIV prevention.

In one of her publications Dube shares some 'amazing observations about society', one of them being that 'while God created diversity and created us all in God's image and God's likeness, we have hardly embraced and celebrated these differences, nor realized the dignity of each person and of creation as a whole.'[100] Like the case study churches, Dube takes her anthropological starting point in the theological account of creation, but with a completely different perspective. Her proposal to celebrate difference and to realise the dignity of each person irrespective of her or his gender and sexuality, is challenging to the case study churches with their normative soft patriarchal and heteronormative perceptions of gender and sexuality as fixed in a creational order. Basically the question raised by Dube and other theologians is why it is so difficult for churches to fully recognise the dignity, equality and rights of

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[98] Moyo, *Sex, Gender, Power and HIV/AIDS in Malawi: Threats and Challenges to Women being Church*, 133.

[99] For example, see Nadar, *On being Church: African Women's Voices and Visions*, 18-22.

[100] Dube, *Service for/on Homosexuals*, 210.

every individual and to put this into practice? Clearly, this question could also be raised in view of the case study churches. Though many answers can be given, it remains an open question which critically interrogates the ideals of masculinity promoted in the churches.

5.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has engaged in a comparative approach to and a critical discussion of the case study churches and the African theologians involved in the study of gender, masculinities and HIV. A significant conclusion is that the theologians and the churches share the quest for transformed masculinities. Where the theologians continuously call upon churches to address men and to transform masculinity, the case studies have shown that some churches have started do so. However the churches do so in ways that diverge from what is envisioned by the theologians. The above section has explored these divergences as well as the convergences between the case study churches, and between the churches and the theologians, in the way they approach men and masculinities. What, then, do these imply for the further study of and engagement with masculinities in the intersection with religion and HIV?

The most critical issue that comes out of this chapter is the fundamental difference in the paradigms in which the churches on the one hand, and the theologians on the other engage in their quest for transformed masculinities. The churches are primarily concerned about the behaviour of men, which they seek to change by promoting alternative masculinities defined within a patriarchal framework. The theologians are concerned about deeply rooted structures of gender inequality that are a result of patriarchy. They seek to "liberate men from patriarchy" and to transform masculinities towards gender justice. Concretely, this fundamental divergence means that the theologians can only be suspicious of and critical to the alternative, "soft patriarchal" masculinities that are promoted in the churches, built on notions such as male responsibility, headship and leadership. Even though they acknowledge that such ideals of masculinity can be helpful in combating HIV, yet they evaluate them negatively because in their opinion a more radical transformation of masculinities is needed. They aim at the deconstruction of patriarchy in order to achieve gender justice, which in their opinion is not just a pre-condition for adequate prevention of HIV and gender-based violence, but is also a theological imperative.

Without defending or supporting the ideals of masculinity promoted in the case study churches – instead, I share many of the critical questions raised by the theologians – I have argued that the negative evaluation of such masculinities by the theologians is somewhat simplistic. It is informed by a monolithic understanding of patriarchy and is hardly sensitive to the way the churches employ "patriarchal" notions of masculinity to mobilise agency and a constructive use of power among men. I have taken the notion of "the interim" as used by Chitando, and have explored it in order to create space for a more complex concept of patriarchy and a more gradual understanding of gender justice. This enables a more nuanced analysis and evaluation

of and engagement with religious constructions of masculinity such as in the case study churches.

The question at stake, put in the terms of the theologians themselves, is whether masculinities that are not "liberative", in the sense that they do not aim to liberate men and women from patriarchy, yet can be "redemptive", in the sense that they are 'life-giving in a world reeling from the effects of violence and the HIV and AIDS epidemic.'[101] If this question is answered positively, the next question is how the "redemptive" character of masculinities is to be analysed. The African theologians tend to employ patriarchy as the major evaluative concept for masculinities, but it is apparent from the discussion above that this criterion is not useful for this purpose. When it is realised that ideals of masculinity such as those promoted in the case study churches may be helpful to combat HIV and gender-based violence (i.e. they can be redemptive), and when these ideals are not evaluated negatively and rejected simply because they are patriarchal, how then can their function and effects be analysed in a more detailed manner? This question is discussed in the next chapter, which proposes an alternative to the analysis of masculinities within the patriarchy-framework.

[101] E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma, 'Introduction' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

6. THE AGENCY OF MEN AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MASCULINITIES: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PATRIARCHY FRAMEWORK

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Thus far, this thesis has taken three important steps in the study of masculinities, religion and HIV. First, it has surveyed and analysed critically the way African theological scholars engage with the topic of masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic. Second, it has added fresh material to this recent field of studies, by presenting detailed case studies in two local Christian church communities. Third, drawing from this material it has entered into a critical discussion with the African theologians under discussion and has questioned some of their central analytical and evaluative concepts, while some critical questions have also been raised with regard to the case studies. In this concluding chapter I aim to take a fourth step. Elaborating on the discussion in the previous chapter, I want to make a theoretical contribution to the study of religion and masculinities in African contexts of HIV and beyond. Before engaging in this task, however, first the argument of this thesis thus far will be briefly recapitulated.

The central question in the thesis is how African theologians and local Zambian churches engage in a quest for the transformation of socially dominant masculinities in the context of HIV. If there is one conclusion that clearly arises from the previous chapters, it is that the theologians on the one hand and the churches on the other engage in different approaches to bring about change among men and to transform masculinities. To recapitulate on the metaphor of the title of the thesis, both the churches and the theologians engage in a "circumcision" of men, but the first seek to "cut off" the masculine energies and sexual (and other) urges, while the latter aspire to circumcise men from their patriarchal power and privileges. This difference in approach is informed by the different levels of analysis of the problem at stake: where the churches primarily analyse at the level of individual behaviour, the theologians engage in a structural gender analysis. Hence they also provide different visions for transformation: the churches aim at a type of masculinity in which men are faithful and responsible husbands and fathers and behave morally upright, while the theologians aim to deconstruct patriarchy and realise masculinities that respect gender equality.

The differences between the approaches of the case study churches and the gender-critical African theologians have been analysed and discussed at length in the previous chapter. As mentioned there, the divergence between both is not necessarily problematic. It illustrates the fact that churches and theologians represent different types of African Christian discourse, as already mentioned in chapter 1. Furthermore, it is a direct result of the task African theology has set itself: to engage critically with the

teaching and praxis in churches.[1] The theological vision of gender justice enables the theologians to challenge churches to consider the transformation of gender relations and masculinities as part of their mission. It is precisely through this critical task that African theology plays such a vital role in African Christianity at large, particularly with regard to issues of gender and HIV. However, as will be expounded below, problems arise when the politically prescriptive theological vision becomes an obstacle to the precise analysis and evaluation of the complex configurations of gender and masculinity in churches. In the last paragraph of chapter 5, I argued from within the theologians' theoretical framework of patriarchy how it is possible to create space for a more analytically sophisticated engagement with religious discourses on masculinity such as in the case study churches. This was done by putting the quest for a transformation of masculinities and gender relations in an eschatological perspective with the notion of "the interim". Hence I argued for a less monolithic understanding of patriarchy as well as a more gradual understanding of gender justice. This could enable the theologians to maintain their commitment to gender equality while at the same time analysing (soft) patriarchal versions of masculinity such as in the case studies in a more nuanced way.

In the present chapter, which presents the conclusion of the research, I take a step forward and suggest a more radical proposal. Firstly, I argue that the present analytical framework of patriarchy is not adequate to analyse religious discourses on masculinity in the context of the HIV epidemic and beyond. Secondly, I suggest an alternative theoretical approach, which does not focus on patriarchal power ascribed to men as such, but rather focuses on the agency that is mobilised among men in these discourses. Thirdly, I look at the case study churches again from the concept of agency. Here, the question is what concepts mobilise men's agency and how this enables transformation.

Through a theoretical discussion and the proposal of an alternative lens, the present chapter deals with the remaining sub-question of the research, concerning the further study of and engagement with masculinities in African contexts of HIV and beyond. The "beyond" is important here: the argument provided in this chapter has a far wider scope than the African theologians and their study of masculinities in contexts of HIV. It is relevant to the broad field of studies of religion and gender, particularly the study of men, masculinities and religion. Though the problems of the patriarchy-framework are illustrated in this chapter with reference to the work of the African scholars discussed in this thesis, the latter stand as representatives of a strong global tradition of (pro)feminist scholarship on religion, gender and masculinities.

6.2. THE PROBLEMS OF THE PATRIARCHY-FRAMEWORK

According to my perception, the theoretical framework of patriarchy in which the African theologians under discussion engage with the issue of masculinities in the

[1] Cf. T.S. Maluleke, 'Half a Century of African Christian Theologies: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-First Century' in O.U. Kalu (ed.), *African Christianity: An African Story*, Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria 2005, 474-475.

context of HIV brings about several problems for the further study of and engagement with masculinities in religious contexts such as the case study churches. These problems are outlined in the present section with particular reference to the African theological scholars. However, they also apply to the wider field of the study of men, masculinities and religion, as most scholars working in this field subscribe to the patriarchy framework but have rarely problematised its key concepts and assumptions.

The Difficulty in Analysing Diversity, Complexity and Ambiguity

A major problem, already discussed in chapter 5, is that the theoretical framework of patriarchy makes the analysis of the diversity, complexity and ambiguity of masculinities very difficult. Inherent to the concept of patriarchy is an understanding of power as hierarchically organised and disproportionately shared in the relations between men and women. It presumes a structural inequality between men and women, and it tends towards an essentialist and dualist understanding of gender in terms of female submission and male domination. It is on the basis of such an understanding, for example, that Musa Dube states: 'At the centre of gender relations is the concept of power and powerlessness. The problem is that gender disempowers half of humanity – women.'[2] This classic conceptualisation of patriarchy has been subjected to critique in feminist theory, as many considered it too simplistic and absolute to analyse male dominance in gender relations.[3] As a result, in the study of masculinities the notion of hegemonic masculinity has been employed. This notion stays loyal to the idea of an overall principle of male domination, but takes into account the differentiations among men and the different ways in which men engage in powered gender relations. Among the African theological scholars, Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma have taken on this understanding. They acknowledge that there are 'many ways of becoming a man' but at the same time say that one idea of masculinity is dominant in a particular society.[4] This theoretical perspective prevents simplistic explanations, as it enables the investigation of diversity among men and the complexity of masculinities. However, as apparent from the discussion in chapter 5, this understanding is still subject to the tendency to generalise men and masculinities. For instance, having said that men are not a homogenous category, Chitando and Chirongoma nevertheless make general statements such as: 'African cultures have generally socialized men to become comfortable with the idea of sexual conquest' and 'men have been socialized to dominate women in the public and private spheres.'[5] This generalising approach corresponds with studies in the wider field of men and

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[2] M.W. Dube, 'Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues' in M.W. Dube (ed.), *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2003, 88.

[3] Cf. S.M. Whitehead, *Men and* Masculinities*: Key Themes and New Directions*, Cambridge: Polity Press 2002, 87-88.

[4] Cf. E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma, 'Challenging Masculinities: Religious Studies, Men and HIV in Africa' in *Journal of Constructive Theology* 14:1 (2008), 56-58.

[5] Ibid., 58 and 62.

masculinities. In spite of the notion of multiple masculinities, this theory still considers all masculinities, and thus men generally, as intricately connected to a gendered structure of power and domination that grants them "the patriarchal dividend".[6] As the sociologist Stephen Whitehead comments, the theory of hegemonic masculinity offers a more nuanced interpretation of male dominance than the concept of patriarchy, but in the end it suffers from the same deficit: '[W]hile it attempts to recognize difference and resistance, its primary underpinning is the notion of a fixed (male) structure'.[7] This structure is the project of hegemony, a pattern of dominance and oppression, an intentional will to power. Whitehead's critique explains why the African theologians under discussion in their scholarly and activist work on masculinities can hardly engage constructively with constructions of masculinity as defined in the case study churches. Though they acknowledge that these masculinities are different from the socially dominant or hegemonic masculinity, in their opinion the church-promoted masculinities are also patriarchal and do not, therefore, meet the criterion of gender justice.[8] The patriarchy framework analyses and evaluates masculinities (and gender relations in general) in terms of oppressive power that is construed monolithically. This results in a simplistic scheme of male domination and female submission.

Both the classic concept of patriarchy and the more sophisticated concept of hegemonic masculinity focus on structure. The implication of this, according to Whitehead, is that the individual man as a subject with agency is made invisible or at least is 'subjected to … an innate drive for power.'[9] Within this conceptual framework it is extremely difficult to examine the nuances of religious discourses on masculinity that may be "patriarchal" but, as the case studies in this thesis demonstrate, do not simply reinforce but rather seek to correct male domination. Because of its inherent "feminist hermeneutics of suspicion", the patriarchy framework is extremely sensitive towards everything that "smells of patriarchy", but is not sensitive to the nuances of religious discourses on masculinity that may be "patriarchal" but yet mobilise a

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[6] For example, R.W. Connell in his theory on masculinities distinguishes between hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and marginalised masculinities, but yet upholds the notion of a main axis of power in the gender order that is characterised by the overall subordination of women and dominance of men. In such an order, men generally benefit from what Connell calls "the patriarchal dividend". 'A gender order where men dominate women cannot avoid constituting men as an interest group concerned with defence, and women as an interest group concerned with change. This is a structural fact, independent of whether men as individuals love or hate women or believe in equality or abjection, and independent of whether women are currently pursuing change. To speak of a patriarchal dividend is to raise exactly this question of interest. Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command.' See R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (2 ed.), Berkely/Los Angeles: University of California Press 2005, 82

[7] Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*, 93-94.

[8] This is most clearly illustrated in E. Chitando, 'A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic' in *Missionalia* 35:3 (2007).

[9] Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities: Key Themes and New Directions*, 93.

positive, transformative agency among men. Exactly this analytical nuance and the interest in individual agency is the key, I will argue below, to the study of religious constructions of masculinity such as in the case study churches of the present research.

The Normative Notions of Autonomy and Equality

The framework of patriarchy not only provides the analytical instruments to examine masculinities and gender relations but also a political vision to change them. With regard to the gender-critical African theologians, chapter 2 has outlined that they envision a transformation of masculinities from patriarchy to gender justice. This transformation is to bring about "liberation of men from patriarchy" but will also liberate women from the structure of male dominance and will enhance the full humanity of men and women together. With this vision, the theologians are responding to the quest for change in gender relations instigated by the HIV epidemic. Clearly, these scholars form no exception when they combine analytical work with a commitment to social transformation in general, and a transformation of gender relations in particular. Such a combination is characteristic of feminist studies as well as of the critical (i.e. pro-feminist) study of men, masculinities and religion. Generally these two dimensions – the analytical and political edge – are considered to stand in a productive tension over against each other.[10] Recently this perception has been contested, however, in a groundbreaking study by the anthropologist Saba Mahmood.

In her book *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Mahmood not only presents an ethnographic study of a grassroots Muslim women's piety movement in Egypt, but hence she also questions the normative liberal assumptions and political ideals – such as about freedom, autonomy, and equality – against which such a movement is evaluated in feminist scholarship. Within the normative frame of feminist thought, according to Mahmood it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to understand women's adherence to the patriarchal norms upheld in religious movements such as the one under discussion. The reason for this, she says, is that feminist theory fails to problematise the universality of the desire 'to be free from relations of subordination and, for women, from structures of male domination.'[11] What feminist thought considers oppressive to women, is, according to Mahmood, experienced quite differently by the women she writes about. The adherence to

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[10] With regard to critical men's studies in religion, see for example B. Krondorfer, 'Introduction' in B. Krondorfer (ed.), *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism. A Critical Reader*, London: SCM Press 2009, xvi. Pointing to the tension between both dimensions, Krondorfer states: 'Once this simmering dissonance is pressed into the dichotomous terms of 'political advocacy' versus 'academic detachment', scholars and practitioners will quarrel over the right understanding of the contours, tasks, and trajectories of this field. If, however, we do not let ourselves be drawn into these polarizing alternatives and, instead, conceive of the inherent tension as a creative tool for advancing a scholarly approach of critical empathy, we might be able to take the wind out of the sails of unproductive disputes.'

[11] S. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2005, 10.

patriarchal norms provides these women with space for self-realisation and agency. In her assessment, the latter is overlooked by feminist scholarship because it conceptualises women's agency in a binary model of subordination to or subversion of patriarchal norms. It cannot analyse agency in the multiple ways women deliberately "inhabit" these norms. Acknowledging that the political ideal of individual freedom and autonomy is relatively new in modern history, and that many societies have flourished (and still flourish) with other aspirations, Mahmood raises the question as to what this implies for the analytical work in feminist scholarship. She formulates her point as follows:

> If we recognize that the desire for freedom from, or subversion of, norms is not an innate desire that motivates all beings at all times, but is also profoundly mediated by cultural and historical conditions, then the question arises: how do we analyze operations of power that construct different kinds of bodies, knowledges, and subjectivities whose trajectories do not follow the entelechy of liberatory politics.[12]

For Mahmood this also raises imperative questions concerning the political edge of feminist studies. Though scholars may be committed to the ideal of gender equality in their own lives, for her this does not mean that this ideal is or should be fulfilling for everyone else. Hence she concludes, 'we need to rethink, with far more humility than we are accustomed to, what feminist politics really means.'[13] In doing so we should take into account that 'any social and political transformation is always a function of local, contingent, and emplaced struggles whose blueprint cannot be worked out or predicted in advance.'[14]

Mahmood raises questions that are highly relevant to the argument of the present chapter. Clearly, the patriarchy framework is largely derived from and informed by Western feminist theory and is built on modern notions of autonomy and equality that are applied normatively. The African theological scholars under discussion who engage in this framework may not all describe themselves as feminists, but evidently the political edge of their work is (pro)feminist and they endorse notions such as women's autonomy and male-female equality.[15] Hence they seek to transform masculinities beyond patriarchy, meaning that power is to be redistributed between men and women (Dube) and that men have to give up their patriarchal privileges

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[12] Ibid., 14.

[13] Ibid., 38.

[14] Ibid., 36.

[15] As Pemberton observes with regard to African women theologians, these 'African women [are] responding to Enlightenment paradigms: freedom, equality and, instead of a Cartesian sentient I, a proposed communal African consciousness which is written into existence.' (C. Pemberton, *Circle Thinking: African Women Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden: Brill 2003, 167.)

including the "myth of male headship" (Chitando) in order to achieve gender justice.[16] The problem is not just that the concept of gender justice is simply equated with a radical understanding of gender equality based on notions such as individual autonomy and freedom.[17] It also functions as a criterion for evaluating and rejecting gender discourses considered "patriarchal", without sensitivity to operations of power and configurations of agency that may not follow liberative politics but yet can make a positive difference in the lives of women, children and men, and in the community at large. Mahmood addresses this issue with regard to the study of women who actively participate in patriarchal religious movements and support their ideology. I would like to draw attention to the implications of this normative framing for the study of men and masculinities in religious contexts that propagate a patriarchal gender ideology, such as in the case study churches. When the notions of autonomy and equality are employed in a normative and absolute way, all "patriarchal" notions of masculinity will be evaluated negatively, thus failing to notice the agency among men that is generated by these ideals.

In the patriarchy framework, critical scholars of men and masculinities are anxious, in the words of Björn Krondorfer, to 'slip back into a long tradition of reiterations of male dominance within the sphere of religion.'[18] I recognise this fear from my own fieldwork. During the case studies I have often felt discomfort with the patriarchal language in the churches, for example on male headship. However, like Mahmood I have been forced to question such feelings, and to re-consider my own normative assumptions.[19] It was evident to me that though the case study churches

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[16] Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*, 122-124; Dube, Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS. Understanding and Acting on the Issues, 87-99, 95.

[17] A similar point has been made by Tinyiko Maluleke with regard to African women's theology. Discussing the way the biblical figure of Ruth is taken as a role model by some women theologians, Maluleke says that Ruth must not and cannot be romanticised. 'Survival and covert resistance – necessary due to fear of reprisals, lack of power and freedom, or potentially fatal danger – must be lauded, but they must not be transformed to quickly into subversive activity. …. Stop the cult that wishes to see positive and successful role models everywhere. … Why must role models be successful anyway? Many African Ruths are not "successful." Patriarchy, culture and globalization will not let them succeed.' See T.S. Maluleke, 'African "Ruths", Ruthless Africas: Reflections of an African Mordecai' in M.W. Dube (ed.), Other Ways of Reading. African Women and the Bible, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2001, 244-245.

[18] Krondorfer, *Introduction*, xvii. See also J. Gelfer, N*umen, Old Men. Contemporary Masculine Spiritualities and the Problem of Patriarchy*, London: Equinox 2009, 10-12.

[19] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 37-38. Mahmood in this context even speaks about feelings of repugnance: 'I was forced to question the repugnance that often swelled up inside me against the practices of the mosque movement, especially those that seemed to circumscribe women's subordinate status within Egyptian society. … I believe that one needs to unpack all that remains congealed under the admission that it is the "social conservatism" of movements like the piety movement that makes liberals

may not unequivocally support my ideal of gender equality, yet they propagate a type of masculinity that in their context has the ability to effectuate change – in relation to HIV but also more widely, with regard to the lives of women, children and men, and the well-being of families and communities. The question, then, is what particular concepts mobilise this agency for change and enable social and gender transformation. This question, I would argue, is to be placed at the centre of critical studies of masculinities and religion.

The Difficulty in Providing a Constructive Vision

A third and last problem with the study of masculinities and religion within the patriarchy framework discussed in this chapter, concerns its difficulty in providing a constructive vision. The framework facilitates the deconstruction of masculinities but makes it difficult to engage in the reconstruction or transformation of masculinities. The central concept of patriarchy has always been a critical concept in classic feminist theory, employed to deconstruct structures and ideologies of gender that are oppressive to women. As is explored in chapter 1, the concept functions similarly in the field of critical men's studies and religion – which after all has developed from feminist studies in religion and theology. The American black theologian Garth Kasimu Baker-Fletcher strongly emphasises the deconstructive scope of the sub-discipline, saying that the study of men, masculinities and religion fails as a critical theory when it 'does not deal with the historical project of patriarchy as its central and fundamental problematic'.[20] He imagines this deconstruction as a journey along which all layers of sexism, homophobia and patriarchy are stripped away. This journey has 'a reconstructive end', being 'the goal to be more fully humane, compassionate human beings who happen to be male'.[21] The formulation of this goal is highly significant, as it illustrates the problem of the patriarchy framework in formulating a constructive ideal of masculinity. The reconstructive project, in Baker-Fletcher's account, aims at a gender-transcendent *humanity* rather than at *masculinity*. In this vision, being male is just something that 'happens to be', it is accidental and inessential. What matters is the humanity that, in the end, is shared by men and women together. In a social, cultural or religious context committed to the modern and liberal ideal of equality, the vision provided by Baker-Fletcher may be effective and powerful. However, many societies, cultures and religions are concerned with labelling gender difference and thus tend to define masculinity and femininity as dichotomous categories. To transform masculinities in contexts such as these requires the formulation and promotion of alternative concepts of masculinity (as is done, for example, in the case study churches) rather than emphasising a common humanity that transcends gender

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and progressives uncomfortable, and to examine the constitutive elements and sensibilities that comprise this discomfort.'

[20] G.K. Baker-Fletcher, 'Critical Theory, Deconstruction and Liberation?' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 277.

[21] Ibid., 278. See also G.K. Baker-Fletcher, *Xodus: An African American Male Journey*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1995, 457

difference. Because scholars in the patriarchy framework tend to understand the notion of gender equality in a radical way, it seems to be difficult for them to define a positive ideal of masculinity as *different from* femininity. This difficulty has been addressed by Michael Clark, a scholar involved in men's studies in religion. According to Clark,

> As profeminist men for the most part, we have become adept at using feminist theory to analyze how men specifically, and the patriarchal universe more generally, have gotten us into the fix we're in. We've made some tentative and provisional suggestions as how we might repair our individual lives as well as the world at large; however, because we're generally so afraid that systematically proscriptive or prescriptive work will be seen as reverting to authoritative male privilege, we have not engaged enough in *constructive* theology.[22]

The above-mentioned worry about reiterating the long tradition of male dominance, according to Clark, hinders scholars in the patriarchy framework from engaging in a constructive theology providing alternative visions of masculinity. In my opinion, this is illustrated in the work of the African theological scholars discussed in this thesis. They deconstruct patriarchal masculinities, but their reconstructive vision is formulated in terms of gender justice, gender equality, mutuality, and partnership – terms that concern *the relation between* men and women and their common *humanity* rather than that they define an alternative *masculinity* by itself. The case study churches, on the other hand, are not concerned with men's power and privileges as such, and hence they can use a concept such as male headship to develop a constructive vision of an alternative ideal of masculinity. In the patriarchy framework, such a concept can only be viewed negatively as in need of deconstruction, and there is little space to propose alternative concepts to redefine masculinity.

6.3. Towards an Alternative Approach: A Focus on Men's Agency

Having identified some of the major problems of the patriarchy framework in the study of and scholarly engagement with masculinities and religion, in the present section I will outline the contours of an alternative approach. This approach is to enable a critical, nuanced and sophisticated analysis and evaluation of religious discourses on masculinity such as are found in the case study churches. Significantly, not only the African theological scholars discussed in this thesis, but also Western scholars involved in the critical study of men, masculinities and religion largely engage in the patriarchy framework. Therefore in the quest for an alternative approach one has to search further. Outlining some of the theoretical contours for a more analytical approach to masculinities and religion, in the present section I will draw from the recent work of two scholars in the field of religion and gender, and try to apply their work to the critical study of men, masculinities and religion. These authors are the anthropologist Saba Mahmood, already referred to, and the North American feminist theologian

[22] J.M. Clark, 'A Gay Men's Wish List for the Future of Men's Studies in Religion' in *Journal of Men's Studies* 7:2 (1999), 269-270.

Margaret Kamitsuka. Both authors engage with the work of French philosopher Michael Foucault and develop poststructuralist approaches to gender and religion.

Analysing Agency

First and foremost, the approach envisioned has an analytical focus. Where approaches to gender and masculinities from the patriarchy framework tend to be both analytical and politically prescriptive projects, I agree with Mahmood that normative ideals easily become a hindrance to a detailed analysis. Take, for example, the political ideal of "liberating men from patriarchy", informed by the association of patriarchy with oppression of and violence against women. Such an ideal leaves little space to analyse how a particular religious discourse may redefine masculinities within a structure and an ideology that can be considered patriarchal. Rather than postulating the preconceived concepts that are to guide a transformation of masculinities in a particular context (e.g. a concept such as gender equality), an analytical approach will search for the concepts emerging from a particular context which function (or have the possibility of functioning) as resources for change. In the words of Mahmood,

> [I]f the ability to effect change in the world and in oneself is historically and culturally specific (both in terms of what constitutes "change" and the means by which it is effected), then the meaning and sense of agency cannot be fixed, but must emerge through an analysis of the particular concepts that enable modes of being, responsibility, and effectivity.[23]

Central in this quotation is the notion of agency. This is a key concept in cultural anthropology where it is used to investigate the capability and power of an individual to be the source and originator of acts within certain social structures.[24] Though the relation between individual agency and social structures is a much debated issue, at least the concept of agency implies and assumes that social structures never fully determine and regulate people's behaviour but always leave some space for deviation and subversion of or resistance to these structures and their norms. Religion, among other factors, can be a force operating to foster and enable agency in individuals.[25] In feminist and gender studies, the concept of agency is generally employed to conceptualise the ways in which women creatively and subversively engage in relations of male domination and in patriarchal structures and hence become actors in their world and realise their own interests.[26] By focusing on women as agents who

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[23] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 14-15.

[24] Cf. N. Rapport and J. Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge 2000, 1-9.

[25] Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar suggest that in African contexts religion is a major factor in individual agency: 'We contend that it is largely through religious ideas that Africans think about the world today, and that religious ideas provide them with a means of becoming social and political actors.' See S. Ellis and G. ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*, New York: Oxford University Press 2004, 2.

[26] Cf. R. Alsop, A. Fitzsimons and K. Lennon, *Theorizing Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press 2002, 230-232.

resist and subvert relations of subordination, the simplistic scheme of patriarchy and female submission is complicated. In her study on Muslim women in the Egyptian piety movement, Mahmood widens the definition of agency, as in her opinion it does not only refer to resistance and subversion but also to the ways women deliberately *inhabit* patriarchal norms and in this way come to self-realisation.[27] Hence she challenges Western feminist and gender theory to dissociate the concept of agency from normative political ideas about autonomy and freedom of women. Her analytical quest, as indicated in the quotation above, is for the particular contextual concepts that enable women's lives, activities and ways of making impact.

Where Mahmood, as other scholars, applies the concept of agency with regard to women, in my opinion it can also be highly relevant to the study of men and masculinities in religious and cultural contexts. Applied to men, the concept of agency enables investigation of the multiple and complex ways in which men engage in "patriarchal" gender relations and how men resist and negotiate hegemonic ideals of masculinity. Where a focus on women's agency demonstrates that women are not merely powerless and subordinated in structures and relations that are somehow patriarchal, a similar focus on men will show that they are not merely dominating and oppressing. Even more, as will be explained below, it could be that precisely the notions associated with "domination" have, in the words of Mahmood, the ability to effect change in the actor's life and in the lives of others. The type of agency mobilised may be different from the one envisioned by the politically prescriptive project of feminism. For example, religious discourses on masculinity may not mobilise agency that makes men supporters of gender equality, but it may mobilise agency of men to be responsible heads in their marriage and family. If the analytical scholar does not postulate the meaning and type of agency in advance, as I have argued above in line with Mahmood, but rather searches for the contextual meaning of agency and the concepts enabling it, then she/he will seriously investigate such a configuration of agency.

Evidently, the proposed analytical approach to masculinities that focuses on individual agency diverges from the structural approach of the African theologians discussed. This does not mean that structural issues do not matter in view of the problem that has given rise to the present study, namely the intersections of masculinities and HIV. The study of masculinities at the macro levels of society, such as the economy and politics, as well as a structural analysis of gender inequalities in these spheres, can certainly be helpful in understanding the complex intersections of masculinities, gender and HIV. It is also urgent to investigate the role of religion in this complicated field. However, the role of religion should not be simplified, such as by the suggestion that religion just maintains or reinforces a monolithic patriarchal structure in society. A structural approach to issues of religion, masculinities and HIV runs this risk.[28] Furthermore, structural approaches fall short, particularly with regard to the

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[27] See Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 5-39.

[28] My critique is in line with what the anthropologists Hansjörg Dilger and Johanna Offe have argued with regard to the wider field of gender and HIV. As they put it: 'While we explicitly

analysis of the *constructive* role of religion in the complex dynamics of masculinities om the context of HIV. As outlined at length above, these approaches lack sensitivity in analysing the diverse, complex and ambiguous ways religious discourses construct, subvert and change masculinities within (and possibly also beyond) ideological frames and social structures of "patriarchy". However it is precisely this diversity, complexity and ambiguity that make that religious discourses not just consolidate or reinforce male domination, but enable different types of agency among men. The question is then, first, what type of agency is mobilised in these discourses and by which concepts is it enabled; and second, whether and how men indeed become agents.

Though the latter question will be explored in a next section, here I will briefly illustrate the proposed focus on agency. What would it mean to look at the case studies presented in this thesis with an analytical focus on men's agency? Certainly this puts the case study churches in a different perspective than when approached from the patriarchy framework. The churches, being concerned with the destructive agency that in their opinion is mobilised by hegemonic ideals of masculinity, envision men who act as agents taking responsibility for themselves, their marriages, families and communities.[29] Specifically with regard to HIV, men are considered agents who can protect and enhance life in the face of disease, suffering and death. The question is, with what particular concepts do the churches mobilise and enable this constructive agency among men? In both case studies, the concept of male headship and the related notions of responsibility and leadership appear to be the key to the ideal of manhood promoted. Furthermore both case studies show that indeed these notions mobilise a type of agency among men that enables them to resist and diverge hegemonic ideals of masculinity and to make a positive difference in view of HIV and other social challenges. Significantly, however, as has become clear in the former

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acknowledge the importance of studies that focus on the political economies of sexuality and disease for the reasons outlined above, we, however, think that a predominantly structural approach cannot sufficiently grasp the complexity of gender and AIDS.' The authors mention four aspects where such an approach shows shortcomings in particular: 1) it tends to present gender as a monolithic category; 2) it tends to take gender as a static and unchanging given; 3) structural forces tend to be seen as determining gender relations and sexuality, which does not take into account the agency of individual actors as well as their possible influence on social structures; 4) the complexity of cultural, religious and moral processes which influence individual actions are not sufficiently taken into consideration. Clearly these comments largely coincide with my critique of the African theologians' structural approach to masculinities and HIV outlined above. See H. Dilger and J. Offe, 'Making the Difference? Structure, Agency and Culture in Anthropological Research on Gender and Aids in Africa' in *Curare* 28:2-3 (2005), 267.

[29] The case studies are an illustration, in particular with regard to men and masculinities, of the general conclusion of Dilger and Offe that 'cultural, religious and moral discourses build a foundation for social actors to develop practices that provide meaning and offer encouragement in an insecure and often cumbersome daily life and beyond that to build relationships that are reliable in a situation of crisis.' See Dilger and Offer, *Making the Difference?,* 275.

chapter, it is exactly this notion of headship that is considered problematic, assessed critically and finally rejected by the African theologians under discussion. This can be explained from the ideal of equality, the focus on powered structure rather than on individual agency, and from the above-mentioned fear of reiterating traditions of male dominance, which are central characteristics of the patriarchy framework. A more inductive analytical approach, then, requires not just analysing the particular concepts that effect change among men and help to transform masculinities, but also a different perception of power. This would facilitate an analysis and evaluation of a "patriarchal" notion such as male headship outside the scheme of domination versus submission.

Power as Enabling Agency

As observed above, one of the major problems with the patriarchy framework is its conceptualisation of power. In this framework, masculinities as well as gender relations in a wider sense are analysed in a dichotomous scheme of male domination and female submission. In such a scheme, power is considered to be hierarchically organised, unequally distributed and oppressive. Subsequently, within this scheme a concept such as male headship can only be understood as a major symbol of a hierarchy in gender relations and as a concept that enables men to exercise power and dominion over women. Without denying that the concept may function in this way in certain cases, a more analytical approach might reveal that it may have other meanings as well. In order to analyse these, there is need for an alternative theory of power.

Recently, such a re-conceptualisation of power has been proposed by Margareth Kamitsuka. As a feminist theologian, her main concern is with the understanding of women in power relations as theorised in classic feminist approaches. She observes a 'tendency among feminist theologians to inscribe potentially restrictive essentialisms about women as victims in relation to systems of oppressive power construed monolithically.'[30] This critique corresponds with the above-mentioned problem inherent to the patriarchy-framework, in that it tends towards essentialist perceptions of men as dominators. In order to complicate and overcome the simplistic representations of women as powerless, subordinate and vulnerable, Kamitsuka (just like Mahmood) engages with the work of Foucault to develop a poststructuralist theory of power. As an alternative to monolithic and dualist understandings of power, this theory speaks about "discursive power regimes" where power circulates through various discourses. Thus power is not understood as something with a singular intentionality, structure or location, but rather as relational and circulatory, something that pervades life and produces new relations and discourses. This implies, among other things, that power is not simply possessed and deployed by or is imposed upon an individual but rather constitutes the individual as an agential subject in the process of interacting with various "power discourses". In the words of Kamitsuka, this perception of power is crucial because it decentres 'the essentialism of a dominator-

[30] M.D. Kamitsuka, *Feminist Theology and the Challenge of Difference*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2007, 90.

dominated dualism', by taking into account that 'the oppressed person is also always an agent to some extent, and the oppressor is not the sole possessor of power.'[31]

Kamitsuka applies this theory to decentre the category of women as "the oppressed" and to draw attention to the agency of women in relations that seem to be subjugating. In my opinion, this theory can also be applied to problematise the category of men as "the oppressors". When one side of the dominator-dominated dualism is decentred – in this case women, the other side –, the other side is also automatically decentred. First of all this means that men cannot simply be considered as dominators in gender relations, such as the monolithic concept of patriarchy tends to suggest. The distribution or circulation of power in gender relations is far more complex. Secondly – and this is a move not made by Kamitsuka, but is a logical consequence of her argument – it puts men's power in a different perspective. Drawing on Foucault, Kamitsuka states that 'with the exception of extreme domination, power is not simply coercive but also productive'.[32] "Power" in this quotation refers to the abstract "discursive power regimes" (this concept is used by Foucault to refer to broad cultural discourses that regulate individuals and communities, such as discourses of religion, sexuality, medicine, or politics). But what would it mean to apply it more concretely to the power that is discursively ascribed to men in the religious discourses on masculinity such as in the case study churches, which centre on concepts such as male headship and leadership?

The African theologians discussed in this thesis, as well as Western feminist theologians and the critical scholars of men, masculinities and religion, generally associate a concept such as male headship with structural coercive and dominating power of men exercised over women. A poststructuralist theory of power makes it possible to re-consider this "patriarchal" notion as a resource of productive power – "productive" in the Foucauldian sense, meaning that it constitutes an agential subject that interacts with the various power discourses, for example the hegemonic ideals of masculinity. The interviews with male church members in the case studies of this research clearly demonstrate that it requires agency for men to resist the norms of hegemonic masculinity and to perform an alternative version of masculinity. Could it be that the function of the concept of headship in the church discourses is that it enables this agency or, in other words, that it empowers men to change? In that case, apart from a symbol of male domination requiring deconstruction, the notion of male headship can also be considered a resource for productive power enabling a transformation of masculinities within religious contexts that do not support modern notions of gender equality but seek to uphold "patriarchal" values and teachings they consider biblically, theologically and/or culturally vital.

A Critical Edge?

The scope and contours of an alternative, analytical framework to study and understand religious discourses on masculinity have been outlined above. More than

[31] Ibid., 92-93.

[32] Ibid., 92.

the patriarchy framework, this approach is capable of analysing the complex and ambiguous ways masculinities are produced and transformed in religious communities. Some readers may wonder, however, whether the proposed framework still allows for a critical appraisal. When misunderstood, the above argument may be read as a defence or justification of patriarchal masculinities as they are often defined in religious communities. To be clear, this is not my intention. To defend or justify them would be as politically descriptive as the call to deconstruct and reject them, while my proposal is to analyse them carefully in all their ambiguities and complexities. Yet the question is how such an analytical approach is a *critical* study of men, masculinities and religion.[33]

In chapter 1, where the present research has been located in the sub-discipline of the critical study of men, masculinities and religion, I adopted but also briefly problematised the critical edge towards patriarchy (as well as to heteronormativity[34]) that characterises the sub-discipline. I indicated that this would function as an analytical lens rather than as a normative evaluative tool. This is informed not only by my analytical approach but also by a postcolonial sensitivity of my position as a Western scholar investigating masculinities in cross-cultural contexts in world Christianity. From that background I agree with Mahmood's response to the critique that her approach would put the politically prescriptive feminist project of gender equality "at the limits of its analytical envelope". Mahmood states:

> The question of how the hierarchical system of gender relations that the mosque movement upholds should be practically transformed is, on the one hand, impossible to answer and, on the other hand, not ours to ask. If there is one lesson we have learned from the machinations of colonial feminism and the politics of "global sisterhood," it is that any social and political transformation is always a function of local, contingent, and emplaced struggles whose blueprint cannot be worked out or predicated in advance.[35]

For the African contextual theologians discussed in the present thesis this is different – though they also have a problem with the issue of representation –, but for scholars like myself I consider it "not ours to ask" how a patriarchal ideology and a hierarchical ordering of gender relations in, for example, African churches, is to be transformed. Does this mean that the proposed analytical approach 'fails as a critical theory', as Baker-Fletcher wants us to believe?[36] From his perspective this may indeed be the

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[33] Cf. Krondorfer, *Introduction*, xvii.

[34] Following the debates on masculinities in African contexts of HIV, the discussion in this thesis has focused far more on issues of gender and patriarchy than on issues of homo/sexuality and heteronormativity. I continue to do so in the present chapter, though underlining the need to include homosexuality in future research on men, masculinities and religion in African Christian contexts, specifically in relation to HIV. This is a largely unexplored but urgent topic.

[35] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 36.

[36] Cf. Baker-Fletcher, *Critical Theory, Deconstruction and Liberation?*, 277.

case, as in an analytical approach patriarchy is not automatically considered a fundamental problem, nor is gender equality the overall goal.

It is significant that Mahmood does not suspend the critical edge that characterises (pro)feminist studies of religion and gender. Rather, she points out that the understanding and practice of this criticism needs to be expanded. It does not simply demand disapproval of the position of the other, but requires engaging with that position and the rationale behind it – with the possibility that 'we occasionally turn the critical gaze upon ourselves … [and] may be remade through an encounter with the other.'[37] Concretely with regard to the present research, this double notion of critique may imply that one is critically aware of the patriarchal ideology upheld in a particular religious context while one also becomes aware how notions in this ideology may function as resources to transform masculinities. The result of the latter will be that one's monolithic perception of patriarchy as oppressive and unjust is questioned, and the idea of gender equality as the only political goal of a project of gender transformation is re-considered. Thus, the critical edge appears to be a double-edged sword: not only the ideology of gender and the configuration of masculinities in a given context are critically examined, but also the concepts employed in this analysis and their normative ideological assumptions. It is in this way that the tension between prescriptive and analytical approaches to the study of religion and gender can be left productively open.[38]

Critical-analytical approaches deliberately engaging in this dialectic tension at least will not claim neutrality on the subject under investigation nor will they take a deliberate a-political stance. They are fully aware of the fact that *what* is analysed and *how* it is examined and presented is already informed by the sensitivities and engagement of the researcher. What is at the heart of any *critical* approach to the study of religion and gender in general, and the study of men, masculinities and religion in particular, is, in my opinion, the commitment to a vision of gender justice of the scholar involved. It is this commitment that I share with, and appreciate in the work of, the African theologians discussed in this thesis as well as with the long and diverse tradition of (pro)feminist studies in religion and theology. Yet the problem is, as Sarah Coakley points out, that in much of this scholarship the notion of gender justice is a-historicised and a-contextualised.[39] From the perspective of an analytical approach, the question as to what gender justice actually means remains an open question that is to be raised and investigated constantly in view of concrete social, cultural and religious contexts and their specific issues and challenges.

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[37] Mahmood, *Politics of Piety. The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 37.

[38] Cf. ibid., 37.

[39] Cf. S. Coakley, 'Shaping the Field: A Transatlantic Experience' in D.F. Ford, B. Quash and J.M. Soskice (eds.), *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005, 50-51.

6.4. AGENCY AS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELF AND OTHERS

The analytical approach outlined above acknowledges that agency is enabled in context-specific ways and by context-specific concepts. This insight is crucial to the quest for the transformation of masculinities in African Christian contexts, which hinges on the agency of individual men to change. The question, then, is what agency means in a particular context, and in what ways and by what concepts it is enabled. The present section takes a brief look at the case study churches, again, in order to explore this question.

A preliminary remark is that a distinction is to be made between *mobilising and enabling agency* – which is done by and in the churches, by means of the discourses they represent, the social spaces they create, the role models they present and so on – and *agency* itself, which is something of the individual subject.[40] The latter is constituted and enabled by various factors, and religion is only one force impacting on the way men act as agents in their environment. It is, however, precisely the role of religion that is of interest to the present study. Hence, the focus in the following section is on agency as enabled by and mobilised in the case study churches.

Agency as Taking Responsibility

When agency, put simply, is the ability of an individual to act as an agent, the meaning or content of men's agency in both case studies is "taking responsibility". As shown in chapters 3 and 4, the notion of responsibility is a primary characteristic of masculinity as promoted in the case study churches. The churches hope for men who take responsibility, i.e. who act as responsible agents in the various areas of life. For Banda, the concept of responsibility is central to the definition of "biblical manhood".[41] Likewise, in Regiment parish a booklet teaches that for a boy to become a man it is crucial to feel 'the need to take lead and to take responsibility'.[42] Also church members, both men and women, time and time again indicate that to be a man means to take responsibility, which could be illustrated with many quotations from interviews. What is noteworthy here is that the very general concept of responsibility is applied concretely to several specific areas of life.

Among other things, it concerns the area of sexuality. On this issue, a man has to be responsible with regard to himself – i.e. controlling his own urges, respecting the values from God, keeping his body pure, protecting himself against HIV and so on. However he is also considered responsible for his partner – to respect the integrity of her body, to observe her moral dignity, to protect her from pregnancy and from HIV

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[40] Though "agency" is something of the individual subject, the subject and his/her agency is constituted by and in discursive traditions and environments. Cf. J. Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (2 ed.), London and New York: Routledge 2006, 195-196.

[41] According to this definition, 'at the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility'. See Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 3* (DVD), Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[42] C.N. Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2007 (1994), 16.

infection. Both dimensions are captured, for example, in the instruction that 'as a young man you should realise that you also have responsibility for your sexual energies, and that you need to master them so that you don't create problems either for yourself or for a girl.'[43]

Responsibility also concerns men's roles in marriage and the family. As a husband, a man is responsible for his wife and for the success of the marital relationship, and as a father he bears responsibility for his children and for the wellbeing of his family. For example, asked to describe the ideal Catholic man, a woman in Regiment parish depicts him as follows: 'He is responsible, taking care for his wife and children. When a man is not responsible he is not a good man.'[44] Further elaborating on this, she concretely points to the roles of a man to provide for the needs of his family, to share time with his wife and children and to pray with his family. The perception of men being responsible for their marriage and family does not mean that women do not bear responsibility in these areas. However in the words of Banda, men are considered to have a "primary responsibility".[45]

Men's task to take responsibility further concerns the wider areas of the extended family, the community and society at large. As in the setting of marriage and family, in these areas responsibility has financial, moral and spiritual aspects. The concrete meanings vary from helping out relatives and other people who have certain needs, to watching over the moral lives of fellow men in the church and community, up to initiating economic or political activities for the betterment of society.

Clearly, the notion of responsibility encapsulates many aspects. It concerns the self as well as others, first and foremost one's wife and children but also the relatives in the extended family, people in the community, the church, and in society at large. In the churches, men are challenged to become responsible agents who take responsibility in the social environments they are placed in and in the social relationships they are engaged in. Realising that this indeed is challenging and demanding, God is asked to 'give us men a sense of responsibility over the women of our lives. … Help us men as leaders of the homes and of the nation to be responsible over our own lives.'[46]

From a (pro)feminist perspective, the strong emphasis on men's responsibility, and especially the idea that men have a *primary* responsibility compared with women, can be looked at critically. After all, if men and women are equal – and both case study churches somewhat acknowledge this equality – why would men have more responsibility in life than women, and why would men be responsible for women rather than that both have an equal mutual responsibility? The responsibility discourse can result in patronising attitudes of men towards women. However, the intention of

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[43] J. Kiura, *About Boys*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications 2007 (1993), 29.

[44] Interview with Rosalyn Banda (woman in her 50s), Lusaka: October 28, 2008.

[45] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 6* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

[46] Closing prayer of a church elder in Joshua H.K. Banda, *Cultivating a Lifestyle of Truth – part 6* (DVD), Northmead Assembly of God 2005.

the emphasis on male responsibility in the churches seems to be different: rather than encouraging patronising attitudes it aims at preventing dominating and abusive attitudes. Where the crises of HIV and gender-based violence have revealed the irresponsible and risky behaviour and attitudes common among men under the influence of hegemonic ideals of masculinity, the churches respond to the need for an ethic of responsibility among men.[47]

Headship as an Imperative to Responsibility

When the content or meaning of agency is in the notion of responsibility, the second question is: what concepts enable this agency? What makes it possible for men to feel "the sense of responsibility" and what inspires them to act indeed as responsible agents in the various areas of their lives? Significantly, a closer look at the case studies indicates that male responsibility is closely related to – and indeed is enabled by – certain perceptions of men and masculinity that in the patriarchy framework would be looked at suspiciously. These are the perceptions that a man is the head of his family and, more generally, that men compared with women have a special and primary task to fulfil on earth. This is put into words, for example, by a church member in NAOG when he explains why responsibility is a specific characteristic of manhood. In his opinion, this is because 'God has put a higher premier, a higher demand on the man than on the woman. ... God expects more from the man than from the woman, to manage, to direct, to aspire.'[48]

Perceptions such as these are reaffirmed in both churches, precisely in order to remind men of their "God-given" responsibilities. In one of the Catholic booklets, the need for men to lead and take responsibility is based on God's command to mankind in the Book of Genesis to rule the earth.[49] Likewise Banda presents it as part of the "biblical order" which is rooted in creation. In this order, 'God has placed man in the position of responsibility, a position where he is to initiate rather than to wait to have things done to him.'[50] This perception enables him to critically address men when they do not take their responsibility. Then he says: 'Adam was created first, and instructions were given to men, to the male. We men are the head. But you have to live up to it! We like to be the head but we don't like to live up to the responsibility. That's our problem.'[51] This quotation illustrates the fact that the idea of male headship is understood from the account of creation, and that it is defined in terms of

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[47] The need for such an ethic has recently been underscored, among others, by Lucinda Manda, a Malawian scholar in ethics and religion. See D.L. Manda, 'Religions and the Responsibility of Men in Relation to Gender-Based Violence and HIV: An Ethical Plea' in E. Chitando and S. Chirongoma (eds.), *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion*, Geneva: WCC Publications 2010 (forthcoming).

[48] Interview with Charles Muleya (man in his 20s), Lusaka: July 13, 2009.

[49] Nganda, *Boys Growing Up*, 16.

[50] Interview with Joshua H.K. Banda (bishop), Lusaka: July 28, 2009.

[51] Joshua H.K. Banda, *Fatherhood in the 21st Century – part 2* (DVD), Lusaka: Northmead Assembly of God 2008.

responsibility. More critically, it demonstrates how the idea of male headship as rooted in God's creation is employed as a resource to address irresponsible behaviour among men and to mobilise agency to make men responsible agents. According to the line of thought expressed in this quotation, which is influential in both case study churches, male responsibility is so imperative precisely because men are created by God to be the heads in their family and leaders in society. In other words, in the context of these churches, men's agential capacity to take responsibility for themselves and for others can hardly be separated from but is rather enabled by the "patriarchal" concepts of male headship and leadership. Such a separation is made, for example, when churches are praised for promoting "progressive masculinities" while at the same time they are criticised for maintaining "the myth of male headship" and engaging in "the paradigm of the male as the leader".[52] However, it is precisely from ideas such as male headship, male leadership and men's primary position in creation, that churches (at least the case study churches, and particularly NAOG) develop a constructive masculinity, i.e. a type of masculinity that makes a positive difference in view of problems such as HIV, violence against women and broken families.

To say that these "patriarchal" notions mobilise agency among men to change their attitudes, perceptions and behaviours, and that they thus function as resources for a transformation of masculinities, does not alter the fact that the same notions can be used to legitimate male domination over women, violence against women or other irresponsible types of behaviour. For that reason, a hermeneutic of suspicion is needed when it comes to religious discourses that employ such concepts and reaffirm men's position at the top of a hierarchical gender order. However this hermeneutic should acknowledge the ambiguous and even contradictory operations and effects of concepts such as male headship and leadership, and thus should also recognise the transformative agency they can enable. Furthermore, from the recognition that these concepts can give rise to a constructive masculinity politics, the assumptions that inform the critical hermeneutic are also challenged. Apart from the trajectory to liberate men from patriarchy, apparently other trajectories to transform masculinities are also possible – and they may be more effective in religious contexts that uphold a patriarchal ideology and theology of gender. Though these trajectories are outside the normative project of gender equality, yet they can contribute to a greater justice in gender relations, especially in view of HIV and gender-based violence.

Men as Responsible Agents

Thus far it has been argued that the case study churches mobilise a kind of agency among men that is defined as "taking responsibility", and that they do so by employing concepts of masculinity that can be considered patriarchal. The question, then, is whether men indeed become responsible agents. In chapters 3 and 4 the question was raised as to whether men live up to the ideal of masculinity promoted in the churches. In light of the above discussion on agency, the present paragraph takes up this

[52] Cf. Chitando, *A New Man for a New Era? Zimbabwean Pentecostalism, Masculinities and the HIV Epidemic*.

question again. Focusing on the personal accounts of two male church members, one from each case study, it analyses in greater detail how these men say that they have taken up their responsibility. In other words, in what specific ways and by which specific concepts has their agency been enabled, according to their own accounts?

The first portrait is of Danny Mulenga, a man in his mid-20s, who is a member of Northmead Assembly of God and actively participates in the church's youth ministry. He originates from another part of the country and moved to Lusaka for professional purposes. His parents died during his childhood and youth years, after which he stayed with a brother. However, his brother did not really look after him and he ended up with bad peers, using drugs and having girl friends. Looking back at this period, Danny says: 'All these things made me becoming self-reliant. I thought: I can live on my own, I don't have to depend on a person, I am a man.'[53] In his perception at that time, manhood was defined by self-reliance. An incident in his life brought him to his senses and he became born again. Significantly, he explains that this also changed his perception of manhood: 'I wasn't yet a man. After receiving Christ and after reading the word of God, now I think: Being a man is being responsible, it is about accepting responsibilities. Being responsible over yourself, over your surrounding and for other people's lives. For me, that is being a man now.'[54] Asked to elucidate this new perception, Danny refers to Genesis 2, particularly to the notion that Adam was instructed by God to watch over the earth and to name the animals. In his opinion this biblical passage underscores men's leadership in relation to women and demonstrates that 'a real man is supposed to be responsible'.[55] This interpretation shows that in this line of thought the idea of a unique, primary position of men in the order of creation is the basis of an ethic of male responsibility. Furthermore, it appears from the interview that this perception indeed has enabled Danny to take responsibility over his life:

> I used to drink, to smoke, to have girl friends, I used to mess around. I couldn't call myself a man because I wasn't responsible over my life and the life of others. But when I changed I became responsible. That is when I became a man because I started to do what God has purposed me to do.[56]

"Taking responsibility" does not only mean that he stopped smoking, drinking and playing around with girls. It also made him committed to a new purpose in life: to bring together his fragmented family and to look after his cousins who were left orphaned because of AIDS. It further made him involved in activities aiming at HIV prevention among the youth. Striking in this account is the centrality of the born-again experience that marks a radical change, not just in the way of living but also in the perception of manhood. Through this experience Danny was able to break with his previous behaviour and to become committed to alternative values. These values centre on the concept of responsibility and are applied to various areas of life. The account illustrates

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[53] Interview with Danny Mulenga (man in his 20s), Lusaka: 6 November 2008.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

the observation made above, that the type of agency mobilised among men in the churches consists of taking responsibility. It further demonstrates that this type of agency emerges from the perception of a particular place and role of men in creation.

Secondly, a portray is given of Marc Bwali, a man in his 50s who is a parishioner of Regiment parish and is deeply involved in the St. Joachim men's organisation. He tells how he had been a "traditional Catholic" for a long time, attending Mass now and then but not really committed to the church and the faith. This changed when his daughter died and his wife sought solace in the church. She joined one of the lay movements in the parish and encouraged her husband to do the same. After some time he decided to join St. Joachim, which had a great impact on his life:

> Before I joined St Joachim, I used not to go to SCC meetings and I used to drink a lot of beer. But immediately when I joined Joachim this began to change. The day I suited I felt so joyous that after that I became concerned with attending SCC meetings, going to church. Nowadays I come to mass almost every day. And beer drinking changed as well. We also started eating together as a family, and we say prayers together as a family. So I became more a family man, and that's the way it is supposed to be.[57]

Summarising the change in his life, Bwali concludes that since he joined the organisation he has become 'a very responsible man'. As can be expected, St. Joachim serves as his example. Bwali says that he learns from Joachim that a man is supposed to be God-fearing and pious, committed to his marriage and family and involved in the church. The men's organisation named after Joachim functions for Bwali as a place of motivation and admonition. Though emphasising the change in his life, he admits that he is not perfect. Sometimes he is faced with temptations. However, he has discovered how to resist these: through praying the rosary or making the sign of the cross. As he says: 'It has happened to me several times when I felt tempted. I prayed the sign of the cross and said "Get off, Satan", and I found automatically my mind switching to other things.'[58] With regard to marriage, Bwali indicates that his involvement in St. Joachim has changed his understanding of headship. He now knows that it does not mean that he should supervise his wife or be a dictator in the home, but that he must look after the family and give spiritual and moral guidance. Referring to Genesis 2, he says that a man is supposed to be the head. However, he realises that 'the Bible also says that when you are married negotiation must come from both sides'.[59] In his perception this balance is characteristic of Christianity over "the African context". What is significant in this account is the role of St. Joachim, both the saint figure who provides a role model, and the group where men encourage each other to follow this example. It appears that in this specific way a kind of agency is mobilised that can be captured by the broad concept of responsibility. Again, this sense of responsibility is related to the perception of a man as the head of his family. Additionally, it seems that the agential capacity to become responsible is enabled by the ritual dimension characteristic of Catholicism.

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[57] Interview with Marc Bwali (man in his 50s), Lusaka: 9 November 2008.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

This appears from Bwali's reference to prayer as a weapon against temptations, but also from his indication that he attends Mass on a daily basis. Lastly, this case illustrates the role of women in mobilising men's agency: it was after his wife's pressure that Bwali joined Joachim and his life began to change.

In view of the issue of agency of men, both accounts discussed above are highly significant. They show how men in different religious discourses narrate and reflect on the changes in their lives. Both accounts demonstrate how religious communities and traditions can function as places where men's transformative agency is mobilised. Indeed, these are only two accounts. I certainly do not suggest that these are representative for men in the case study churches generally. However, they show – and that is my intention in presenting them – that change amongst men and a transformation of masculinities can be initiated outside the normative project of gender equality and yet can result in behaviour and attitudes among men and perceptions of masculinity that are more life-giving and do greater justice to women, children and men themselves. If one were to look upon these stories with a strict focus on power structures, such changes could easily be ignored. The conclusion would then be that they simply reaffirm men's leadership and headship over women and thus reiterate the old, familiar and dominant tradition of patriarchy. This would neglect, however, the variety within this tradition, i.e. the multiplicity of masculinities, all of which may be patriarchal but which yet may have totally different appearances and effects. Furthermore, it would ignore the negotiations and changes occurring within this tradition: the reference to a "balanced" notion of headship in the last account – found to be supported in both case study churches – undeniably indicates a tendency towards more equality and partnership in marital and gender relations. Thus, without overrating the two personal accounts presented above and without overlooking their ambivalence, they represent highly significant trajectories of mobilizing and enabling men's agency to change, which is a key to any transformation of masculinities.

6.5. Circumcision, Agency and Gender Justice – A Conclusion

The HIV epidemic has given rise to a quest for the transformation of masculinities. As is apparent from this study, African theological scholars and local churches engage in this quest in different ways. The divergences (as well as the convergences) in their approaches have been outlined and discussed at length in the present thesis, and they do not have to be repeated here. In this concluding paragraph I would like to return to the metaphor in the title of this thesis, introduced in the first pages: the metaphor of male circumcision.

Male circumcision can be a metaphor for the strategies designed to change men and to transform masculinities developed by African theologians and local churches. It has become apparent from the present research that these strategies are different, both in their trajectories and objectives. Through the metaphorical circumcision, the theologians seek to liberate men from patriarchy and to cut men off from the excessive power and the privileges granted to them. In this way they aim at equality in gender relations, as in their opinion that is a precondition for masculinities that can

make a difference in view of problems such as HIV and gender-based violence. Different from the theologians are the case study churches. They want to cut men off from immoral behaviour and attitudes, aiming to obtain men who behave in a morally upright manner in line with what are considered Christian values. In their opinion, this will prevent the spread of HIV and will solve problems in marriages, families and communities caused by men's irresponsibility. In both trajectories, men are "circumcised", either from their patriarchal power or from their immoral behaviour. Moreover, this circumcision does not only mean that something is "cut off", but also that after cutting, something is uncovered: a potential for alternative behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of masculinity. Both the theologians and the churches believe that there is such a latent potential present in men, and they encourage men to explore it. In other words, they mobilise men's agential capacity to change. The metaphorical circumcision enables this constructive agency of men.

In this thesis, some problems in both trajectories of metaphorical circumcision have been identified. The problem with the theologians, as argued above, is that they relate this individual agency directly to a transformation of powered structures of gender. Though attention to gender as deeply rooted in social structures is necessary, I have argued that significant changes may take place *within* certain structures. It could even be that these changes will also eventually impact on the structural level. The case study churches, on the other hand, focus on individual transformation; they even employ concepts that from a (pro)feminist perspective are at the heart of an ideology that legitimises unequal structures, in order to mobilise men's agency for change. There is some evidence from the case studies that this strategy is relatively successful. In the churches a number of men can be found who indeed have committed themselves to what they consider as Christian ideals of masculinity, which are different from socially prevalent ideals. However, the question raised by the theologians as to whether this transformation is radical enough and whether churches should not promote gender equality rather than propose alternative understandings of male headship, remains a critical one.

Though the theologians and the churches envision men's agency and the resulting transformation of masculinities in different ways, the different visions all seem to be helpful in view of HIV and seem to enhance the life of women, children and men. In that sense, they help to achieve gender justice, though this does not necessarily coincide with gender equality. To put it in the terms of the theologians: some of the transformed versions of masculinity may be "redemptive", without however being automatically "liberative". The question of the relation between gender equality and gender justice, and between redemptive and liberative masculinities, remains a critical one, theoretically and theologically, both within and beyond African Christianity. The present thesis has not provided the final answer, but rather has showed the complexity of this question and has suggested a way of how this question can be addressed constructively. Hopefully this contributes to the quest for transformed masculinities in African Christianity and opens up new perspectives to

think about the relation between religion and masculinities in the context of the HIV epidemic and beyond.

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Preamble
In this thesis two types of sources have been used. The primary sources are the materials collected in the case studies. They consist of interviews, pamphlets, booklets, church documents, unpublished materials, DVD's and websites. The secondary sources are formed by all other academic and professional publications used in this thesis. The publications of African theologians are not presented as primary sources but are included among the secondary sources, as for practical and principal reasons it is difficult to distinguish between these and other publications.

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SUMMARY IN DUTCH (NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING)

Inleiding

Mede als gevolg van de HIV epidemie is de constructie van masculiniteit in Afrikaanse culturele, sociale en religieuze contexten recentelijk een onderzoeksthema geworden. De reden hiervoor ligt in het feit dat de epidemie in sub-Sahara Afrika een stempel van gender draagt: vooral vrouwen en meisjes raken besmet met HIV (volgens de UNAIDS cijfers van 2009 komen ongeveer 60% van de besmettingen in sub-Sahara Afrika voor onder vrouwen). Deels kan dit worden verklaard uit de fysiologische kenmerken van het vrouwelijk lichaam, maar het is een vrij algemeen gedeelde opvatting dat deze kwetsbaarheid versterkt wordt door constructies van gender. Deze zouden leiden tot ongelijkheid in de relatie tussen mannen en vrouwen waardoor vrouwen onder andere minder zeggenschap zouden hebben over hun seksualiteit en lichaam. De aanvankelijke focus op vrouwen in studies naar gender en HIV is de laatste tien jaar verbreed, nadat onderzoekers zich realiseerden dat de kwetsbaarheid van vrouwen samenhangt met het gedrag van mannen en met de daaraan ten grondslag liggende constructies van masculiniteit.

"Masculiniteit" is hier een sociaalwetenschappelijk concept dat verwijst naar de gender identiteit van mannen en naar de positie en macht van mannen in gender relaties. Omdat mannen geen homogene groep vormen, wordt masculiniteit gezien als een meervoud. In specifieke contexten bestaan meerdere vormen van masculiniteit naast elkaar. De meest populaire vorm wordt vaak "hegemonische masculiniteit" genoemd. Deze is niet per se de meest voorkomende, maar wel de meest invloedrijke vorm die door grote groepen mannen als ideaal wordt nagestreefd. De idee is dat juist deze hegemonische ideeën over masculiniteit grote risico's met zich meebrengen in de context van HIV. Ze zouden mannen aanmoedigen tot seksueel risicovol gedrag zoals het hebben van meerdere partners en weerhouden van het gebruik van condooms. Ook zouden ze aanzetten tot mannelijke overheersing van vrouwen, tot seksueel geweld en andere vormen van geweld tegen vrouwen en kinderen. Tegen deze achtergrond heeft UNAIDS, de Aidsbestrijdingorganisatie van de Verenigde Naties, gesteld dat het van groot belang is om schadelijke concepten van masculiniteit te bestrijden en te veranderen. De idee van gender, specifiek van masculiniteit, als een sociale constructie is hier van groot belang. Ten eerste, omdat het ruimte creëert voor actieve masculiniteitspolitiek: als masculiniteit een constructie is (en dus geen biologisch gegeven), dan kan het ook worden gereconstrueerd en veranderd. Hegemonische opvattingen kunnen worden bestreden en alternatieven kunnen worden gestimuleerd. Ten tweede, omdat het meer analytisch gezien aandacht vraagt voor de krachten die invloed uitoefenen op de manieren waarop percepties van masculiniteit worden geconstrueerd en zich ontwikkelen in een samenleving. Religie kan gezien worden als een dergelijk kracht die invloed heeft op de voortdurende constructie en verandering van masculiniteit. Mogelijkerwijs mengen religieuze gemeenschappen en organisaties zich zelfs actief in masculiniteitpolitiek. Er is relatief

weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de rol van religie in relatie tot masculiniteit en HIV, maar over het algemeen wordt deze rol vooral als problematisch gezien. Meer dan een kracht tot transformatie van masculiniteit zou religie bijdragen aan de status quo van gender ongelijkheid en de daaraan verbonden hegemonische ideeën van masculiniteit. Religie, of het nu gaat om het christendom, de islam of Afrikaanse inheemse godsdiensten, zou de dominantie van mannen in relatie tot vrouwen legitimeren en zou daarmee problematische percepties van masculiniteit in stand helpen houden.

Dit proefschrift richt zich op de rol van religie, specifiek het christendom, in de (re)constructie van masculiniteit tegen de achtergrond van de HIV epidemie in Afrika. Het gaat er vanuit dat deze rol meer complex is dan zojuist beschreven. Als de sociale constructies van masculiniteit divers en veranderlijk zijn, dan ligt het niet voor de hand dat religie simpelweg de hegemonische vorm van masculiniteit in stand houdt (al is het maar omdat deze hegemonie zelf geen statisch gegeven is). Zonder te ontkennen dat religie een problematische rol kan spelen in de constructie van masculiniteit, is dit onderzoek voornamelijk geïnteresseerd in de mogelijke constructieve rol: zou het kunnen zijn dat religie juist ook aanleiding geeft tot alternatieven voor hegemonische vormen van masculiniteit? Dragen religieuze gemeenschappen mogelijk zelfs actief bij aan het transformeren van masculiniteitpercepties die problematisch zijn in de context van HIV?

Deze vragen worden onderzocht op twee niveaus binnen het christendom in Afrika: het niveau van Afrikaanse theologie en van lokale kerken. Wat betreft het laatste niveau: er zijn case studies verricht in twee kerkgemeenschappen in Lusaka, Zambia, namelijk in een rooms-katholieke parochie en in een pinksterkerk. De keuze voor case studies in kerken ligt voor de hand gezien de interesse in de rol van religieuze gemeenschappen. De keuze voor onderzoek naar Afrikaanse theologie is ingegeven door het feit dat een aantal theologen actief bijdraagt aan discussies over religie, masculiniteit en HIV.[1] De betekenis hiervan voor dit onderzoek is tweeledig. Allereerst zijn deze theologen collega-onderzoekers die een eigen bijdrage leveren aan onderzoek naar deze thematiek. Als tweede, het eigene van hun bijdrage is juist dat het een christelijk theologisch karakter heeft. Deze theologen vormen daarmee zelf een religieus discours over masculiniteit, en dat discours is object van studie in dit proefschrift net zoals het discours binnen de kerken. De vraag die centraal staat in het onderzoek luidt: Hoe richten Afrikaanse theologen en lokale Zambiaanse kerken zich tot mannen en hoe stellen ze thema's aangaande masculiniteit aan de orde in de context van de HIV epidemie; wat zijn de overeenkomsten en verschillen in hun benaderingen en hun analyses van en visies voor masculiniteit; wat betekenen deze voor de verdere studie van masculiniteit in Afrikaans christendom? Het onderzoek dat gepresenteerd wordt in dit proefschrift is gepositioneerd binnen de academische

[1] De term "theologen" dient breed te worden opgevat: het betreft Afrikaanse wetenschappers op het gebied van theologie in de meer strikte zin van het woord en op het bredere gebied van religiestudies en bijbelwetenschappen. Ze hebben echter gemeenschappelijk dat hun werk rond de thematiek van religie, masculintieit en HIV gekenmerkt wordt door een zekere mate van theologische analyse, reflectie en betrokkenheid.

discipline van de religiewetenschap, specifiek de subdisciplines van de studie van het wereldchristendom en de studie van religie en gender. Het betreft een analytisch-theologische studie, wat betekent dat het een bijzondere interesse heeft voor de theologische betekenissen, concepten en vooronderstellingen in de Afrikaans christelijke discoursen over masculiniteit en dat deze kritisch worden onderzocht.

De hierboven kort weergegeven problematiek van masculiniteit, HIV en religie in sub-Sahara Afrika wordt in het proefschrift beschreven in hoofdstuk 1. Dit hoofdstuk beschrijft ook de vraagstelling en achtergronden van het onderzoek en het introduceert de genoemde subdisciplines, met een focus op de studie van christendom in Afrika, en op de studie van religie en masculiniteit. Tegen de achtergrond van postkoloniale kritiek op de Westerse studie van Afrika wordt er ook ingegaan op de vraag hoe een blanke Europese onderzoeker onderzoek kan doen naar masculiniteit in Afrikaans christendom. Als laatste biedt het hoofdstuk een introductie op de case studies, met een korte beschrijving van de situatie in Zambia wat betreft thema's als gender, de HIV epidemie en het christendom.

Afrikaanse theologen over masculiniteit in de context van de HIV epidemie

Het tweede hoofdstuk richt zich op de discussie over masculiniteit binnen Afrikaanse theologie. Deze thematiek wordt pas sinds kort aan de orde gesteld maar is opgekomen vanuit de bredere discussies over gender en de HIV epidemie. Thema's aangaande gender worden bestudeerd binnen Afrikaanse theologie door en dankzij de beweging van Afrikaanse vrouwentheologen, georganiseerd in the *Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*. Samen met een aantal mannentheologen vormen deze vrouwentheologen een prominent gender-discours binnen Afrikaanse theologie. De aanvankelijke focus op vrouwen is verbreed met de introductie van het concept "gender" dat gebruikt wordt om de ongelijke machtsrelaties tussen mannen en vrouwen te analyseren. Het concept "patriarchaat" wordt gebruikt om aan te geven dat deze ongelijkheid structureel van aard is. Patriarchale structuren, die diep geworteld zijn in de samenleving, de economie en de politiek, worden volgens deze theologen gevoed door cultuur en religie, zeker ook door het christendom. Zij uiten een scherpe kritiek hierop en spreken onder andere over patriarchaat als zijnde een zonde en als tegengesteld aan de centrale christelijke boodschap van bevrijding en menselijke waardigheid. Onder de noemer van *gender justice* (gerechtigheid in de relaties tussen mannen en vrouwen) ontwikkelen zij visies voor de transformatie van gender verhoudingen, met gelijkheid en partnerschap als centrale waarden. Deze worden theologisch gefundeerd in het godsbeeld, de antropologie, de christologie en de eschatologie. Van daaruit doen de theologen een oproep tot kerken om *gender justice* centraal te zetten in hun missie. De noodzaak hiervan zien ze onderstreept door de HIV epidemie.

De afgelopen jaren is er door een aantal theologen, met als meest prominente figuur Musa Dube, een HIV bevrijdingstheologie ontwikkeld. Deze verklaart de epidemie niet primair vanuit het gedrag en de moraal van individuele mensen, maar vanuit ongelijke structuren in de (globale) samenleving zoals armoede en patriarchaat. De HIV epidemie laat volgens hen zien hoe levensbedreigend gender ongelijkheid kan

uitwerken voor vrouwen. Om die reden hebben Afrikaanse vrouwentheologen vanaf het begin van deze eeuw HIV en AIDS bovenaan hun agenda geplaatst, waarbij ze zich specifiek richten op culturele en religieuze ideeën en praktijken die de kwetsbaarheid van vrouwen versterken. Voor hun conferentie in Yaoundé in 2007 nodigden ze echter (voor het eerst) een aantal mannentheologen uit en werd er gesproken over het thema *liberating masculinities* (bevrijdende vormen van masculiniteit). Deze conferentie markeert het begin van discussies over masculiniteit, religie en HIV binnen Afrikaanse theologie. Met name Ezra Chitando levert een belangrijke bijdrage aan deze discussie. Het thema masculiniteit wordt door hem en anderen geanalyseerd binnen het theoretische en analytische kader dat al ontwikkeld was door Afrikaanse vrouwentheologen. Patriarchale vormen van masculiniteit worden als problematisch beschouwd: ze zouden mannen seksuele zeggenschap over vrouwen geven, mannelijkheid definiëren in termen van seksuele performance en aanzetten tot allerlei vormen van geweld van mannen tegen vrouwen. Tegen deze achtergrond onderstrepen de theologen nogmaals het belang van een deconstructie van patriarchaat en van de culturele en religieuze ideologie die patriarchaat in stand houdt. Bijvoorbeeld, het idee van de man als hoofd van het gezin, dat zowel in veel Afrikaanse culturen als in de Bijbel en het christendom wordt hooggehouden, wordt door hen bekritiseerd als zijnde een uitdrukking van een gevaarlijke patriarchale ideologie en als een legitimatie van levensbedreigende patriarchale structuren. De theologen pleiten voor de transformatie van patriarchale vormen van masculiniteit in de richting van *gender justice*. Dat betekent dat ze *liberating* (bevrijdend) en *redemptive* (verlossend) moeten zijn. Bevrijdend, zowel ten opzichte van mannen als vrouwen, aangezien beide uiteindelijk beter tot hun recht zouden komen als patriarchaat wordt opgeheven. Verlossend, omdat ze mannen zouden stimuleren om een constructieve bijdrage te leveren aan het gezin en de gemeenschap. Door mannen te bevrijden van patriarchaat en hen gecommitteerd te krijgen aan het principe van gender gelijkheid hopen de theologen in elk geval één van de structuren onder de HIV epidemie aan te pakken en te veranderen. Ze doen verschillende voorstellen om deze transformatie van masculiniteit te bewerkstelligen, waarbij ze opnieuw een belangrijke rol zien weggelegd voor kerken. Zoals Chitando stelt: 'De HIV epidemie daagt Afrikaanse kerken uit om hun missie ten aanzien van mannen te herzien. Inderdaad, veel kerken hebben mannengroepen, maar hoeveel leden hebben die eigenlijk? En, belangrijker, wordt in deze groepen gender gelijkheid gepromoot? Worden dominante vormen van masculiniteit hier bevraagd? Hoe kunnen hegemonische vormen van masculiniteit worden gedeconstrueerd onder christelijke mannen? Deze vragen zijn cruciaal voor Afrikaanse kerken die AIDS-competent willen zijn.'

Gezien de kritiek van de theologen op kerken vanwege het in stand houden van patriarchaat en hun oproep tot kerken om bij te dragen aan een transformatie van masculiniteit, komt de vraag op hoe kerkgemeenschappen eigenlijk omgaan met mannen en welke ideeën over masculiniteit zij promoten. Deze vraag staat centraal in hoofdstuk 3 en 4 waarin de case studies binnen twee kerken in Lusaka, Zambia, worden gepresenteerd. Beide hoofdstukken zijn gebaseerd op een analyse van

interviews met kerkleiders en kerkleden (vooral mannen maar ook een aantal vrouwen), van schriftelijk materiaal zoals boekjes en folders, en van preken en toespraken. Dit materiaal is verzameld over twee perioden van in totaal ruim vijf maanden, van september-november 2008 en juni-augustus 2009).

Case studie in de rooms-katholieke Regiment parochie

In hoofdstuk 3 staat de rooms-katholieke Regiment parish centraal. Het hoofdstuk begint met een beschrijving van de parochie, met specifieke aandacht voor de respons op HIV en AIDS en voor de plaatsen waar mannen worden aangesproken en waar thema's aangaande masculiniteit aan de orde gesteld. Wat betreft het laatste valt te denken aan de groep Marriage Encounter die de voorbereiding op het huwelijk verzorgt, de mannengroep St. Joachim die de heilige Joachim (de vader van Maria) promoot als rolmodel voor katholieke mannen, en de jongerengroep waar o.a. thema's als HIV en AIDS, seksualiteit en relaties worden besproken. Het hoofdstuk bespreekt vervolgens de onderwerpen die kritisch aan de orde worden gesteld als het gaat over mannen en masculiniteit. Het seksuele gedrag van mannen blijkt, mede als gevolg van de HIV epidemie, een belangrijke kwestie te zijn, evenals het overmatige gebruik van alcohol. Ook de onverantwoordelijkheid van mannen in hun huwelijk en gezin is een issue, evenals de neiging van mannen om vrouwen te onderdrukken. Als laatste is de geringe betrokkenheid van mannen op de kerk en op het geloof een zorg binnen de parochie. Samen geven deze issues een beeld van het soort masculiniteit dat binnen de parochie als problematisch wordt gezien.

Het hoofdstuk beschrijft vervolgens de kernnoties van het alternatieve ideaal van "katholieke mannelijkheid" zoals dat wordt gepromoot: verantwoordelijkheid op de verschillende terreinen van het leven, het idee van de familie-man, de notie van de man als hoofd van het gezin, de nadruk op zelfbeheersing en als laatste het belang van spiritualiteit. Deze noties leven breed binnen de parochie maar hun betekenis wordt weinig uitgewerkt. Ze vormen dan ook eerder de brede contouren dan een specifieke definitie van masculiniteit, wat ruimte laat voor verschillende interpretaties. Opvallend is verder dat bovengenoemde noties worden ontleend aan zowel de Bijbel en de christelijke traditie als aan de traditionele Zambiaanse culturen. Alleen wat betreft de idee van de man als hoofd van het gezin wordt het verschil tussen beide benadrukt: traditioneel zou dit worden verstaan in termen van macht, terwijl het in het christendom zou gaan over verantwoordelijkheid.

In de volgende paragraaf worden de theologische achtergronden van het ideaal van mannelijkheid beschreven. Het blijkt te worden gevoed door het katholieke denken over gender dat zijn theologische uitgangspunt neemt in de schepping. Drie belangrijke noties worden hieraan ontleend: de gelijkheid (of gelijkwaardigheid) van man en vrouw, het fundamentele verschil tussen man en vrouw en de daaruit volgende complementariteit van man en vrouw. Ondanks de nadruk op gelijk(waardig)heid blijkt dat er de neiging is om het verschil tussen man en vrouw hiërarchisch te duiden, onder invloed van het scheppingsverhaal van Genesis 2. Een tweede theologische achtergrond wordt gevormd door de Afrikaanse katholieke ecclesiologie van de kerk als de Familie van God, die ertoe leidt dat masculiniteit

gedacht wordt in termen van de bijdrage van mannen aan de gemeenschap. Als derde wordt de betekenis van de katholieke traditie van heiligen voor de constructie van masculiniteit besproken, aangezien o.a. St. Joachim en St. Josef expliciet worden gepresenteerd als rolmodellen van mannelijkheid.

In de laatste paragraaf van het hoofdstuk wordt ingegaan op de vraag of mannen binnen de parochie leven naar het ideaal van mannelijkheid dat wordt gepromoot. Er wordt gewezen op het feit dat veel mannen een vorm van volkskatholicisme aanhangen, wat samenhangt met het feit dat de katholieke kerk in Zambia een brede volkskerk is. Vermoedelijk zullen de normen, waarden en idealen van de kerk onder hen niet heel veel impact hebben. In de parochie is echter ook een groep mannen van verschillende leeftijden die actief betrokken zijn in bijvoorbeeld de St. Joachim mannengroep of in de jongerengroep, en die een serieuze devotie tonen. Hoewel ook zij soms aangeven de normen van de kerk niet altijd heel strikt te nemen, zeggen ze een andere vorm van mannelijkheid te belichamen dan welke gangbaar is in hun omgeving doordat ze proberen te leven volgens christelijke waarden. Hun motivatie daartoe is mede ingegeven door de HIV epidemie.

De conclusie van deze case studie is dat Regiment parish niet echt actief inzet op het transformeren van masculiniteit maar wel degelijk bezorgd is over bepaald gedrag dat gangbaar is onder mannen en daarom alternatieve waarden probeert te bevorderen. Deze bezorgdheid is o.a. ingegeven door de HIV epidemie maar ook door armoede, geweld tegen vrouwen en problemen in huwelijken en gezinnen. In de parochie is “katholieke mannelijkheid” niet zozeer een precies gedefinieerd en actief gepromoot ideaal maar meer iets dat zich ontwikkelt naarmate mannen meer betrokken raken op de kerk en het geloof en zich spiritueel vormen, bijvoorbeeld naar het voorbeeld van St. Joachim of St. Jozef. Die betrokkenheid probeert de parochie te stimuleren, maar zoals de priester zelf toegeeft zouden daarvoor creatievere manieren gebruikt kunnen worden.

Case studie in de pinksterkerk Northmead Assembly of God

De tweede case studie, gepresenteerd in hoofdstuk 4, is verricht in Northmead Assembly of God, een bekende pinksterkerk in Lusaka die onderdeel is van de Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Zambia. De hoofdvoorganger van de kerk, bisschop Joshua Banda, is een prominente christelijke leider in Zambia. Het hoofdstuk opent met een introductie van de kerk, waarbij specifiek wordt ingegaan op de respons van de kerk op de HIV epidemie en op de plaatsen waar mannen worden aangesproken en thema’s aangaande masculiniteit aan de orde worden gesteld. Dit laatste gebeurt expliciet in preken tijdens kerkdiensten, in de mannengroep *Men of Truth*, tijdens de voorbereidingscursus op het huwelijk, en in de groepen voor respectievelijk jongeren, singles en getrouwde stellen. In de kerk is er een expliciet discours over masculiniteit, bijvoorbeeld in de prekenserie *Fatherhood in the 21st Century*, dat erg kritisch is ten aanzien van de populaire vormen van masculiniteit in Zambia en daarbuiten. De kritiek spitst zich toe op een aantal zaken, te beginnen met seksualiteit. De preoccupatie van mannen met seksualiteit wordt uitvoering aan de orde gesteld en scherp veroordeeld. Er wordt gezegd dat dit risicovol is in het kader van HIV, maar vooral dat het ingaat

tegen de richtlijnen van God. In dit kader wordt ook homoseksualiteit expliciet afgewezen. Een ander thema is het gebruik van alcohol door mannen. Dit wordt afgewezen omdat alcohol het lichaam zou ontheiligen, zou aanzetten tot seksuele immoraliteit en zou leiden tot armoede in gezinnen. Een derde kwestie is huiselijk en seksueel geweld tegen vrouwen, waar mannen kritisch op worden aangesproken. Datzelfde geldt voor de hiermee samenhangende neiging van mannen om vrouwen te overheersen. Deze neiging wordt verklaard vanuit "Afrikaanse cultuur" en er wordt benadrukt dat het christendom gelijkheid van mannen en vrouwen predikt. Als laatste wordt er gewezen op de algemene onverantwoordelijkheid van mannen, of het nu gaat om de manier waarop ze hun rol als vader voor hun kinderen, als hoofd van het gezin, als echtgenoot voor hun vrouw, of als leider in de samenleving vervullen. Al deze kwesties illustreren volgens Banda de 'vervorming van mannelijkheid' in Zambia. Daartegenover wordt er in de kerk een alternatief ideaal van mannelijkheid gepromoot, door Banda *biblical manhood* genoemd.

Het ideaal van "bijbelse mannelijkheid" wordt gekenmerkt door de notie van een primaire en unieke verantwoordelijkheid van mannen in het huwelijk, het gezin en de samenleving, de idee van de man als hoofd van het huwelijk en het gezin (dat door Banda "gebalanceerd" wordt met de idee van gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen), de notie van mannen als leiders in de samenleving, en de notie van zelfbeheersing. Deze noties zijn ontleend aan, en staan binnen een breder theologisch kader. Als eerste, de definitie van mannelijkheid is sterk beïnvloed door het denken over gender vanuit een theologie van de schepping, gebaseerd op een letterlijke en normatieve interpretatie van Genesis 1-3. Vier noties worden hieraan ontleend: het fundamentele verschil tussen man en vrouw, de complementariteit van beide, de gelijkheid tussen man en vrouw, en de norm van heteroseksualiteit. Het idee van de man als hoofd in het huwelijk en gezin, dat centraal staat in het ideaal van "bijbelse mannelijkheid", lijkt op gespannen voet te staan met de idee van gelijkheid maar wordt verklaard als onderdeel van het geslachtsverschil. Een tweede theologische gedachtelijn is de paulinische idee van de eerste en de tweede Adam. Waar dit idee bij Paulus gaat over de schepping, de val en de verlossing van de mensheid, past Banda dit toe op mannelijkheid. Adam, zoals hij geschapen is door God, wordt gezien als belichaming van het ideaal van "bijbelse mannelijkheid". Echter, na zijn val in het paradijs is dit ideaal beschadigd, en dit verklaart de huidige problemen veroorzaakt door mannen. Echter, in Jezus Christus als de tweede Adam zou God het ideaal van mannelijkheid hebben hersteld. Hij is zowel degene die dit ideaal belichaamt als degene die mannen helpt om er naar te leven. Zo ontwikkelt Banda een theologisch kader voor de transformatie van masculiniteit. Een derde theologische lijn is de sterke nadruk op wedergeboorte (*born again*) en heiliging, die kenmerkend is voor theologie in de pinksterbeweging. Als vierde blijkt de idee van goddelijk oordeel van belang te zijn, omdat dit mannen in de kerk aanzet om hun gedrag te veranderen.

De vraag of dat laatste inderdaad gebeurt wordt besproken in de laatste sectie. Er kan geen eenduidig antwoord op worden gegeven. Pastores in de kerk tonen zich kritisch, maar veel mannen geven op zijn minst aan serieus te streven naar het ideaal

hoewel ze ook toegeven hun zwakheden te hebben. De conclusie van deze case studie is dat Northmead Assembly of God zich actief mengt in masculiniteitpolitiek, mede (maar zeker niet alleen) ingegeven door de HIV epidemie. Opvallend is dat niet alleen problematische uitingen van mannelijkheid worden bekritiseerd, maar dat er ook heel duidelijk een alternatief ideaal van mannelijkheid wordt gedefinieerd en gepromoot. Hierbij wordt er gebruik gemaakt van noties als de man als hoofd en leider om mannen vervolgens te wijzen op de daarbij horende verantwoordelijkheden.

Kritische vergelijking en evaluatie van case studies en theologen

Nadat de voorgaande hoofdstukken hebben beschreven hoe Afrikaanse theologen en twee Zambiaanse kerken omgaan met masculiniteit in de context van de HIV epidemie, volgt er een meer kritische vergelijking en evaluatie in hoofdstuk 5. In de eerste sectie worden beide case studies vergeleken. Er wordt gewezen op een aantal overeenkomsten: beide kerken tonen zich bezorgd over het morele gedrag van mannen op terreinen als seksualiteit, relaties, gezin enzovoort, en ook het alternatieve ideaal van mannelijkheid dat ze proberen te bevorderen overlapt grotendeels. In beide kerken blijkt dit ideaal te zijn ingegeven door een gender ideologie gebaseerd op scheppingstheologie. Er zijn echter ook duidelijke verschillen. Het discours waarbinnen mannen worden aangesproken en thema's rond masculiniteit aan de orde worden gesteld is in NAOG veel explicieter en radicaler dan in Regiment parish. Waar NAOG een strikt geformuleerd ideaal van mannelijkheid geeft, wordt er in Regiment eerder een brede richting aangewezen. Dit hangt samen met de verschillen in kerktype: waar een katholieke parochie als Regiment een volkskerk is die onderdeel van de gemeenschap wil zijn, is een pinksterkerk als NAOG een keuzekerk die zich juist wil onderscheiden van "de wereld". Een ander verschil is de meer individugerichte opvatting en benadering van masculiniteit in NAOG en de meer gemeenschapsgerichte opvatting en benadering in Regiment. Ook de relatie tussen het christelijke en het traditionele/culturele idee van mannelijkheid wordt in beide kerken verschillend gedacht: in NAOG is er veel meer sprake van discontinuïteit terwijl in Regiment beide vrij vloeiend in elkaar overgaan. Deze verschillen zijn kenmerkend voor het katholicisme versus de pinksterbeweging in Afrika in bredere zin: pinksterkerken zijn vaak "moderner", ze nemen meer afstand tot culturele tradities, hun theologie is meer gericht op het individu en op het nucleaire gezin, terwijl de rooms-katholieke kerk juist inzet op "inculturatie" en dus een positieve houding heeft t.a.v. de cultuur, en haar theologie en kerk-zijn sterk gemeenschapsgericht is. Dit leidt er toe dat het ideaal van mannelijkheid in beide kerken verschillend wordt gepositioneerd op de schaal van christelijke en Afrikaanse identiteit en de schaal van moderniteit en traditie. Een laatste opvallend verschil betreft de rol van kerkleiders. In NAOG presenteert Banda zichzelf als rolmodel voor mannen, en zo wordt hij in de kerk ook gezien. In Regiment is de rol van priester Nsanzurwimo sowieso veel minder prominent, maar als celibataire geestelijke kan hij ook moeilijk een rolmodel zijn op de terreinen waar de hoofdproblemen liggen, nl. seksualiteit en relaties.

In de tweede sectie worden de case studie kerken vergeleken met de theologen. Opnieuw is er een aantal overeenkomsten: er is een gedeelde bezorgdheid ten aanzien

van mannen en hegemonische constructies van masculiniteit, en er is een gedeelde zoektocht naar alternatieve idealen van mannelijkheid. De verschillen springen echter veel meer in het oog. Waar de kerken de problemen analyseren op het individuele niveau van moreel gedrag, presenteren de theologen een structurele analyse van masculiniteit, gender relaties en patriarchaat. Een ander verschil is de transformatie van masculiniteit. De theologen zetten in op de deconstructie van patriarchaat en op transformatie in de richting van gender gelijkheid, terwijl de kerken hun ideaal van mannelijkheid juist formuleren in een discours dat patriarchaal genoemd kan worden. Hieraan ten grondslag ligt een verschillende theologie van gender. In de kerken is deze gebaseerd op de schepping, waaraan een bepaalde "scheppingsorde" wordt ontleend. Hoewel de theologen vaak verwijzen naar Genesis 1:27 om het idee van gender gelijkheid te funderen, zijn ze erg kritisch over Genesis 2 (waarnaar in de kerken juist vaak verwezen wordt) omdat deze tekst en haar gangbare interpretaties patriarchaat zouden legitimeren. Hun theologie van gender gaat uit van de eschatologische idee van herschepping, waarbij de betekenis van mannelijkheid en vrouwelijkheid niet vastligt in een scheppingsorde maar juist open staat voor verandering. Een volgend verschil betreft bijbelse hermeneutiek. Met behulp van een gender-kritische hermeneutiek problematiseren de theologen o.a. Genesis 2-3 en paulinische teksten over mannelijke overheersing en vrouwelijke onderschikking. In de kerken wordt de Bijbel echter gezien als het "Woord van God" dat niet zomaar bekritiseerd kan worden. De implicatie van deze verschillen is dat de idealen van mannelijkheid die door de kerken worden gepromoot, door de theologen "patriarchaal" zouden worden genoemd en volgens hen dus onderdeel van het probleem zijn in plaats van de oplossing. Het feit dat de kerken een aantal kwesties aan de orde stellen waarover ook de theologen bezorgd zijn, zoals geweld tegen vrouwen en overheersing van vrouwen, doet niets af aan hun fundamentele bezwaar tegen de vormen van masculiniteit zoals die door de kerken worden bevorderd.

In de derde sectie wordt deze analyse en evaluatie door de theologen kritisch besproken. De vraag is of het concept "patriarchaat" niet veel te monolithisch is om het meervoud aan vormen van masculiniteit te analyseren, zelfs al zijn ze allemaal op de een of andere manier patriarchaal, en om recht te doen aan hun eigenheid. De kerken promoten een ideaal van mannelijkheid dat in zekere zin patriarchaal is (denk aan noties als de man als hoofd en als leider), maar tegelijk onderstrepen ze de gelijk(waardig)heid van mannen en vrouwen en bestrijden ze overheersing van en geweld tegen vrouwen door mannen. Dit leidt tot vormen van masculiniteit die gematigd patriarchaal zijn (*soft patriarchy*) en die een positief verschil kunnen maken in bijvoorbeeld de context van HIV. Dit laat de noodzaak zien van een meer complexe conceptualisering van patriarchaat en een meer genuanceerde evaluatie van patriarchale vormen van masculiniteit dan onder de theologen gangbaar is. Hierbij zou moeten worden onderkend dat patriarchale noties van masculiniteit door de kerken juist constructief worden gebruikt. Het idee van de man als hoofd, bijvoorbeeld, lijkt voor de theologen synoniem te zijn voor mannelijke overheersing, zodat ze nauwelijks sensitief zijn voor het feit dat dit idee in de kerken juist geherdefinieerd wordt in

termen van verantwoordelijkheid. Gebruik makend van een zijdelingse opmerking van Chitando, dat in "het interim" sommige patriarchale opvattingen van mannelijkheid constructief gebruikt zouden kunnen worden, en verwijzend naar de notie van Afrikaanse vrouwentheologen dat *gender justice* een eschatologisch ideaal is, wijs ik er op dat dit ruimte kan geven voor een meer genuanceerde analyse en evaluatie van patriarchale vormen van masculiniteit in te context van HIV. Hierdoor zou ook de bijdrage van kerken als in de case studies positiever kunnen worden beoordeeld.

Dit wil echter niet zeggen dat er geen kritische vragen te stellen zijn bij de case studie kerken. De eerste vraag zou kunnen zijn of ze zich eigenlijk wel actief genoeg inzetten voor een transformatie van masculiniteit. De case studies laten zien dat beide kerken meer zouden kunnen doen en creatievere manieren zouden kunnen ontwikkelen om mannen te bereiken, bepaalde kwesties aan de orde te stellen, en verandering te bewerkstelligen. De tweede vraag is waarom de kerken het eigenlijk zo belangrijk vinden om vast te houden aan een (weliswaar gematigde maar toch) patriarchale ideologie. Is dat echt alleen om bijbelse of theologische redenen, of ook om de machtspositie, het respect en de belangen van mannen te beschermen? Waarom is het zo moeilijk voor de kerken om ondubbelzinnig de gelijkheid, gelijkwaardigheid en rechten van mannen en vrouwen te erkennen? Dat blijft een open vraag.

Religie en de agency van mannen: een alternatieve benadering

Het feit dat de Afrikaanse theologen onder discussie zich kritisch uitlaten over vormen van masculiniteit zoals gepromoot in kerken, waaronder de case studie kerken, is op zichzelf geen probleem. Het is een logisch gevolg van een van de taken die Afrikaanse theologie zichzelf heeft toegekend, namelijk het kritisch volgen van wat er binnen kerken gezegd en gedaan wordt. Uit hoofdstuk 5 blijkt echter dat het bevrijdingstheologische engagement van de theologen, de normatieve vooronderstellingen die daaraan ten grondslag liggen en de benadering die daaruit volgt, ook een obstakel kunnen vormen om te analyseren wat er precies binnen kerken gebeurt. Mijns inziens is dat het geval met de thematiek van masculiniteit: uit het commitment aan een ideaal van *gender justice* volgt bij de theologen een normatief idee van gender gelijkheid en een monolithische opvatting van patriarchaat, welke weinig behulpzaam blijken bij de analyse van discoursen over masculiniteit binnen kerken en hun transformerende kracht. In hoofdstuk 6 wordt daarom een alternatieve benadering voorgesteld. Allereerst worden de problemen van het conceptuele frame van patriarchaat benoemd. Niet alleen Afrikaanse theologen gebruiken dit frame voor hun analyse van masculiniteit en gender, maar ook vele andere religiewetenschappers en theologen die werken vanuit een (pro)feministisch engagement. Het probleem is allereerst dat het binnen dit frame moeilijk is om de diversiteit, complexiteit en ambiguïteit van constructies van masculiniteit te analyseren. Ten tweede, binnen dit frame worden noties als individuele autonomie en gelijkheid normatief toegepast, maar in navolging van de antropoloog Saba Mahmood betoog ik dat er hierdoor geen oog is voor *agency* van mensen binnen structuren en in contexten die niet aan deze normen voldoen. Mahmood past dit toe op de *agency* van vrouwen, maar hetzelfde

geldt voor de *agency* van mannen. Ten derde wordt er binnen dit frame zo sterk ingezet op de deconstructie van patriarchaat dat er nauwelijks tot geen ruimte is voor het ontwikkelen van een constructieve perceptie van masculiniteit.

Als alternatief voor het frame van patriarchaat stel ik een andere benadering voor. Deze is primair analytisch van aard en richt zich op de *agency* van mannen die gemobiliseerd wordt in en door religieuze discoursen over masculiniteit. De vraag is welke concepten en noties in deze discourses *agency* mobiliseren. *Agency* is hier een antropologisch concept dat verwijst naar het vermogen en de macht van een individu om te handelen binnen bepaalde sociale structuren. Toegepast op dit onderzoek verwijst het naar de manieren waarop mannen handelen binnen patriarchale structuren. Bijvoorbeeld: het gaat er niet bij voorbaat vanuit dat het idee van de man als hoofd aanzet tot overheersing, maar onderzoekt hoe mannen invulling geven aan dit idee en hoe het mogelijk ook kan aanzetten tot gedrag dat constructief is. In lijn hiermee gaat deze alternatieve benadering voorbij aan simplistische ideeën over macht in gender relaties, volgens welke mannen macht misbruiken om te heersen over vrouwen. Voortbordurend op recente poststructuralistische benaderingen van macht, zoals o.a. voorgesteld door de cultureel antropoloog Saba Mahmood en de feministische theoloog Margaret Kamitsuka, ziet het macht niet per definitie als overheersend maar ook als mogelijk productief, in de zin dat het *agency* mogelijk maakt. In de laatste sectie wordt vanuit deze alternatieve benadering opnieuw naar de case studie kerken gekeken. Geconcludeerd kan worden dat in beide case studies de *agency* van mannen verstaan wordt als het nemen van verantwoordelijkheid voor jezelf en voor anderen. Dit besef van verantwoordelijkheid wordt gemobiliseerd met de notie van de man als hoofd en als leider en met de idee dat mannen op basis van een scheppingsorde een primaire positie hebben. In zekere zin zijn dit patriarchale ideeën, maar ze blijken de potentie te hebben om constructief te worden aangewend. Aan de hand van twee interviews wordt aangetoond hoe deze ideeën en de bredere religieuze discoursen mannen inderdaad helpen om verantwoordelijkheid te nemen en zo *agency* te tonen die constructief kan zijn in de context van HIV.

De conclusie van het onderzoek is dat kerken en theologen zich op heel verschillende manieren inzetten voor een transformatie van masculiniteit. In de termen van de titel van dit proefschrift, die is ontleend aan een preek in NAOG: beide beogen een besnijdenis van mannen, maar de theologen proberen mannen te besnijdenis van hun patriarchale macht en de kerken van immorele gedragingen. Deze strategieën leiden tot heel verschillende vormen van masculiniteit, die echter allemaal de potentie hebben om constructief uit te werken in de context van HIV, specifiek met het oog op het welzijn van vrouwen en kinderen, en in die zin kunnen ze bijdragen aan het ideaal van *gender justice*.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Adriaan Sander van Klinken was born on July 1, 1982 in Middelharnis, the Netherlands. He studied religion and pastoral work at the Christelijke Hogeschool Ede (BA, 2003), and continued his studies in theology at Utrecht University (MA, 2006) and at the Protestant Theological University in Utrecht (M.Div., 2007). During his studies he specialised in the study of world Christianity and in the study of religion and gender. In 2006 he conducted research with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, writing his master's thesis on issues of gender and HIV in African women's theology. From 2007 up to 2010 he was a PhD Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies and Theology, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University. As a researcher he was attached to Centre IIMO, the Utrecht University centre for intercultural theology, interreligious dialogue, missiology and ecumenics. In this position he worked on the research project *Intersecting Religion, Masculinities and HIV and AIDS* that was sponsored by ICCO, Kerk in Actie and Prisma, of which the present thesis is the result.