UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY
CLERGY IN DEALING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master Artium
in Social Work

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ABSTRACT

The church has generally played a very passive role in responding proactively to the issue of domestic violence that threatens family living. For more than three decades various scholars and experts have raised an important discourse around the influence of the patriarchal nature of the mainstream religions, its structures and its teachings on domestic violence. In some countries formal training programmes are now offered to equip clergy to deal with domestic violence.

This study sought to explore the challenges experienced by selected clergy within the Anglican Church in dealing with domestic violence. A qualitative inquiry approach was applied this research issue. The sample was drawn from the Diocese of Cape Town of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, based on participants' experience of the phenomenon and their willingness to participate in the study. The researcher used face-to-face interviews utilizing a semi-structured interview guide for data collection. Questions were open-ended to allow for free flow of information. Because of the sensitive nature of the study, probing questions were followed up by responses to get in-depth perceptions and experiences of clergy's involvement in domestic violence.

For the data analysis, the researcher followed the proposed guidelines as recorded in Creswell (1998:147-148). Trustworthiness is central in qualitative research. A strong awareness of the concept of reflexivity accompanied the researcher into this study; thus lined up were colleagues and the research supervisor for regular debriefing. A co-coder was appointed to check whether similar categories and meanings surfaced during analysis as part of ensuring trustworthiness of the study findings. With reference to the ethical considerations in this study, all participants were thoroughly briefed before the interview with clear explanations of the goal, procedure and advantages of the study. Participants had the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the interview as participation was completely voluntary. The researcher guaranteed the principles of privacy and anonymity and all participants were informed of the findings of the study.

Consistent with literature, this study confirmed the complex nature of domestic violence. Participants experienced various challenges on different levels in the ministry pertaining to domestic violence. These challenges primarily related to the lack of training in dealing with real life issues such as domestic violence during their theological training; the lack of theological guidelines offered by the church to address patriarchal societal practices, beliefs and gender stereotyping; and the lack of guidance on contextual interpretation of Scriptures.

DECLARATION

I declare that the explorative study on how clergy within the Diocese of Cape Town of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, deal with domestic violence is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all sources I have used or quoted have been dedicated and acknowledged by complete references.
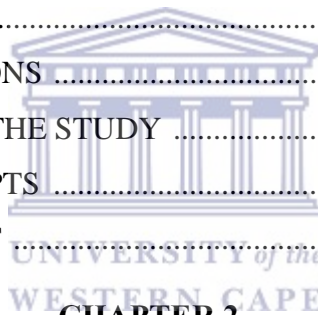
Elizabeth Petersen

Signed: _____

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Reliable statistics of the prevalence of domestic violence in South Africa are not available and no official statistics exist. What is certain though is that South African women live in one of the most violent societies in the world. It is estimated that one in every four women is assaulted by an intimate partner every week (Blaser, 1999 as quoted by Van Sitters, 2002:1). The domination and violence toward women are ingrained in the tradition of family relationships in South Africa (Emmett, 2000).

Although the presence of both religious organizations and violence in South Africa is pervasive, scant research and attention has focused on how best to enrol clergy and religiously orientated resources in the battle against violence against women. Research suggests that religion can be a positive influence in the promotion of individual, interpersonal, and social well being as recorded by Giesbrecht and Sevcik (2000). They further remark that religious issues are intricately connected with a personal and communal sense of identity for battered women in conservative religious churches.

Aziz Hartley, reporter of *Cape Times* (2004, 10 May, 3) quoted the Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane as saying that it was "shameful that despite Jesus calling women 'herald', 'evangelist', 'disciple' and 'apostle' and despite Jesus establishing a community of equality, the church has for 20 centuries denied and denigrated the place of women in the church". Ndungane was speaking at the centenary celebrations of the oldest shelter for abused women and children in South Africa, St. Anne's Homes, in Woodstock, Cape Town.

The South African Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998), defines domestic violence as: "Physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economical abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the complainant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence; or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant, where such conduct harms, or may cause imminent

harm to, the safety, health or well being of the complainant". It is difficult to judge accurately the full extent of domestic violence because it is still often a hidden phenomenon.

Abuse within intimate relationships is extremely underreported due to the complexities of the nature of the problem. It is important to view violence within the South African context by looking at the strong patriarchal context that exists. Traditional and cultural values seems to have accepted violence as a means of resolving conflicts and these values are critical in shaping and perpetuating the violent behaviour of men towards women (Watts, Osman & Win, 1995). Violence against women is used as a way of securing and maintaining the relations of male dominance and female subordination that are central to the patriarchal social order (Hester, Kelly & Radford, 1996).

Giesbrecht and Sevcik (2000:229-230) note that although multiple theories seek to explain spousal assault, it is generally accepted that gender inequality and the structure of relationships are important causal factors. A number of psychological and demographical variables have been studied in regard to the systematic study of violence against women like the self-esteem of victims, batterers' exposure to family-of-origin violence, interventions for victims and batterers, socio-economic status and causal attributions for violence (Rotunda, Williamson & Penfold, 2004:353).
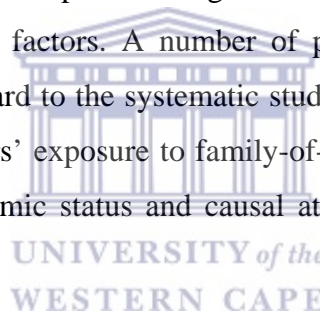
The influence of religion, church involvement and victim help-seeking from clergy members have not to date been a major focus of research. This relative absence of empirical knowledge takes on critical importance when it is acknowledged that clergy members may be the first contact to provide counselling about family, relationship and violence-related issues.

Some 30 years ago, Walker (1979:2), called it a myth to think that religious beliefs will prevent gender-based violence. The majority of women Walker (1979) interviewed grew up in what she calls "religious" homes and she found that their beliefs and values primarily served to maintain the family unit. While most of the women in her study reported religious beliefs and some felt that their belief in a deity "helped them endure their suffering, offering comfort and solace," others abandoned their faith because it created conflict with the abuser or because of being unsuccessful in seeking help from religious or spiritual leaders.

Dobash and Dobash (1979:33-34) in reviewing the record of Western Civilization reached the conclusion that the seed of wife beating lies in the subordination of females and their subjection to male authority and control. The relationship between women and men has been institutionalized in the structure of the patriarchal family including a religion that makes such relationships seem natural, morally just and sacred. This structure and ideology can be seen most starkly in the records of two societies that provided the roots of our cultural legacy, the Romans and the early Christians.

More recent literature reviewed recognized that religious teachings and clergy members have both helped and hindered efforts that seek to establish non-violence in relationships (Rotunda *et al.* 2004; Bell & Mattis, 2000; Grady, 2000). Casa (2000:4) in her cover story for the National Catholic Reporter reported that when social services in Santa Clara County, California asked domestic violence victims during a survey in 1996 where they first turned for help, their answer overwhelmingly was "to the church." But when they were asked where support was most lacking, their answer was the same: "the church".

Grady's study (2000) suggests that through the centuries church leaders have encouraged women not to pursue careers other than home-making and have taught that motherhood is a woman's only God-ordained calling in life. He then refers to the writings of Saint Paul in Ephesians chapter five verse twenty two which calls wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. This scripture Grady (2000) says has been used to compel Christian wives to tolerate physical and sexual abuse from their husbands in order to glorify God with submissive femininity. This he calls "spiritual abuse". He further criticizes the church for offering "illogical" and "irresponsible" counselling to women and men in domestic violence situations.

Privette, Quackenbos and Bundrick (1994) as quoted by Rotunda, Williamson and Penfold (2004) questioned lay people about their preference for pastoral or secular counselling and asked them about the types of problems for which they would be most likely to seek pastoral counselling. They found that half of their sample would prefer pastoral counselling when it is available. They also found that 86% of their sample would seek pastoral counselling for marriage problems compared to 13% who would seek secular counselling.

Bell and Mattis (2000:528) assert that religion must receive particular attention in any dialogue about the role and impact of domestic violence in the lives of women. They confirm that most victims are likely to use religious coping strategies and are more likely to seek help from a minister than from any other helping professional. It is therefore critical to note that religion and spirituality may serve either as mechanisms for achieving resilience in the face of domestic assault or as contributors to women's vulnerability.

Grady's study (2000), indicates that some religious traditions hold that even in the face of abuse, women must not separate from or divorce their partners. Furthermore some individuals use biblical references to legitimise the use of physical coercion as a strategy for getting women to submit to the authority of the men in their lives.

1.2   RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

Pastoral Standards (2003:3) referring to sexual abuse, remind the church leadership that while the church seek to extend ministry into a society full of abuse, there are occasions on which that very abuse is happening within the life of the church. The booklet makes reference to church's commitment to develop its own strategy along three lines; one of which is: Training the church for intervention in an abusive society.

In 2003 The Church of the Province of Southern Africa (The Anglican Church) in the Western Cape, introduced, as part of its attempts to stay abreast social issues, a Gender Sensitizing Training Programme for their clergy and asked the researcher to be involved in this training program.

All of the above mentioned factors influenced the decision to embark on this line of research.

This research proposed to explore the challenges experienced by clergy within the Church of the Province of Southern Africa in dealing with domestic violence with the intention of pointing towards more effective ways of enrolling clergy into the fight against domestic violence. The research question that flowed from the preliminary literature reviewed and contextual information is as follows:

What are the challenges experienced by clergy in dealing with domestic violence?

1.3   MOTIVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The literature consulted for the purpose of this study indicated that there is a lack of domestic violence related research that specifically explores the role of clergy in responding to domestic violence victims and perpetrators. What was also confirmed during the preliminary literature review is that much research is required to deepen the understanding of professionals helping religious victims and perpetrators.

Babbie (1989:80) asserts that explorative studies are most typically done for three purposes. Firstly, these studies aim to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire to better understand the issue. The researcher's personal interest in this study was influenced by her 13 years of working experience with abused women in shelters and working as a counsellor with battered women. The following observation was made. Women often say that they want the violence to stop and many felt that their religious communities were not very effective to this end. The researcher has counselled many Christian women who struggle with the resentment they have for the church which disappointed them when they really needed help with their abusive husbands. Sometimes women would say that it is in the absence of services for their partners that their options are limited and if clergy could provide more honest and confrontational support to their partners, life would be different and their families could be preserved.

In the early 1990's an initiative by a few women in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa started to raise awareness on the issues of violence against women. Later a task team called Tamar was established with the blessing of the church to address this issue through training and education among the churches.

The significance of this explorative study relates to two more reasons for this kind of studies as mentioned by Babbie (1989:80) namely, to test the feasibility of undertaking a more comprehensive study, and secondly, to develop the methods to be employed for explorative-descriptive studies.

The social work profession could benefit directly from this study as more inclusive and holistic approach to domestic violence intervention needs to be researched and developed.

1.4   GOAL OF THE RESEARCH

The goal of the research was to explore challenges experienced by clergy (within the Church of the Province of Southern Africa) in dealing with domestic violence. The secondary goal was to identify training needs to inform the church's attempts to address the issue head on.

The related objectives were identified as follows:

- To explore participants' understanding of domestic violence and its root causes
- To explore intervention strategies in dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence
- To explore participants' suggestions regarding training needs and professional support in dealing with domestic violence

1.5   ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

(see chapter 2 for a comprehensive discussion and reflection of the methodology)

1.5.1   Research approach

Creswell (1998:17) notes that the nature of the research question determines the type of methodology to be used. As this study sought to explore challenges experienced by clergy in intervening with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, the qualitative approach was most appropriate. This kind of inquiry proposed to answer "what" and "how" questions which according to Creswell (1998:17) is typical in qualitative research.

1.5.2   Population, sample and recruitment of participants

The population for this study was the Cape Town Diocese of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. Because it is almost never possible to study all the members of a population, a sample of the subjects are selected that gives an adequate reflection of the whole population that interests a researcher. De Vos *et al.* (2002:199) describe a sample as a small set of persons that together comprise the subject study. Ten clergy were purposefully selected to participate in the study based on their experience of the phenomenon and their willingness to participate in the study. The purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998:118).

Permission was obtained from the Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa to do the study within the church.

1.5.3   Data collection methods and process (see also chapter 2)

McCracken (1988:17) explains that the purpose of the qualitative interview is not to discover how many and what kinds of (as in quantitative research), people share a certain characteristic. It is the categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world. The qualitative interview is much more intensive than extensive in its objectives. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has used face-to-face interviews and utilized a semi-structured interview guide for data collection. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed.

1.5.4   Data analysis (see also chapter 2)

McCracken (1988:16) explains that the most striking difference between qualitative and quantitative methods is the way in which each tradition treats its analytical categories. The quantitative goal is to isolate and define categories as precisely as possible before the study is undertaken, and then determine, again with great precision, the relationship between them. The qualitative goal, on the other hand, explains, McCracken (1988) is often to isolate and define categories during the process of research. The qualitative investigator expects the nature and definition of analytical categories to change in the course of a project.

January (2003:42) quotes Patton (1990:371), as saying that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. The final result remains unique for each inquirer, known only when and if, arrived at. Patton also claims that the challenge related to qualitative analysis, lies in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivial information from what is relevant, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals.

McCracken (1988:16) furthermore asserts that qualitative research normally looks for patterns of interrelationship between categories rather than the sharply delineated relationship between a limited set of them as in quantitative research.

The researcher found this to be true in my research experience and used the guidelines of Creswell (1994:155) for data analysis. A detail of the actual process that was followed is recorded in chapter two.

1.5.5 Data verification

Creswell (1998:201) views verification as a distinct strength of qualitative research in that the account made through extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness to participations in the study, all add to the value of a study. He uses the term verification rather than validity because verification underscores qualitative research as a distinct approach and legitimate mode of inquiry in its own right. Creswell also refers to terms such as trustworthiness and authenticity as general concepts to use in establishing the credibility of the study.

Trustworthiness is central in qualitative research. Ely and Anzul (1991:93) reiterates that trustworthiness means that the processes of the research are carried out fairly, that the products represent as closely as possible to the experiences of the people who are studied. Since the current researcher comes from a particular religious and professional experience, which relates very strongly to the study, a conscious effort was made to remain open to the fact that multiple interpretations exist to what participants would be sharing during interviews.

For the same reason, a strong awareness of the concept of reflexivity accompanied the researcher into this study. Colleagues and the research supervisor were available for regular debriefing. Appointing a co-coder to check whether similar categories and meanings surfaced during analysis was part of ensuring trustworthiness of the study findings. (See chapter two).

1.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ely and Anzul (1991) suggest that qualitative research is an ethical endeavour. It is impossible to confine ethical considerations to certain sections; it is present from the start and woven throughout every step of the methodology.

The following ethical considerations were followed:

- All participants were thoroughly briefed before the interview explaining the goal, procedure and advantages of the study
- Participants would have the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the interview as participation was completely voluntary
- Researcher guaranteed the principles of privacy and anonymity
- All participants were informed of the findings of the study.

1.7 USE OF LITERATURE IN THE STUDY

Creswell (1994:179) and Creswell (1998:88) indicate that the use of theories and literature to guide qualitative studies can be placed on a continuum of before/after data collection, depending on the goal and strategy of inquiry. In this study, the researcher aimed for a truly inductive form of inquiry and reasoning and did not want to be influenced by the existing literature on the topic of domestic violence for collecting data. For this reason, theories and literature were consulted for a basic theoretical orientation in the beginning of the study and were researched in depth after the data collection.

Literature findings pertaining to the themes that emerged from the researcher's own study are therefore presented in Chapter 3.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

Domestic Violence – The South African Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998), defines domestic violence as: "Physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economical abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the complainant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence; or any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant, where such conduct harms, or may cause imminent harm to, the safety, health or well being of the complainant".

Religion – According to The Free Encyclopaedia, the Wikipedia; "…the word *religion* probably derives from the Latin word *ligare*, meaning "to join", "to link" or to bind. The prefix *re-* may mean "back" or "again", or may be an intensifier, so *religion* could be literally

translated, variously, as "binding back", or as re-linking or re-joining, or as "binding strongly". According to the first interpretation, *religion* is understood by many modern English-speakers to mean the reconnection of human and the alleged divine. Accordingly, one might begin by defining religion as a system of beliefs based on humanity's attempt to explain the universe and natural phenomena, often involving one or more deities or other supernatural forces and also requiring or binding adherents to follow prescribed religious obligations."

Christianity – The Wikipedia The Free Encyclopaedia states that Christianity is a monotheistic (monotheism is the belief in a single, universal, all-encompassing deity), broadly Trinitarian religion, encompassing many religious traditions that trace their origins to Jesus Christ. The vast majority of Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Lord incarnate and sole Saviour of all humanity as the Jewish Messiah. Over the past two millennia, Christianity has diverged into three main branches: Catholicism, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox. Collectively, it is the world's largest single religion, with over two billion followers. The term Christ derives from the Greek adjective Khristos that means, "Anointed." Christian means "belonging to Christ."

Patriarchy – With reference to literature reviewed, a *patriarch* is a man who exercises autocratic authority over an extended family. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are referred to as the three patriarchs of Judaism, and the period in which they lived is called the patriarchal period.

The word *patriarchy* is often used to mean society controlled by men in general, although this is more properly termed andrarchy. In Gerda Lerner's (1986) article on the Creation of Patriarchy, she states that in the earliest form patriarchy appeared as the archaic state. The basic unit of this organization, she says, was the patriarchal family which both expressed and constantly generated its rules and values. In this process it was clearly seen how integral definitions of gender affected the actual formation of the state. The roles and behaviour deemed appropriate to the sexes were expressed in values, customs, laws and social roles. They were also expressed in leading metaphors, which became part of the cultural construct and explanatory system. Because of their sexual and reproductive capacity, women themselves became a resource and acquired by men much as the land was acquired by men.

Clergy – The working definition in this document refers to people ordained for religious duties or church leaders. In this study the word clergy, pastor and priest will be used interchangeably.

Victim – The working definition in this study for "victim" would refer to any woman who finds herself on the receiving end of domestic violence as defined in this document. A victim of domestic violence also refers to that woman who finds herself powerless in the situation.

Perpetrator - The word perpetrator refers to that male person (in the case of this study) who exerts violent and abusive behaviour on his female intimate partner or spouse. The word abuser is sometimes used which means the same as perpetrator in this study.

Intervention – The word intervention in this research refers to any form of help or perceived help offered to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

1.9   LAYOUT OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 aims to orientate the reader to the context and the research methodology of the study. A preliminary review of literature is presented to frame the study and basic information on the methodology is provided.

Chapter 2 reports comprehensively and reflectively on the research methodology that was employed in this study, addressing the research approach, population and sampling, data collection and process, data analysis and verification, ethical considerations, significance of study and definitions of concepts.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to the detailed reporting of findings and discussion with a specific focus on the five key theme questions to which the participants were asked to respond. In this chapter narratives are used in support of findings and literature was incorporated in relation to findings.

Chapter 4 of this report relates to summaries, conclusions and recommendations drawn from this study.

The Harvard convention of referencing was used in the text. As a rule, present tenses were used in quotes, except for instances where there were clear indications of unpublished references.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The goal of the research was to explore challenges experienced by clergy in dealing with domestic violence.

According to Rubin and Babbie (2001:123) the purpose of exploratory studies are either to gain insight into a relatively new and unstudied subject or to test the feasibility of more comprehensive study and /or develop methods for such a study. De Vos *et al.* (2002:139) contend that exploratory studies are usually of a qualitative nature and the data-collection methods would be unstructured or semi-structured interviews and/or observations. The aim of this research aligns itself to the qualitative research approach with an exploratory design.

2.2   THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Bannister *et al.* (1994) as cited in Van Sitter (2002:38) define qualitative research as an interpretative study of a specific issue or problem in which both the researcher and participants are central to the research.

Mason (2002:3) outlines elements which characterize qualitative research as follows:

- It is grounded in an "interpretivist" philosophy regarding the social world;
- It is based on methods of data generation both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which it is generated; and
- It is based on methods of analysis, explanation and argument building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context.

This kind of inquiry proposed to answer "what" and "how" questions which according to Creswell (1998) is typical in qualitative research. The researcher's role is described as active learner rather than expert who passes judgement on participants.

According to Mason (2002:1) through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social

processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate.

Qualitative methods in research are said to be more suitable for sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS and domestic violence. (Schoepf, 1991 as quoted by Mathison, 2002:17). Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998:15). Creswell further notes that qualitative research is the deep involvement in issues of gender, culture, and marginalized groups, and that the topics we research are emotion-laden, close to the people and practical.

While there is an increase in focus on the role of religious communities in dealing with domestic violence in the USA, little research has been done on this phenomenon. With reference to research and literature on Christianity/Christian Church as it relates to domestic violence, even less is available in South Africa.

The reason for choosing the qualitative research approach is embedded in Creswell's (1998:16-17) writings which say that qualitative inquiry is for the researcher who is willing to do the following:

- Commit to extensive time in the field.
- Engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis – the ambitious task of sorting through large amounts of data and reducing them to a few themes or categories.
- Write long passages, because the evidence must substantiate claims and the writer needs to show multiple perspectives.
- Participate in a form of social and human science research that does not have firm guidelines or specific procedures and is evolving and changing constantly.

Through the use of a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to study clergy's experiences of dealing with domestic violence in terms of their own definitions and understandings relating to root causes and interventions. This approach supported the

researcher in creating a safe environment of care in acknowledgement of the sensitive nature of the phenomenon and the participants' experiences thereof.

By adopting a qualitative approach, the researcher was well able to establish a rapport with the participants and she could be flexible in the ways in which the interviews were conducted. The researcher was able to engage participants in their natural setting and instead of beginning with an existing theory, participants were invited to share in their own words their understandings and experiences right through the data collecting process.

Literature also acknowledges that while qualitative research is characterized by specific phases, these are often intermingled or executed side by side according to Tutty *et al.* (1996) as cited in Dames (2003:15). The researcher felt at home with the qualitative method as it acknowledges the researcher as a kind of "instrument" in the collection and analysis of data (McCracken, 1988:18). According to Miles (1979:597) as quoted by McCracken (1988:18) this metaphor is a useful one because it emphasizes that the researcher cannot fulfil qualitative research objectives without using a broad range of his or her own experience, imagination and intellect in ways that are various and unpredictable.

I must acknowledge that I did feel a sense of connection with participants as they wrestled with the research question themes and this compelled me to continuously engage in a process of reflection on my own experiences and feelings. The complexity of the nature of domestic violence was sensed and sometimes verbally expressed as participants tried to make sense of their understanding and perceptions especially relating to definitions and root causes of the phenomenon.

2.3   THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROCESS

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005:78) refer to a number of authors who have identified phases of the qualitative research process which service as guidelines for the research process. These authors include Royce (1995), Denzin and Lincoln (2003) and De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Schurink (1998).

The guidelines proposed by De Vos *et al.* (1998) were found to be most suitable and practical for this study:

Phase one: Choosing a research problem or topic

Phase two: Deciding to use a qualitative research approach

Phase three: Selecting the qualitative design

Phase four: Preparing for data collection

Phase five: Data collection and analysis

Phase six: Data verification

Phase seven: Report writing.

The researcher used these phases in sequence, and found that there was interplay between some of the phases.

For example, although the researcher began with a general topic and notions of what would be relevant, focusing and refining continues after some of the data had been gathered and some preliminary analysis had been done. (Neuman, 2000:149). It was also clear that preliminary data-analysis was interwoven with the data-collection phase.

The decisions involved in phases one to three have already been discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.1. The discussion that follows elaborates on the methods and processes of the phases of data-collection, data-analysis and data-verification.

2.4   DATA-COLLECTION

2.4.1   Introduction

Data collection in a qualitative style is when a researcher directly observes and participates in small-scale social settings in the present time and in the participant's home culture. Creswell (1997:149) refers to Miles and Huberman (1984) who outlined the parameters of data collection by defining where the research will take place (the setting), the participants who will be interviewed (the actors), and what the actors will be interviewed about (the events). In qualitative research, data collection happens in the form of words according to Neuman (2000:33).

The research interview is an interpersonal situation between two partners, about a theme of mutual interest. It is a specific form of human interaction in which knowledge evolves through dialogue (Kvale, 1996) as quoted by January (2003:40).

2.4.2   Population, sample and recruitment of participants

A population is the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements. A study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected (Babbie, 1989:169-170). The population for a study is that group of people from whom a researcher wishes to be able to draw conclusions (De Vos *et al.* 2002:199). Neuman (2000:201) explains that to define the population, a researcher specifies the unit being sampled, the geographical location, and the temporal boundaries of populations. In this study, the researcher started with an idea of the population being religious leaders; but De Vos *et al.* (2002) further explain that because it is almost never possible to study all the members of a population, a sample of the subjects are selected that gives an adequate reflection of the whole population that interests a researcher. De Vos *et al.* (2002:199) describe a sample as a small set of persons that together comprise the subject study.

The researcher made use of purposive sampling in the selection of 10 ordained priests for the purpose of this study. Purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representatives or typical attributes of the population (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:202).

The purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998:118). The sample was drawn from the Cape Town Diocesan of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, based on participants' experience of the phenomenon and their willingness to participate in the study.

The researcher first obtained verbal and written permission from the Archbishop of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa to do the study within the church. To make the sample as inclusive and culturally inclusive, participants were purposely chosen to include both female and male priests from the Coloured, Black and White communities in the Western Cape of South Africa. Permission was obtained via an initial telephonic contact with participants, explaining the purpose of the research, clarifying whether they had experience the phenomenon and whether they would be willing to participate. Except for two all the other participants were interviewed in their own natural setting.

2.4.3   Data collection methods and process

The method for data collection was interviewing, a well-recognized tool in qualitative research. The researcher used face-to-face interviews and utilized a semi-structured interview guide with five open-ended questions or themes for data collection.

De Vos *et al.* (2005:296) write that in general, researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. Semi-structured interviews are especially suitable where one is particularly interested in complexity or process, or where an issue is controversial or personal.

In the case of this study, the researcher was particularly interested to gain some understanding of participant's beliefs and attitudes toward the phenomenon. The researcher realized that she was tapping into an area of exploration which was controversial especially when she questioned participants on whether they thought there was a link between patriarchy, Christianity and domestic violence. Because participants are regarded as the experts (according to De Vos *et al.*, 2005:296) in this data collection method, the researcher learned a lot from their passionate sharing on this issue.

With semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it De Vos *et al.* (2005:296). Depending on where participants were, the researcher was flexible to ensure proper enrolment into the interview. Some participants were ready and we went straight into the interview, while others needed a bit more time to get started. As the interview proceeded with some participants, the researcher changed the sequence of the question themes to some degree to ensure maximum sharing. For example sometimes participants shared specific cases as they gave an overview of themselves and the various parish communities in which they ministered.

The open-ended questions allowed participants to reflect on issues and to focus on how they perceive the phenomenon, describe it, feel about it, remember it and make sense of it. Follow-up probing questions were also asked for in-depth exploration of feelings, behaviours, and interpretations of experiences.

The following open-ended themes were studied which sought to explore challenges experienced by Anglican clergy when intervening with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence:

- How participants define domestic violence and understand its root causes
- Guidelines offered during theological training and / or by the church for clergy in dealing with domestic violence intervention
- Participants' experiences of intervention with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Participants' suggestions for domestic violence training and professional support for clergy

The guide ensured that similar themes of data were obtained from the participants. De Vos *et al.* (2005:287) quote Kvale (Sewell, 2001:1) who defines qualitative interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations".

The researcher was particularly aware of the sensitive nature of the phenomenon that was to be explored. As a senior social worker with extensive experience in interviewing, the researcher was nevertheless attentive and adapted the style of interviewing to achieve the goal of the research. It is for this reason that the focus and style of interviewing took on a very enrolling nature which ensured that participants felt safe and freely shared their experiences of the phenomenon. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed.

The researcher has been indirectly involved in the Anglican Church for over thirteen years through her role as social worker and director at the shelter for abused women and children, which is under the auspices of the church. More recently, the researcher became a member of the church and has had more interaction with the church and some clergy through church activities for the last four years. This has ensured a high level of willingness by clergy to participate in the study. Participants were assured of anonymity. They were also encouraged to share as openly and honestly as possible, and were reminded that they have the right to withdraw from the research process at any time. The participants were informed of the

findings of the study in an objective manner without violating the researcher's commitment to anonymity.

- **Pilot Interview**

De Vos *et al.* (2005:205) write that in order to undertake scientific research on a specific problem, the researcher should have background knowledge about it. A pilot study is one way in which a prospective researcher can orientate herself to the project she has in mind. The pilot study is a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research process. Its function is the exact formulation of the research problem, and a tentative planning of the modus operandi and range of the investigation.

The researcher purposefully chose one coloured male participant who was involved in Gender Sensitizing programme for clergy from the Cape Town Diocese, for a pilot interview.
Lessons learnt from the pilot study were:

- The researcher was surprised that the participant was uncomfortable about closing the door of the room where the interview took place. Later she learnt from one of her clergy colleagues that male clergy are not really allowed to be alone in a room with a woman. While this was an important assumption within the researcher's understanding of confidentiality practice in social work, it was debatable in the context of the Church's Pastoral Standards.
- The layout of the interview schedule had to be adapted to ensure a more logical flow of questioning.
- Instead of giving an overview of the researcher's experience of the phenomenon, participants had to be asked to share an overview of their life as priests starting from their actual ordination leading into them sharing about the communities which they worked in.
- The researcher had to be clear about the desired response to the question of the link between Christianity and domestic violence.

The value of the pilot study related to restructuring of the interview guide. This was indeed a trial run for the researcher and helped to defuse some of her own anxieties relating to the study. Through this process, the researcher was able to test the possible kind of responses to

the type of questions she wanted to address. It also indicated to the researcher when probing for more in-depth explanations were necessary.

- **Interviewing techniques used**

The process of data collection during the study involved in-depth interviews with 10 individuals. During the introductory pleasantries, the researcher followed an inductive approach by orientating participants with the interview process, clarifying research goals and reminding them that they could withdraw from the process at any stage. Participants were also assured that their anonymity would be protected.

De Vos *et al.* (2005:288-289) refer to a number of interviewing techniques which the researcher found incredibly useful during the interviews with participants, such as:

- *Start with questions that are not controversial.* The researcher started off by asking participants to share information about themselves relating to when they were ordained and the communities in which they ministered.

- *"Funnel" questions from general to specific, from broad to specific.* Participants were then asked to define domestic violence, then more specific questions around examples of domestic violence helped to get a clearer understanding of what participants meant.

- *Return to incomplete points.* The researcher sometimes had to gently encourage some participants to finish what they were saying which helped to retain the focus on a particular point.

- *Speculation type of question.* An example of this type of question used was something like "I'm not sure do you think there is a link between patriarchy, Christianity and the domestic violence? This kind of question really did help reluctant participants to open up.

- *Encourage a free range but maintain control* – Because it was clear that most participants had not done any debriefing on their interventions with victims and perpetrators, they sometimes needed to share and express their emotions. Some participants also sometimes felt that they needed to offer a sermon on certain misinterpreted teachings of the Church. By maintaining control of the interview process, it was necessary to redirect certain questions.

It was particularly necessary to monitor the effect of the interview on the participant. Some participants shared their personal stories relating to the phenomenon. The researcher acknowledged this personal sharing and gently managed to pull them back into their role and back to the focus of the research.

Other techniques proposed by De Vos *et al.* (2005:288-289) which were used by the researcher were; to avoid leading questions, to be alert, and to follow your hunches.

- **Communication Techniques used**

De Vos *et al.* (2005:289) argue that active interviewing is not confined to asking questions and recording answers, it relies on mutual attentiveness, monitoring and responsiveness. The researcher made use of communication techniques such as nodding, paraphrasing, clarification, reflection, encouragement, comments, spur, listening and probing. All of these techniques helped to build rapport with participants.

It was also necessary at times to allow for silences. Showing interest and active listening through eye-contact and appropriate body language helped to make the participants feel comfortable and safe to talk about their experiences.

- **Pitfalls experienced during interviewing**

Some challenges experienced by the researcher during interviewing relate to:

- Interruptions. In two instances people walked into the rooms where the interview was undertaken. The participants had to address those people first and afterwards returned to the interview. Another participant answered his phone in the middle of the interview. These situations did interfere with the train of thought and the level of intimacy established prior to the interruption.

- The combination of the use of a new tape recorder, outside noise and the participant's uncertainty as to whether to close the door or not, all made it harder for the researcher to create the conducive atmosphere in this one instance. During this interview the participant did not keep eye contact and seemed very tense for most of the interview. He was often very vague in his responses and the researcher had to constantly ask for clarity.

- Teaching and Preaching. Some participants were going off into sermons on some of the interview questions and the researcher had to redirect them to focus on the question. The researcher sometimes felt awkward in having to stop some participants to get them back on track or cutting them short; but it was done with great sensitivity which enhanced the rapport.

De Vos *et al.* (2005:292) refer to May's definition in Morse (1991:189) and quotes "Semi-structured interviews are defined as those organized around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth". They explain that semi-structured interviews generally last for a considerable amount of time and can become intense and involved, depending on the particular topic (De Vos *et al.* (2005:297). It is for this reason that the researcher was particularly alert and used her observation and facilitation skills and guided participants through the interview.

As much as the interview took an ordinary conversational style, the questions were focused to ensure that the interviews gave the specific information required for the purpose of the study (De Vos *et al.* 2005:297).

- **Researcher's observations and experiences:**

The pilot study really helped to defuse the researcher's own feelings of anxiety to enter the field. The researcher became more and more comfortable with the interview process as time went by.

With reference to the researcher/participant relationship, the researcher aimed to maintain a balance between formality and informality. A certain formality in dress, demeanour and speech helped the participants to place the researcher in the role of a "scientific" person who asks very personal questions out of not personal, but professional curiosity. This formality also helps to reassure the participant that the researcher can be trusted to maintain the confidentiality promised to him/her (McCracken, 1988:26). This was particularly obvious to the researcher as she observed the phases of the individual interviews. The more safe participants felt, the more they revealed.

McCracken further advises that the researcher be careful to establish a relationship of substance with participants. He warns against the possibility of going too far and allowing the intimacy to obscure or complicate the task at hand. My sense is that I developed good rapport with all participants, although in isolated instances, I did feel uncomfortable with the inappropriate way that I was addressed by some male participants. To support the researcher in this regard, supervision and debriefing helped a great deal.

The researcher recognizes that she was sometimes more careful not to be misunderstood by male participants on questions relating to root causes of domestic violence. It was even worse during interviews with white male participants. In retrospect, I know now that it had to do with my own cultural issues but also a deep rooted impression that white men are intelligent and one should not ask them "silly questions". I was shocked when I made this realization about myself which was still embedded in the impact of apartheid on my psyche to some degree. I was even more surprised by the openness in which these participants responded to the questions.

Another observation made was that I felt generally more comfortable interviewing the female participants and that I had no issues with the white females at all.

Black participants were more generous in expressing their views on controversial issues such as teachings of the church. Coloured participants were much more reserved and often felt the need to explain or give a different interpretation to these teachings. White female participants were very outspoken about issues of teachings and misinterpretation of scriptures while white male participants were generally reserved in their position.

The researcher was sensitive to the intellectual and emotional demands that qualitative interviews can have on participants. To ensure that participants did not feel victimized by the interview process, the researcher closely observed participants energy levels and body language throughout the interview.

As much as this study was to learn from participants about their experiences in dealing with domestic violence, it also served in many ways as an enlightening experience for the researcher. Most of the time, I walked away from interviews feeling more inspired to pursue

my work in this particular field. A moment of sadness was experienced when the participant who has been involved in this work in the church, indicated that she has become disillusioned and was ready to get out of this work.

The overarching feeling that I experienced during the data collection process was satisfaction and a hunger for more information to deepen my understanding of the phenomenon as experienced by clergy.

2.4.4 Data analysis

It was hard for the researcher to fix the analysis process to a particular tradition. Quoting from Huberman and Miles (1994), Creswell (1998:142) confirms that data analysis is not off-the-shelf; it is rather custom-built, revised and "choreographed". While it is true that the analysis process evolves in the field, Creswell (1998:142) asserts that the analysis process confirms to a general contour which is best represented in a spiral image. According to this data analysis spiral model one enters with data of text or images and exits with an account or narrative.

The researcher followed the proposed guidelines as recorded in Creswell (1994:155 and Creswell (1998:143-144). The following steps in data analysis were observed as recommended by Creswell:

- The researcher transcribed the ten interviews individually.
- The transcription was supplemented with additional data obtained from attitudes, expressions, non-verbal codes and perceptions, after the interview
- The researcher read through the transcripts several times. Emerging themes relating to the research questions were identified by entries in margins.
- The section was coded in themes.
- The researcher checked the transcripts regularly to establish whether new themes emerged or not.
- Themes were grouped together, and categorized by selecting specific wording, Categories were prioritized into central themes and sub-themes.
- Narratives or quotations supporting the categories were identified in the transcripts. These narratives were organized under each of the central and sub-themes.

- The researcher and the coder checked whether re-coding or re-categorization was necessary. After much deliberation, an agreement was reached on themes and sub-themes.

2.4.5   Data verification

Creswell (1998:201-203) highlights eight verification procedures and recommends that at least two of them be used in any given study. I will reflect on two of these procedures as used by this study:

- **Peer review or debriefing**

This procedure provides an external check of the research. According to Guba (1985) as quoted by Creswell (1998:202) the peer debriefer's role is defined as a "devil's advocate" who keeps the researcher honest. The researcher was very aware of her own religious and cultural context in relation to the study and made a conscious effort to ensure trustworthiness by subjecting herself to peer debriefing. This has helped to establish a professional distance to guard against familiarity with participants from her own cultural background and gender orientation. The very fact that participants were chosen from different sexes and cultural backgrounds served as a dynamic tool to assess researcher authenticity with regard to data analysis and management.
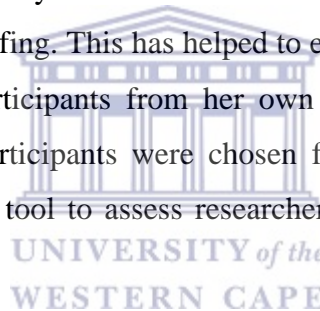
- **Clarifying researcher bias**

From the outset of the study it is important for the reader to understand the researcher's position and any bias or assumptions that impact the inquiry (Merriam, 1988) as quoted by Creswell (1998:202). In the final report, the researcher does mention her past experience of the phenomenon.

A strong awareness of the concept of reflexivity accompanied the researcher into this study; thus lined up were colleagues and the research supervisor for regular debriefing. Appointing a co-coder to check whether similar categories and meanings surfaced during analysis was part of ensuring trustworthiness of the study findings.

De Vos *et al.* (2005:219) indicate that the researcher compares results with the demands and expectations of theory, which serves the additional purpose of verification.

Moustaka, (1994:58) in Creswell (1998) identifies the following questions to assist in data verification which I tried to apply:

- Do the descriptions truly reflect the subjects' actual experience? In this study summaries and reflections have been used to check the researcher's understanding of the responses.

- Is the transcription accurate and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview? Spot checks have been done by the supervisor to ensure that transcriptions truly reflect the participants' responses.

- Has the researcher identified alternatives to the conclusions offered from the analyses? The process of co-coding and peer reviews allowed for checking alternative conclusions and the interpretations and to account for the following question.

- It is possible to go from the general structural description, to the transcriptions and to account for the specific content and connections in the original examples of the experience.

2.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While different authors describe the concept of ethics, De Vos *et al.* (2005:57) note that they stress the same aspects. They define ethics as a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. Ethical guidelines, De Vos *et al.* (2005) assert, serve as standards and a basis upon which each researcher ought to evaluate her/his conduct.

Ely and Anzul (1991) suggest that qualitative research is an ethical endeavour. It is impossible to confine ethical considerations to certain sections; it is present from the start and woven throughout every step of the methodology.

The following ethical considerations have been followed:

- All participants were thoroughly briefed before the interview explaining the goal, procedure and advantages of the study.

- Participants would have the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the interview as participation was completely voluntary.
- Researcher guaranteed the principles of privacy and anonymity.
- All participants were invited to receive a copy of the findings of the study.

The researcher has done her best to uphold the following in reporting on the findings of this study as offered by De Vos *et al.* (2005:66):

- The final written report must be accurate, objective, clear, unambiguous and contain all essential information.
- All forms of emphasis or slanting in order to bias the results are unethical and must be avoided.
- Plagiarism is a serious offence; therefore all due recognition must be given to sources consulted and people who collaborated.
- Shortcomings and errors must be admitted.
- Subjects should be informed about the findings in an objective manner, without offering too many details or impairing the principle of confidentiality; this is a form of recognition and expression of gratitude to the community for their participation.

2.5.1 Summary

This chapter presented an elaborative discussion of and reflection on the research methodology and covered the qualitative approach, the research process, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations of this research project.

The qualitative findings will be discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of the study was to explore the challenges that clergy experience in dealing with domestic violence and the secondary goal was to identify domestic violence training needs of clergy.

For the purposes of this study a semi-structured interview guide was compiled. The questions were verbally posed and were open-ended to facilitate free flowing responses. The following question themes guided the interviews:

- How participants define domestic violence.
- How participants understand and explain the root causes of domestic violence.
- Participants' experiences of intervention with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Guidelines offered during theological training and / or by the church for clergy in dealing with domestic violence intervention.
- Participants' suggestions for domestic violence training and professional support for clergy.

Data was analyzed thematically, per question theme, as explained in Chapter 1. This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the research findings as derived from the semi-structured interviews.

3.1.1 Biographical information of participants

Participants were purposely chosen to represent culturally the three primary racial groups in the Western Cape. All ten participants were selected from the Cape Town Diocese of the Anglican Church with permission from the Archbishop. The priests selected for the study comprised of both men and women. The following is a breakdown of their biographical information:

The female priests comprised of one Black, one Coloured and two White participants all aged between mid 40's to early 60's. The number of years in the ordained ministry ranged from 3 - 15 years. The male participants comprised of two Black, two Coloured and two White participants aging from late thirties to late fifties. The number of years in ordained ministry ranged from 5-23 years. All participants had working experience as a parish priest in both some poor socio-economic communities, as well as very affluent communities and all have been exposed to congregants from the three racial groups represented in the Western Cape.

3.2   DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The discussion that follows will be based on the central themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data, starting with first ideas and experiences that emerged spontaneously. Findings of literature relating to these will be compared to findings of this study.

The following table is presented for structuring the discussion of the findings. The structure will indicate that there is an interdependence and overlap of themes and sub-themes of the findings.

TABLE 3a

SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE FIRST QUESTION

First theme:
Multifaceted oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour
Sub-themes.:
• **Emotional and Psychological Control**
• **Physical Abuse**
• **Financial Control**
• **Sexual Abuse**
Second theme:
Gender and Power Issues
Third theme:
Disease of Silence

3.2.1 First Question Theme: Definitions/understanding of domestic violence

3.2.1.1 *Multifaceted oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour*

In response to the first question several participants spontaneously referred to "oppressing and controlling behaviour**".** The discussion to follow is presented according to participants prioritizing of the aspects of oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour.

- **Emotional and Psychological Control**

Participants explained their perceptions and understanding of domestic violence firstly and foremost in terms of oppressing and controlling behaviour by means of emotional degrading, verbal abuse and threats. The following quotes illustrate:

> *"She's got a wonderful home, she doesn't need anything, but she's got no power, nothing to say. She cannot say anything she cannot make a suggestion cannot she cannot do anything she has to ask him her husband whether she can go to the shop whether she can do anything"*

> *"Domestic violence comes out of an unstable relationship...whereby the one side is oppressed...the father is ruling the family".*

> *"There's emotional abuse which is just belittling. 'You useless rubbish' and just the kind of awful attacks".*

> *"There's no respect within the family, because the father talks down at the mother in the presence of the children".*

> "*It is experienced from somebody in the family. There is aggression and the wrong use of power or of authority...it doesn't always to go to beatings or throwing things or the actual violence which leaves marks on the body".*

> *"...Verbal abuse, a lot. Emotional abuse, a lot. She will be held responsible by the husband for whatever goes wrong not only within the household but also if he watches TV for argument's sake and something is being said by whoever on TV that he disagrees with; he would take it out on her".*

Literature reviewed confirms that psychological and emotional abuse as a prominent feature in violence against women, which is often dominated by the theme of control. Paymar

(2000:83) writes that emotional abuse within the context of battering is a powerful psychological weapon designed to cause pain, depersonalize the victim, and increase power for the batterer. Men who batter almost always make dehumanizing comments before assaulting their partners.

Ganley (1995:19) highlights that psychological abuse include: threats of violence and harm, attacks against property or pets and other acts of intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, and use of the children. Such control is enforced via direct and indirect means. Ganley (1996:20) describes emotional abuse as a tactic of control that consists of a wide variety of verbal attacks against the victim's worth as an individual or role as a parent, family member, friend, co-worker, or community worker.

Pence and Paymar (1993:112) explains that emotional abuse is any attempt to make your partner feel bad about herself or any attack on her self-esteem. Amongst the examples of such abuse they refer to include calling her names like slut, bitch, whore. They explain (1993:111) that abusive men rarely refer to their partners by name – it is "old lady", "woman", "bitch", "the wife" and other terms. This is one way of objectifying her – to make her less than human and, therefore, deserving of scorn. If she is not a person, she is easier to control.

According to the South African Domestic Violence Act No.116 of 1998, psychological abuse refers to "a pattern of degrading or humiliating conduct" towards a complainant. It includes: repeated insults, ridicule or name-calling; repeated threats to cause emotional pain; or the repeated exhibition of obsessive possessiveness or jealousy, such as to constitute a serious invasion of the complainant's privacy, liberty, integrity or security.

This kind of violence results in a profound state of dependence, severe anguish and disintegration of self (Peterson & Green, 1999). Freire (2002:47) asserts that the oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom.

- **Financial control**

To further describe the multifaceted oppressing and controlling behaviour as a form of domestic violence, participants then referred to the financial control which male partners exert on their female partners. It was explained in the following narratives:

"… giving her limited funds to see to all the household bills and needs; and he refuses to disclose what he earns and how he spends the rest of the money".

"There's the whole thing about whose in control of the resources or finances yea, this is my money".

"…man if this woman gets a higher salary than this man then this man feels very much threatened..."

"the wife would be given money would not have no clue of what the husband is earning, would be given only a certain amount to do the housekeeping on. Would be shouted at if she didn't come out on that amount of money per week even if it wasn't enough. And in fact had not a clue the husband would never tell her what he was actually earning. What does he use the rest of his money for, you know? …. That's abuse you know they kind of control in that way".

Literature agrees that financial abuse can be explained as when abusive husbands control all the finances and allocates funds to his wife at his discretion. In this way wives are kept financially dependent. Financial control can be viewed as a structural constraint, which keeps women from leaving abusive relationships (Ponton, 2002). Pence and Paymar (1993:152) assert that economic abuse is using control of the family income or limiting your partner's access to money to keep her dependent on you or to get your own way. Their examples of such financial abuse or control includes giving her an allowance, not letting her know about or have access to family income. Paymar (2000:168) confirms that controlling the money usually gives a person more authority in the relationship. Victims of domestic violence often report that besides the fear of threatened violence, what kept them locked in an abusive relationship was their lack of financial resources.

- **Physical abuse and control**

While a number of participants referred to physical abuse as a form of domestic violence**,** only isolated examples of cases were mentioned from personal experience. In explaining how physical abuse manifests itself, some participants spoke about "*kicking, slapping, hitting, beating and shaking,* to define physical controlling behaviour and abuse.

> *"I want to understand by violence actual unrestraint physical aggression. A woman shaken, a woman knocked to the floor, a child beaten"*

> *"My gut feeling would say when a husband you know lashes out at his wife, hits his wife, it is physical abuse"*

> *"...I found the woman on the floor and this man was physically kicking when I came he stopped and he ran away..."*

> *"...people would often say that my husband he does this and this, he hits me but at least he brings the money back at the end of the day".*

Literature suggests that many men use physical violence infrequently but abuse women by resorting to other overt and covert behaviours including intimidation. According to Pence and Paymar (1993:98) physical abuse is the use of any physical force against your partner intended to make her afraid or to hurt her. Examples of such abuse include pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping, punching, kicking which confirm what participants regarded as physical abuse and control. Wyatt (1997:184) added that pregnancy did not stop abusive men. In fact the beatings increased if she could not have sex whenever he wanted to. Such relationships are very dangerous for women and in many ways battered women feel captive in abusive relationships.

- **Sexual abuse**

A number of participants mentioned that sexual abuse was also a form of domestic violence but only one mentioned the following as an example:

> *"…a young girl probably in her early twenties and she was basically abducted by some young man in the township and taken to a hokkie and kept there for a weekend and whether he was raping her whether she was a girlfriend, he was grabbing her; but the impression that I got from the parents was that he basically abducted her and taken her to the hokkie and he had intercourse with her for the whole weekend…"*

Other participants just mentioned examples of sexual abuse as referring to:

> *"… rape, child sexual abuse* as forms of domestic violence.

Pence and Paymar (1993:134-135) argue that batterers often demand to have sex with their partners after an abusive incident. For many women sex after battering is further degradation – the act solidifies his power. Sexual abuse is an attempt to break her will and spirit.

Sexual abuse incorporates an array of acts, which have common underlying sexual content. It can take on the form of visual, verbal and or physical assaults. In the context of an abusive relationship, sexual violence is often in the form of rape or sexual assault. According to Londt (2004:64) some abusers use sexual violence as a primary choice of intimidation and harm to batter their victims. Sexual battering may include pressured sex when the victim does not want sex, coerced sex by manipulation or threat as well as physical forced sex. Victims may also be forced to engage in sexual activities, which they experience, as humiliating, painful or unnatural, by the perpetrator. Referring to her work with some victims, they have recalled that their perpetrators have refused to wear condoms despite the fact that they engaged in high risk sex with sex workers or multiple partners. These victims are sometimes also forced to have sex with third parties or face the risk of being beaten and humiliated (2003:24).

With reference to literature reviewed, according to Johnsson-Latham (2005:42) the boundary between violence and oppression tends to be indistinct. Open violence, he says, is often relatively easy to detect as a result of the injuries it causes. Oppression, he writes, is more difficult to define but in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, it may be said to include such things as "threats, taunts, ridicule, abusive treatment, arbitrary punishment and violations of privacy, etc".

3.2.1.2 *Gender and power issues*

Domestic violence was also regarded as controlling and abusive behaviour of males toward their intimate female partners. For the purpose of this study this concept refers to gender-based violence. Experts in the field argue that domestic violence is almost always gendered. Most activists seek to include all acts or omissions by men that cause harm to women because of their gender status (Abrahams, 1997) as cited in Heise, Raikes, Watts and Zwi (1994:3). In 1993, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women tried to encompass a wide range of aspects in its definition of gender-based violence. It refers to any act that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including

threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. The term gender refers to a set of qualities and behaviours expected from a female or male by society (http://www.engenderhealth.org/wh/sg/egwhat.html 2006/04/25 16H40).

While participants acknowledged that domestic violence is also when a female partner abuses her male partner and that it can also happen in same-sex relationships; most participants recalled their experiences of domestic violence to be primarily male violence on their female intimate partners. Here follows some narratives which explain this understanding:

> *"Women are at the receiving end of that violence is normally the norm and the pattern that males are the perpetrators of violence at home".*

> *"The experiences that I've been personally involved in have been the male against the female".*

> *"It's mostly the men that are abusing the women – their wives".*

In summary, participants mainly referred to domestic violence within the context of husband-wife marriage relationship. According to Glanz and Spiegel (1996:5) in contemporary South Africa women are perceived as the natural objects of male violence and aggression, particularly within the confines of the home.

In a multicultural society like South Africa, cultural difference between ethnic groups renders different perspectives on many issues including domestic violence. The challenge for South African activists is that not much research has been done to establish culturally competent understandings of explaining family violence in our country. Literature reviewed confirm that violence in the family always involves the abuse of power and control to hurt, shame, or humiliate another person (Nason-Clark, 1997; Brown & Bohn, 1989).

3.2.1.3 Disease of silence

Domestic violence was also explicitly (by one participant) but also implicitly by others conceptualized as a disease of silence. Silence was referred to in cases where abuse was going on in a home or intimate relationship, but victims or family members do not speak out, or only report it in worst case scenarios:

"I think that to me I mean even within a home where people know what's going on, silence is kept...that is domestic violence".

"In the first place, we have to remember that I said that the church or the people whoever or all of us see the church as sacred. And secondly the women become very fearful to challenge the church and they are prepared to keep quiet all the time".

Secrecy/silence was also related to social status. While most participants acknowledged that domestic violence happens in all types of communities; none of them reported any cases from the white, affluent communities where they had worked. One participant said:

"As far as I can remember (domestic violence) *not in that community- but all I can tell is that the wives are very secretive even if they have many things they will never bring it you know to the fore. But to be honest nothing was ever brought to us. Things just went smooth".*

Participants said that often people would be too ashamed to acknowledge that domestic violence is happening within their homes. Participants who were aware of domestic violence in affluent communities did not address it.

Non-reporting/silence and/or not addressing the topic in a parish, was also interpreted by some participants as "no problem exist". The following narrative explains:

"I think that in a sense this parish is not one that is in the forefront of trying to struggle with domestic violence. We are a settled parish by some standards, we may have problems in this parish with people who already have enough, wanting more. If you go to some other parishes you may find that the issue of domestic violence just overwhelms the priest. Whereas I'm not overwhelmed by it".

In summary, the female priests interviewed seemed to have more victims coming to them than the male priests. A few male priests indicated that victims would normally come to them as a response to a sermon or when they have already decided to leave the relationship.

Although most of the participants were exposed to a cross-cultural, affluent as well as very poor socio-economic communities; their understandings and definitions were mainly framed from their limited encounters within the "coloured" and "black" poor socio-economic

community experiences. They indicated that in the more affluent communities, domestic violence was not reported often because of the shame factor that is related to it and it is normally kept very private.

With reference to literature reviewed, Fortune and Enger (2005:2) confirm that it is either by its silence or its instruction, that the church has too often communicated to battered women that they should stay in abusive relationships, try to be better wives, and "forgive and forget". To batterers, they say, the church has communicated that their efforts to control their wives or girlfriends are justified because women are to be subject to men in all things (Ephesians 5:22-24, *The Holy Bible*, New International Version, 1984:1071). Denial and silence in religious communities about wife abuse, not only immobilize religious victims, according to Nason-Clark (2004:4), but inadvertently encourage the behaviour of the perpetrator.

As indicated by some participants in this study, literature confirms that when domestic violence is absent from religious discourse, victims keep silent. Nason-Clark (2004:2) confirms that "shame, embarrassment, guilt and fear have kept and continue to keep many women from telling anyone else what takes place within the four walls of their homes. Abused women have often blamed themselves for being poor wives or mothers. They have excused their husbands' behaviour. They have hoped or prayed for change".

In line with this study, literature seems to suggest that many pastors report that they never hear about family violence from the members of their congregation and are never called upon to deal with these issues. Based on this absence of reported problems and requests for help, their sense is that the problem does not exist (Fortune, 1983; Leehan, 1989; Nason-Clark, 2004). According to Leehan (1989:115) "statistics would suggest that it is practically impossible for a congregation not to have members who are experiencing or at sometime have experienced one of the forms of family violence". He further informs that "those pastors who make a concerted effort to be sensitive to issues of family violence and let their congregations know of their concerns report a tremendous increase in the number of persons seeking help". This point was definitely confirmed by most participants in this study.

Literature also refers to the shame factor and the fact that in many communities the issue of domestic violence is still kept very private (Livingston, 2002; Leehan, 1989; Nason-Clark,

2004). Smullans (2001:16) reiterates it is advisable for effective clergy counselling "…to recognize it is difficult for a woman to acknowledge that she is a victim of abuse. She may not label what happens to her at home as abuse. Woman may be embarrassed, confused or ambivalent about what they are experiencing".

Finally it was also noticed that the female participants had more direct encounters with victims seeking help from them as well as the black male participants who addressed the issue and spent more time supporting victims who approached them for help. To some degree this observation coincides with Taylor, Ellison, Chatters, Levin and Lincoln (2000:77) who report that "although general rates of referrals made and received were low for all clergy, there were important differences by race of involvement in counselling and referrals to mental health community services. Their study confirmed that black clergy saw more cases of family violence often as a result of home visits to members of their congregations.

The following table structure the findings related to the second question about root causes of domestic violence.

TABLE 3b
SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM SECOND QUESTION

First theme:

Patriarchal societal practices and beliefs

Sub-themes

- **Traditional and Cultural Practices**
- **Interpretation of Scripture and Christian Religious Teachings**

Gender Stereotyping and Family Roles

Sub-themes:

● **Role confusion and insecurity**

● **Role modelling**

● **Poverty and family roles**

Violent Society and Apartheid Legacy

3.2.2 Second Question Theme: Root causes of domestic violence

The above table and following discussion reflect the themes that emerged from exploring root causes of domestic violence.

3.2.2.1 Patriarchal societal practices and beliefs

This theme was explicitly identified by several participants and implicitly referred to by others by way of examples they experienced in practice. With reference to literature reviewed, the word *patriarchy* refers to "the complex of ideologies and structures that sustains and perpetuates male control over females" according to Bloomquist as quoted by Brown and Bohn (1989:62).

The three sub-themes that emerged from this central theme were summarized as follows:

- **Traditional and cultural practices**

Giesbrecht and Sevcik (2000:230) explain that culture can be understood as "encompassing the beliefs, values, world views, behavioural norms, and social role expectations that provide direction, purpose, and life-meaning among a particular group". Mayer (2004:49) on the topic of religious and church affiliation as identity shaping elements, noted that religious affiliations in South Africa is as diverse as its languages, ethnicities and the socio-cultures. Officially, the majority of the population subscribes to a Christian faith. Churches and religious communities encompass many religious identities, particularly as they combine numerous special sub-groups and religious orientations. It must be noted that aspects of religious identity in South Africa are closely related to socio-cultural, historic and ethnic backgrounds.

Cultures with a "macho" concept of masculinity coupled with dominance, toughness or male honour were found to have generally higher levels of violence against women according to Campbell (1985) as recorded in Mathison (2002:10).

Pence and Paymar (1993:72), with reference to understanding culture in relation to domestic violence and with reference to their work with men who batter, say that critical thinking is reflective – it is critical as opposed to mystical. They explain that we live in a society that uses myth to maintain societal order in what is essentially a dysfunctional culture. They

argue: "To see the world and our culture from a critical mind, we must first separate what is nature – those things made in creation (for some, by the Creator) from what is culture – those things made by humankind. Mystical thinking occurs when people believe that what are cultural phenomena is nature's way. For example, hierarchy as a social order is a cultural pattern".

The following quotes reflect some participants' views on the root causes of domestic violence pertaining to traditional and cultural practices:

"Patriarchy is very evident in our society and is reinforced through culture. Most cultures, religions, I would say, all mankind religions are so in a hierarchical structure it is definitely very open to abuse of power because someone is placed in submission to someone else…"

"…these power relations are given license by culture and religion…we have it in our own scriptures if we go straight to scripture now that we even have scriptures that says wives submit to your husbands I mean it cannot be more clear…
Christianity has been patriarchal in its history but then the whole world was patriarchal in its history and Christianity is always part the world that it is in. But Christianity is the one faith which is saying that human beings are sinful creatures. So when Christianity seems to be part of a patriarchal system it is at the same time the only hope for the patriarchal system. I think that there is a link between Patriarchy and Domestic violence, But I don't think that if you solve the patriarchy thing that you will solve the problem of domestic violence. It is an abuse of power and if women were the chief power in the household we'd find women abusing their power".

"I would think in my interpretation of Jesus I see Jesus criticizing the actual structures and systems. But Paul doesn't and I feel that he was a little confused I don't say that disrespect because he was just a man like we are a human-beings, he was a human-being and he was in a position of transition, which really he was a Jew and then he followed Jesus and he was also leaving some Judaism behind and moving into this new age and a new way of being and so you get things like Paul saying on the one thing I demand women to be quiet and silent in public meetings the next minute if we

believe that Paul wrote, Galatians then he is saying that there is neither Jews...nor gentile men or female".

Two participants spoke extensively about their perceptions of the abuse of lobola in the Xhosa culture as a cause of domestic violence. These were some of their comments on this matter:

"If we take the question of lobola the lobola, it was never meant to be selling ones daughter to another family you know? It is the commitment if you give that la bola to the in-laws, to the parents of your girlfriend you are showing them that I am committing myself to your daughter I want your daughter to be with me for life and in many cases the guy's who is not committed do not conform to this".

With great concern this participant referred to what happens to some young women who marry within the Xhosa culture in the following narrative:

"When this young girl is sent to this new family now the understanding from her own family is she must go and serve those people because those people has given so much on her account. As a result the poor girl cannot even open up her mouth. Okay, let me put an example. I had a wedding in March of this year and unfortunately it was not a couple from my parish. The priest asked me the minister asked me to conduct this so I went in there and I did this wedding. Beautiful wedding; now after 3 months I met this young girl in Claremont I said how are you now – hoe is die trou lewe? And then she started crying and then I wanted to know why and then she said it's hectic. She has now become the slave of the whole family"

"In Khayelitsha for instance you know when a decision has to be taken men will sit out side in the kraal even today though there are no kraals the men must get together and come –come and reach a decision it will be communicated to the women there after which they must accept that utter rubbish"

According to Dr Nokuzola Mndende (*Mail & Guardian*, April 13-20, 2006:19) labola is aimed at building relationships between two families, especially to protect the children who will be the product of these two families. She argues that another misconception which is always attacked by feminists, regarding labola is that women are being sold. In their research,

she says, they never mention that the bride brings possessions from her homestead to her new home. She continues her argument that the African Traditional Religion does not discriminate against women. In pre-colonial Africa there was clear and distinct gender differentiation in terms of roles. As a strategy for enforcing stability, peace and harmony, Africans had evolved a system of defining what a man was and could do, and what a woman was and could do. Both patriarchal and matriarchal societies had – and some still have today – clearly defined gender roles. Each society, in order to justify its customs, invoked the sanction of ancestors.

According to Bloomquist as quoted by Brown and Bohn (1989:62), "violence against women can be seen as the outgrowth of patriarchal social constructs that define the relationships between women and men as one of subordination and domination. This historically created gender hierarchy of males over females function as if it were natural". She continues to assert that it is "this control-over mandate within patriarchy that makes it prone to violence".

Literature reveals that patriarchal culture and gender-biased interpretation of Scripture has sometimes led to a distorted view of male headship in some homes (Bowman, 1994).

While some participants in this study highlighted specific problems with the misuse of cultural traditions, Londt (2004:99) in addressing cultural explanations as another set of causal theories in emerging African literature on gender based violence refers to the Population Reports (John Hopkin School of Public Health, 1999) which note that although culture can aggravate women's vulnerability, it can also serve as a creative resource for intervention. She then goes on to cite that this report makes reference to several cultural traditions such as public shaming or community healing that can be mobilized as resources to confront abuse.

In the case of religion, Johnsson-Latham (2005:44) writes, things like "culture", "tradition" and "attitudes", are often interpreted by men and they tend to be "man-made" constructs of gender stereotypes complete with rules on how people are to behave, dress and relate to one another. He also notes that reports of patriarchal violence often make reference to the power structure under which women and men are allotted different roles – far exceeding their biological ones – and which means they enjoy different rights as regards things like chastity, ownership, inheritance, education, careers and so forth. Johnsson-Latham (2005:44) also

refers to Lars Jalmert, a Swedish researcher specializing in men's studies who summarized what many reports reflect*: "that men are not afraid of losing their honour but of losing their power, their prestige and their position of superiority and the service that goes with it".*

- **Interpretation of Scripture and Christian religious teachings**

At this point in the discussion, I wish to refer to the Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia's definition of religion, which is "commonly defined as the belief in the divine, as dealing with the supernatural, or sacred that results in worship; that worship itself; the institutional or culturally-bound expression of that worship; or some combination of these."

With reference to the Religious Tolerance website, Christian, by definition includes any group or individual who seriously, devoutly, prayerfully describes themselves as Christian. The website further explains that Christians follow the teachings of and about Yeshua of Nazareth, commonly referred to as Jesus Christ. (Jesus is the Greek form of Yeshua; Christ is Greek for "the Messiah" or "anointed one"). Most Christians regard Him as the Son of God. They further believe that He is God, the second in the Trinity (The Trinity consists of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three separate persons, all eternal, all omnipresent, who form a single, unified deity.).
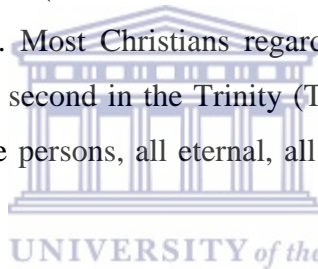
Participants were of the opinion that some interpretations and teaching about the role of men and women in marriage are out of context and may reinforce domestic violence.

With reference to the link between Christianity, patriarchy and domestic violence, one participant said:

> "*That's* (patriarchy) *the act of a human sin. It's not the act of a colonial or a freedom fighter or doesn't matter what you are. And I think that's where Christianity has got something to say and I don't think it's really fair to say that Christianity has brought patriarchal attitudes when they came to this country because anybody who came to this country 300 years ago came from a patriarchal society. It wasn't because they were Christians".*

One participant argued that it is the strong masculine images used for God in the writings of Christian Theology that is the foundation to all these problems that Christianity faces. This line of thought was also picked up from another participant who said:

> "*I believe that the Bible was mostly written by men. And the Bible has a very strong patriarchal uhmm tendency within what is being written. So it is being written from a male perspective and it's been written to promote the male. And that kind of thing has been picked up by the church and has been taught by the church throughout the ages. I'm certain that a lot of what is going on in the mind of the male as him being the superior being, comes from the teaching from the church and perhaps we need to revisit and undo and unlearn that and to teach the proper theology with regard to what we believe a man and a woman ought to be and how they ought to relate to one another within a relationship or within a household.*"

Many participants expressed concern about what they referred to as the "wrong" interpretation of the Bible and the church's teachings. The following narrative explains this concern:

> "*Without responsible interpretation, that is open for abuse and is abuse. I had first hand knowledge of that we did a march in Mitchell's Plain one day we marched with the mayor of Cape Town and I remember it was a dismal rainy day. I remember everyone was feeling very miserable, it was... it was against violence against women we had all these men with their little brown bottles hanging over the fences shouting things at us like... "die vrou* (referring to the female priest) *ken nie haar Bybel nie*".

Stephanie Vermeulen in an provocative article in the *Mail & Guardian*, April 13-20, 2006:27), writes "'From woman is the beginning of sin and because of her all must die' (Ecclesiasticus 25:24 Apocrapha). This is one example of the about 200 biblical verses that belittle and demean women. Throughout Abrahamic doctrine women are treated as weak, inferior, dependent and unclean. In Proverbs men are explicitly instructed: 'Spend not all your energy on women, nor your loins on these destroyers of kings' (31:3). The Old Testament is littered with warnings against keeping the company of all manner of females ranging from virgins and whores to singing girls. Religious followers would argue that biblical quotes cannot be understood out of context, but the point is that it is the context itself that

consistently debases the female gender". Vermeulen then referred to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who 150 years ago challenged the idea that utterances of men like Abraham and Moses were divinely inspired.

Another participant said:

"But the church has made at times women to feel withdrawn because there's such a lot said in the Bible where the woman must know she's inferior to the man. Take Adam and Eve. Eve is sometimes labelled as the one who bullied Adam around and here comes someone to say here's an apple. And the woman sees herself as one who enticed or tempted the man. So she always feels guilty. You'll see always an abused woman when you counsel them, she feels guilty. She takes all the guilt. You see where it comes from. I'm telling you it comes from evil. Paul was a very good theologian with a very good insight a clever somebody, but Paul could not culturally take the role played by women at that time".

Another participant recalled what he had heard from the preaching of a pastor, not from the Anglican Church:

"I know of one comment that I picked up was that a man has the right to discipline his wife it's a kind of distorted model of headship and authority. Some might, the person who have said that will say God gives me that right. It's a God-given authority to man. Uhmm and I don't know whether in past years that has been a model preached and yet I have been at services not Anglican services I'm glad to say but others where this kind of very hierarchical model has been presented as the Bible says and I ya in the last ten years I've been in that kind of service where I thought buddy if this is what you see as the way for your people, that's certainly not how I see it at all. So I think it's uhmm it probably does have quite a role"

Most participants had very strong opinions against and mixed feelings about Saint Paul's teachings about women's role in the church and the home as reflected in the Book of Ephesians, and how this impacts on the issue of men's tendency to abuse their power and authority.

Christian teachings on wife submission to husband dominance were a big discussion which was riddled with dilemmas for participants. They really struggled as to how a scripture like Ephesians 5:22-24 (*The Holy Bible*, New International Version, 1984:1071) should be interpreted or whether it should be included in the prayer book as a reading for marriage ceremonies if it causes such problems within families.

One participant said:

> "*Those days it was quite right for those days. Woman you must respect your husband and do what he says you must do and do it. Yes, it is fine, it is fine. There must at least be somebody who is responsible for this home but today it is no more as strong as it was before and it causes a friction. We don't really have to change the Bible itself. I respect the Bible a thousand times. But there are things which we as priests have to learn and come together and see how we can work on this portion if we feel that it encourages this* (domestic violence) *to happen*".

Another participant said:

> "I*t shouldn't be read as far as I'm concern because it's it was applicable to Paul and them Jews at that time… it's totally off it shouldn't be read at the weddings. What I'm trying to say that passage was relevant for Paul because Paul was a traditional Jew who believed in the Jewish traditions. That passage of the Ephesians is a fulfilment of what's being put down in the African or Xhosa culture so when the men listen to that nonsense, they say hey wow what else do you want and the wives feel that we are nothing*".

Yet another participant explained:

> "*Paul was more referring to leadership in terms of the spirituality as husband why don't you set the tone and do the prayers and lead your people to church and to do scripture and to have a relationship with God. And many men don't do that you know. Many men don't do that. And I think that is what he referred to when he gives a so called leadership role to the men. And I would call it a leadership role and not a bossy role cause there is a difference between the two*".

Another participant said:

> *"Our theology is a distorted theology, we portray a very passive picture of Christianity. Mary as at the annunciation who is epitomized as the first Christian first of the disciples. Her prayer I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to Your will; has been portrayed as the ultimate Christian prayer. I agree this is a prayer that we do pray. But it is also a very passive thing okay I just let everything happen and I don't think that's helpful for men. I don't think that it's helpful for men I think it's not helpful for I think men do need to come to a point where they say Lord I give you my life, you know, but do we portray that in a way that actually disempowers people women as well as men? Well particularly men now. We almost emasculate them. Almost remove from them the need for them to get up and do the things that men would say make us male i.e. strength and courage and initiative drive determination not that those are exclusive reserved for men, but those are things that men would see as very important. To what extent does the Christian gospel the way that it is portrayed uhmm just say those things, there's no place for them?... I look at our churches and I say where are our men? Where do our men fit in what can they contribute because a lot of the way that we portray things are very feelly feelly. It's good it's nice for women where is it for men? Do men feel comfortable here at all".*

In summary, participants were indeed very concerned about what was regarded as the misinterpretation of Scripture and the church's teachings on submission in relation to how most men abuse their power and the victimization of women. While most participants were passionate in their discussion and some defending these scriptures and teachings, there were no indications of special commitment to officially address these matters of great concern. In the absence of clear guidelines from the church on such teachings, each participant passionately related their own interpretations on the Ephesians 5:22 (*The Holy Bible*, New International Version, 1984:1071) reading and teachings on submission.

Participants were equally concerned about the patriarchal nature of Christianity and the Scriptures and its impact on issues relating to the abuse of power by men over women. Again

participants seemed overwhelmed by this issue and sometimes became either disillusioned or defensive on this matter.

Leehan (1989:81-82) explains how religious battered women struggle with some teachings within the Judeo-Christian tradition. The common interpretation and application of both Hebrew and Christian scriptures affirms the superiority of husbands over their wives. One of the common scriptural words for marriage *(baal)* focuses on the notion of ownership and lordship. Genesis 3:16 (*The Holy Bible*, New International Version, 1984:3) tells women very clearly that your husband 'shall rule over you' and the very favourite Christian passage is Paul's admonition 'wives, be subject to your husbands' Ephesians 5:22 (*The Holy Bible*, New International Version, 1984:1071).

McMullen (2003:197) acknowledges that the church has special problems when it tries to address the matter of domestic violence. She argues that violence against family members is related to power and patriarchy, and solutions to the problem relate to the Christian understanding of the nature of the marriage bond, the confidentiality of the confessional and our understanding of the nature of God. She further asserts that concepts like patriarchy, the sacramental nature of marriage (especially its indissolubility), male headship, and the confidentiality of the confessional can all feed the problem of domestic violence rather than offering a solution.

McMullen (2003:197) in her writings confirm what one of the participants referred to when he spoke about patriarchy, when she writes: "Patriarchy is the abuse of powering the structures of society. Western society, until quite recently, accepted patriarchal patterns as a means of organizing society and understood God's relationship with humanity through that lens". She continues and refers to Brian Wren's portrait of a god seen through a patriarchal lens and writes:

> *"How would patriarchal society see God? The god of patriarchy would be seen as the one who is in control of everything. Though this god might allow a lot of freedom, he would be very much in command a patriarchal god would relate to his creatures by command and decree, expecting a response of submission and obedience, giving*

protection in exchange for obedience and either punishment or mercy when obedience was denied".

It is not difficult to see how the early church accepted society's pattern and used patriarchy as the principle on which to organize the budding Christian society. Teaching that a man was the head of the family as Christ is the head of the church would raise no eyebrows then, because men were used to behaving in their own family in a similar way to a patriarchal god".

Literature contributes that certain aspects of the gender-based culture of fundamentalist Protestant Christianity, such as the fundamentalist practice of male headship of the family, can be used to reinforce an abuser's behaviour and a victim's submission to the abuse (Foss & Warnke, 2003).

According to Fortune and Enger (2005:2) both the Torah and Christian Bible (*The Holy Bible*, New International Version, 1984) contain story after story which reflect violence against women e.g. Dinah in Genesis 34, Tamar in 2 Samuel 13, the Levite's concubine in Judges 19, Jepthah's daughter in Judges 11, Vashti in Esther 1, Suzannah in Daniel 13, and probably the persistent widow in Luke 18.

These authors continue to argue that Christianity like Judaism and Islam all state as a core value to the preservation of marriage and the family; but its underlying purpose behind the application of texts and teachings on marriage and family often has been the preservation of male control of women and children within a patriarchal system. Thus we have seen centuries of what they call "religion in service to patriarchy" rather than serving as a challenge to the dominant social norms which have perpetuated violence against women. Fortune and Enger (2005:3) assert that men have been permitted to "discipline" their wives and their children all for the "good of the family". They then refer to the fact that Christian history is filled with examples of church leaders justifying abuse of women by men; with specific reference to church fathers like Martin Luther who unapologetically described their own physical violence towards their wives.

3.2.2.2   Gender stereotyping and family roles

As indicated in 3.2.1.b., participants understood domestic violence as an issue of gender and more specifically male violence against females. When discussing root causes of domestic violence, they reiterated stereotypical perceptions of gender as a core contributor. Gender stereotyping refers to the assumptions that women and men should play different roles in society.

In the USA as in South Africa, statistics confirm that intimate partner violence involves female victims. Drumm et al (2003:3) confirms that according to the Crime Data Brief from the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2001 approximately 85% of victims of intimate partner violence were women.

Under this central theme participants referred to role modelling and societal norms with regards to male dominance/female submission, role insecurity/confusion when men are challenged, and role models for children as root causes for domestic violence. Participants spoke about this aspect in a very detached manner.

One female participant, referring to a march in which she participated, quoted remarks that were made by some of the men on the sidewalk and said:

> "ja julle kan maar march nou, maar vanaand sal julle julle pak slae kry en ja julle wil julle kos h^e'kom huis toe jy kry pak slae met jou kos" and you know it was blatant and also because I had a collar on "die vrou (referring to the female priest) ken nie haar bybel nie".

> "dan onse mense wat s^e hy is die dak in ons gemeenskap, hy is die man in ander-woorde hy bied beskerming"

Another participant said:

> "I remember a man saying to me I don't remember whether he spoke about himself or about somebody else. He was saying just talking about him and his wife or somebody else and his wife he had no right to hit his wife on church property; because he was in the church he shouldn't have been beating his wife if it was off the property, it was somehow okay. It was that kind of acknowledgement that it wasn't great but also there

was the attitude that you shouldn't do those things in public, but there may be times when it is acceptable but in private. And it wasn't there or subsequent to that that one heard the attitude quite strongly expressed that a man has the right to discipline his wife. That it was right as head of the household and as a husband you do have the right to discipline your wife"

Another participant said:

"it is far greater than just a rule of the fathers and so some of these passages come out of that and says look we want good Christian families so we need order. Because order was of very importance as was shame and honour. Shame and honour were what people lived for. According to in those days, you don't do anything to shame your husband, never".

Another participant said:

"The wife was regarded as property in the Old Testament I know she's listed with the uhmm goods, the man's goods".

Other participants said :

"I think is the inequalities between men's perception and women's perception that we are almost born into a society into a position where men will expect to have their way and women will sometimes will expect that men will have their way. And I think that probably the violence comes when people stand up against that".

"men are brought up to deny the feminine within them and women are almost told to strive for that and so the feminine within society has been oppressed and the feminine I believe there is a number of movements philosophical and spiritual movements that are recognizing that there are an imbalance here".

"I think one of the root causes is the way we have been brought up as men if I look at it from the male's perspective. Who are the one's that are carrying guns, who are the one's who got to be the muscle mania and who are the one's who watch these days who watch the violence on TV. You see the wrestle mania few of those guys and if there are woman they just push aside and all those kind of things. Which is instilled in

our minds, it's that kind of things. It's all that little things that we sometimes don't take note of and looking at women, we are in control of them".

Many religions advocate a patriarchal system that upholds men as the head of the church and as head of the household. Brinkerhoff, Grandin and Lupri (1992) as quoted by Rotunda *et al.* (2004:354), "defines religious patriarchy as a set of personal, marital, and religious relationships that allow men to have power over women. Some religious organizations and writings may espouse patriarchal views which, when coupled with the batterer's interpretation of those views, may increase the use of controlling tactics and the likelihood that victims remain in potentially dangerous relationships".

Foss and Warnke (2003:16) continue to argue that "When the definition of culture is expanded to include religious affiliation, it is clear that gender roles are strongly affected by religious beliefs and religious community. The relationship then between gender and religious culture is mediated by religious and gender beliefs within family systems. According to the Cultural Context Model, domestic violence can be described as both individual-level and family-level expressions of gender-based oppression, which is derived in part from cultural gender roles inequity. To eliminate violence against women in the home, traditional gender and social roles need to be challenged on multiple individual, family and cultural-group and societal-environmental levels".

Although multiple theories seek to explain spousal assault, Giesbrecht and Sevcik (2000:229) with reference to the United Nations Office at Vienna (1989:31), concluded that "…it is generally accepted that gender inequality and the structure of relationships are important causal factors. A patriarchal hierarchy, and thereby a power differential can encourage a tacit acceptance by the community of abusive contact within the home…. (that) becomes manifest in societal attitudes that allow husbands to view their wives as chattels and that stress the privacy and autonomy of the family".

Dobash and Dobash (1979:33-34) in reviewing the record of western civilization reached the following conclusion: "The seeds of wife beating lie in the subordination of females and their subjection to male authority and control. The relationship between women and men has been institutionalized in the structure of the patriarchal family and is supported by the economic

and political institutions; and by the belief system, including a religious one that makes such relationships seem natural, morally just and sacred. This structure and ideology can be seen most starkly in the records of two societies that provided the roots of our cultural legacy, the Romans and the early Christians".

Booth (1998:6), in describing men's roles in colonial families in terms of patriarchy, argues that a patriarchal authority was itself a product of specific historical circumstances. The Protestant Reformation augmented paternal authority in the home, giving the fathers for example, a legal right to determine which men could court his daughters and a legal responsibility to give or withhold consent from a child's marriage. Throughout the English-speaking world, certain basic patriarchal principles were taken for granted. Hierarchy was essential to successful household functioning, fathers and husbands were responsible for directing family activities, and wives and children were subject to men's authority.

Because husbands and fathers were thought to play a crucial role in the maintenance of social order, local government extended to them explicit and far-reaching responsibilities to oversee all aspects of their dependents' lives. For example, colonial law required fathers to lead their families in prayer, teach children and servants, place children in a lawful calling or occupation, oversee children's choice of a spouse, and, above all, discipline wayward or disorderly household members. In addition, authorities required household heads to correct and punish abusive or insubordinate wives, disruptive children, and unruly servants in order to maintain orderly households (Norton, 1996; Ozment, 1983).

Alsdurf and Alsdurf (1989:92-93) argue that family abuse of any sort is "the abuse of power" where a more powerful person takes advantage of a less powerful one. They then refer to the US nationwide study of family violence by sociologists Murray Straus, Richard Gelles and Suzanne Steinmetz that revealed that wife beating is "much more common in homes where power is concentrated in the hands of the husband. The least amount of battering occurs in democratic homes. These researchers found that violence is used by many husbands as a means of legitimizing their authority and establishing their place as a family decision-maker.

- **Role insecurity/confusion**

Peterson and Green (1999:1-2) referring to Epstein *et al.* (1993), writes that family roles are the recurrent patterns of behaviour by which individuals fulfil family functions and needs. Along with roles come certain social and family expectations for how those roles should be fulfilled. He then goes on to explain role allocation as being the assignment of responsibilities within a family what enables the family to function properly. Role accountability, Peterson explains, refers to a family member's sense of responsibility for completing the tasks of an assigned role.

One participant expressed frustration about women empowerment and implied that it is because women have been empowered that men struggle with role confusion. According to him even the Bible does not portray very positive role models for men. Men react with defence mechanisms like anger and power when their traditional roles are being threatened.

One participant said:

> "*It is because of the focus in the last few years on abuse of power and men abusing power and all the rest of it and the whole women's. The tremendous emphasis there has been and quite rightly so on women becoming empowered and claiming their space and not simply being a kind of doormat. I think for many men there's perhaps the uncertainty as to where men fit in. Where what is the image of the godly man?*"

Another participant said:

> "*Because what is happening is that you see yourself as being dominant and then because of human nature or your upbringing, when anybody challenges your status or your position as being dominant, as a man, now you start to feel that you need to defend your position. And the only way that we know how to defend our position is to fight for it*"

Another participant said:

> "*Uhhmm, it is the same in the life of the church, cause I think that men are very conscious of being told the whole time that men are abusers, men are doing this, men are doing that. In fact the Catholic church is has start a very good to counteract that. It's called Five-out-of-six. Because otherwise the negative things 1/6 of the men in the*

country abuse women. Five out of six, don't. So it is a positive way of putting it. And I
think that we so often focus on the negative that we don't know how to affirm".

Another participant said the following:

"I heard one quite sad comment in the harbour. Most of our faithful parishioners are
women. A number of them are widowed or divorced or they come without their
husbands. And there was one comment made which was quoted to me by one of the
men who no longer comes because he has left his wife. He said this of St. Simon's is a
church that supports the women because it takes the women's part the whole time. The
women dominated, uhmm ya, so ya we have a number of very strong women and not
very strong male leaders, but some strong male leaders".

According to Booth (1998:4) scholars devised a variety of stage theories and functionalist
models describing long-term trends in the history of fatherhood. These frameworks tended to
either romanticize or demonize men's familial roles in the past, depicting the pre-industrial
era as a time when men were intensely and actively involved in family life, especially in
childrearing, or, conversely, as a period when men were domestic patriarchs who dominated
their children and tyrannized their wives. These and other models argue that industrialization
fundamentally weakened men's familial roles or homogenize men's experience across class,
ethnic, or geographical lines.

A journalist, Michael Morris (*Cape Argus,* 2005) in his article on "Academic essays probe
crisis in masculinity as men lose it" reported the following:

"A lot of South African men are battling to figure out who they are and how they are
meant to behave. Rapid and far-reaching social, legal and economic changes –
especially in the past 10 years – have pulled the rug of masculine certainty from under
their feet, and some are reacting violently".

Paymar (2000:23) says that men are socialized to view so-called "feminine" characteristics –
sensitivity and the expression of feelings – with hostility. These qualities are perceived as
opposite to what is required to be a real man, or a superman. At an early age, boys begin to
reject their gentler feelings or any characteristics that may make them seem vulnerable.
Failure to live up to the male persona may bring scorn and ridicule by their peers, so boys

learn quickly to adapt. By the time they are adults, men have learnt to deny sensitive feelings or have lost touch with them altogether.

According to Rotunda *et al.* (2004:355) when one is exposed to family-orientated patriarchal sermons on a frequent basis, the importance and acceptance of social roles will be reinforced.

- **Role modelling**

Literature refers to the intergenerational transmission of violence which according to Markowitz (2001:207) is rooted in Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. This theory holds that through learning processes, witnessing and experiencing violence as a child leads to greater use of violence as an adult. According to Gibson *et al.* (2002) as referred to by Mathison (2002:10), many men experience a sense of powerlessness and perceived emasculinity; and that the high prevalence of domestic and sexual violence are attributed to displacement of aggression, taking the form of assertion of power over the weaker.

Participants also felt domestic violence is perpetuated by the way parents and society model the role of men and women within family context. Men are portrayed as dominant and aggressive and women as submissive. This was expressed in the following narratives:

> *"Having had bad role models of very aggressive sometimes very abusive sometimes father figures or parents in one's own family of origin, so you bring those, it perpetuates, it carries on down generations".*

> *"The way we have been brought up as men if I look at it from the male's perspective. Who are the one's that are carrying guns, who are the one's who got to be the muscle mania and who are the one's who watch these days who watch the violence on TV. You see the wrestle mania few of those guys and if there are woman they just push aside and all those kind of things".*

> *"What the person has seen also in society the male, die-die die man is baas you know in terms of the dominant role".*

> *"And men are brought up to deny the feminine within them and women are almost told to strive for that and so the feminine within society has been oppressed and the*

feminine I believe there is a number of movements philosophical and spiritual movements that are recognizing that there are an imbalance here".

"We could look at the male role models in his life when he was a child. How did his father behave towards women and towards children towards other people? How did his uncles behave, how did his older brother behave and he could have learnt from these examples"

Expanding the concept of family interventions to include contextual influences, Almeida *et al.* (1998) as quoted in Foss and Warnke (2003:16) address the connection between culture, gender, family processes and the individual. They explain that gender-based oppression as it is exercised at multiple levels, including family, in cultural groups, and in broader societal environments. According to the Cultural Context Model, they say "domestic violence can be described as both individual-level, and family-level expressions of gender-based oppression, which is derived in part from cultural gender role inequity. To eliminate violence against women in the home, traditional gender and social roles need to be challenged at multiple individual, family and cultural-group and societal-environmental levels".

There is some limited evidence that points to learned attitudes as one factor that may help explain why being subject to violence as a child leads to violence as an adult as revealed by Markowitz (2001:207). According to Keef'O (1998) as cited in Markowitz (2001:208), experiencing violence as a child and acceptance of violence in dating relationships were related to violence in dating relationships. However these studies did not show whether attitudes mediated the relationship between childhood experience and adult violence.

According to Wyatt (1997:183) African American women who reported that as children their mothers disciplined them by scolding, spanking, beating, or otherwise physically punishing them were also likely to report being in relationships where their partners threw, smashed, hit or kick things or physically attacked them.

Family violence and tolerance for family violence tend to be passed on down through generations according to McGoldrick *et al.* (1999) as recorded by Foss and Warnke (2003:15). They further assert that this intergenerational transmission occurs through social learning within both the family and the larger cultural contexts that permit family violence.

- **Poverty and economic hardships**

The view was expressed that men who have lost their jobs and/or trying to make a living in conditions of poverty, sometimes struggle with feelings of inferiority and inadequacy relating to their traditional dominant role and react with extreme aggression. Compare the following narrative:

"The things like lack of education, or poverty or job loss or a man feeling frustrated that he is not so good as the next man or being belittled either at work or by his wife or by his children or not feeling that he's being affirmed that he is control and he reacts with that".

"I mean in terms of shelter for many people they rather would uh... work through suffer, suffer this violence because the issue there would then be is where they going to be on the streets"

"Being unemployed is an incredibly disempowering experience. Your frustration builds and you end up taking it out on your family. Uhmm having a lot of anger for various things and again not knowing how to deal with it adequately."

"Uhmm, powerless women also who don't have options to go elsewhere to move out or to say you don't do that or to stand up to their men … Women who don't have a job can't move out, there's no where to go, she must just lump it. She ends up enduring it for years and years, because there is no other option. There is no other option as far as they see it. So powerless, uneducated women, women with lack of opportunities, lack of skills, you just can't move out because you've got your five kids. What do you do, where do you go? Where can you go there is no housing there's no place out here, you can't go to your mother, she only has one room. Ya, just women with very very few options".

Glanz and Spiegel (1996:5) raises the extent to which the social and spatial structuring produced by the apartheid system has created circumstances in which familial violence has pervaded everyday life in the shanty townships.

Although literature suggests that improvement in socioeconomic resources has been a linked to interruption in perpetration of domestic violence (Aldorando & Kantor, 1997 in Drumm *et*

al., 2003:2), other studies indicate that domestic violence is present across all social, economic, ethnic and religious groups according to Berry (2000) in Drumm *et al.* (2003:3).

3.2.2.3 *Violent society and Apartheid legacy*

Under this central theme, the legacy of violence of an apartheid South Africa was referred to as another root cause for domestic violence by some participants. Another participant referred to the legacy of violence during the apartheid regime in South Africa as a contributing factor, which was expressed in the following narrative:

> "S*ociety has given to us in… the pattern that society has given to us- you see uhmm again this issue may be that the male is the major perpetrator of violence within the home".*

> *"War in this world is men who fight and then later they only realize that they can negotiate. So there are all those kind of things of sorting things with violence. And I am not sure whether it is something that is in our genes where we don't like to take the long route*."

> *"Another reason that in the old South Africa your male person and female person coming from a disadvantage community uhmm being employed by the whites uhmm boss, was always a boy even though he was an adult. He was always seen as a boy uhmm and so he was never given recognition for what he was. He was never acknowledged as an adult human being, he was always a boy. He was always made to be feel lesser than and so maybe he need somewhere an outlet where he could demonstrate himself as something more than just a lesser human being and perhaps the house would have been the only space that was left for him; maybe even her to be able to prove to maybe him or herself that I am more than what other people at my work especially think in terms of my humanness. So it could be a means of affirming my maleness, my superiority that I can be in charge and sometimes in many cases I would think that people go over to a level where they abuse to demonstrate their superiority to the other person."*

In order to understand domestic violence within the South African context, one has to take into consideration its colonial and apartheid history as well the recent transition to democratic government (Vetten, 2000). The cruelty of the previous apartheid system has serious implications for the social conditions of South Africa's disadvantaged people.

Literature reviewed stress that historical events, such as the legacy of apartheid, contribute to health and social problems, disease and suffering (Mayer, 2004; Vetten, 2000). A culture of violence linked to the colonial heritage wherein Africans were always treated coercively and violently by their colonizers, is attributed to the high incidence of domestic violence on the African continent according to (Bowman, 2003) as reported by Londt (2004:100). Bowman (2003) also refers to the lengthy civil wars and repressive practices of many post-colonial regimes which continue this culture of violence.

Oliver (2000:536) confirms that racial discrimination in the form of blocked access to educational and employment opportunities have produced a chronic frustration syndrome among black males. Subsequently, anger toward society and one self is translated into violent attacks directed toward wives and girlfriends. Oliver refers to the gender entrapment theory by Ritchie (1996) to explain partner abuse. Ritchie has introduced this concept to describe what happens to women who are marginalized in the public sphere because of race, ethnicity, gender and class. According to Ritchie, dual exposure to racism and sexism render many poor black women vulnerable to partner abuse.

Within the South African context then it is argued that within an oppressive patriarchal system like apartheid South Africa, women and more especially poor black women, had the least power and were the most oppressed and exploited Londt (2004:8).

TABLE 3c

SUMMARY OF CENTRAL THEMES AND SUB-THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE THIRD QUESTION

First theme:

Intervention with Victims

 Sub-themes:

- **Counselling**

- **Referrals**

- **Challenges Experienced**

Second theme:

Intervention with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Sub-themes:

*   **Counselling**

*   **Pastoral Home Visits**

*   **Challenges**

3.2.3   Third Question Theme: Participants intervention with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence

3.2.3.1   Intervention with victims

It must be noted that participants responded to these questions based on very limited direct intervention with victims and abusers of domestic violence. It is also important to note that the female participants had between 5 and 15 years of priesthood experience since ordination. Only one male priest had 4 years experience, while the rest had between 10–22 years of experience as ordained priests and in the ministry. All participants have been pastoring various parishes.

Under this central theme the researcher will reflect on two sub-themes i.e. Intervention with victims and Intervention with abusers as it emerged from the data collected. None of the participants referred any of the abusers for professional help; yet those who intervened with

the victims often also referred her for professional counselling. A few participants were aware of domestic violence, but did not intervene.

Some participants acknowledged that they are not trained as counsellors and struggled to give victims the proper help. Generally participants were sensitive and acknowledged that they did not know enough about domestic violence. At the same time it sometimes felt as if participants would prefer to keep the victim more responsible for her situation. Although this was not overtly expressed, it came through in the manner in which they spoke about some of the cases that they have dealt with.

According to most participants, victims approached female priests easier because they are more approachable and three out of the four women priests interviewed have specific community work experience relating to domestic violence and HIV & AIDS.

The female participants recalled that they were often approached by victims seeking support while the male participants seemed to experience very little direct interaction with victims. Two participants mentioned that in their view victims tend to be more comfortable in approaching female clergy about the abuse; while three male priests recalled that it had to do with the priest's approachability and many said that if there was a sermon on the topic victims have stepped forward to talk about their abuse.

One participant recalled:

> "...women say I can't leave this man cause I made promises before God and now if the church is enabling them do get out of this abusive relationship it's almost like putting God on their side and say it's ok. Because one of the other obstacles that they don't leave is because God will leave them too if they do the wrong thing."

It appeared that participants really felt sorry for the victim, but some were also a bit frustrated that they only come at the end when they have already decided to divorce their abusive partner. Another very conflicting response here was participants' admiration and / or confusion with women's ability to endure suffering. Some participants would not even use the word victim and spoke about people and the researcher had to from time to time specify who they were talking about.

- **Counselling**

Most participants reported that they generally played a passive/supportive role by offering the victims a listening ear, a safe space to talk about her situation, biblical support and prayer in some instances and general spiritual accompaniment and the assurance of future availability whenever she needs to talk.

Three participants indicated that they at times challenged the victim's interpretations of the biblical teachings on issues such as submission, divorce and what they understand the bible to say about them breaking their marital vows. The following narrative is an example:

> *"Very often the church says to the woman you can't leave him because that's a sin. Cause you are breaking up the marriage which is a sacrament of God. But when you can say to them listen, he poured petrol around your shack and wanted to burn you alive with your child, he broke the marriage. In the sight of God, the marriage is now broken and now it's just the paper work. It's quite liberating for her".*

Another participant explained how he supported a victim in the following narrative:

> *"I'm thinking particularly of the woman in R whose husband was alcoholic and the cycle in that house went - heavy drinking- violence and a beating- sobering up- being sorry asking forgiveness- she's saying you're forgiven- and then the cycle would start again. And she gave up her friends she gave up her friends she withdrew into herself she didn't go out because of this situation and trusting when she trusted enough to speak about it she needed her self-esteem built. And what the break through was in that particular case was when she got strong enough in herself to invite her friends for tea while her husband was drunk on the floor. She said to me I must protect him when he is like that. And I said to her no you don't protect him like that He's sick. You bring your friends in you have tea. And she did. And when he came too and sobered up he discovered that he was lying on the floor while her friends were there having tea. And she did not make excuses for him. She said my husband is not well and that was a turn around and it restored her confidence. And after that her husband had to change, cause I think husbands change when the situations get too tough for them".*

Some participants' frustrations for the women's late reporting of the domestic violence was sensed as they spoke about the fact that there is not much that they could do when she had already decided to leave her partner. One participant said that she would never encourage a woman to divorce her partner and also indicated that she would not comment on a victim's decision to divorce.

Although she was the only one who expressed her stance, it would appear from the researcher's observations with other participants that they really struggled to encourage victims to leave their abusive relationships. Another participant sounded really frustrated with victims who come right at the end when they have already decided to divorce their abusive partners. He felt that at that point there is nothing much that he as a clergyman could do because the victim had made up her mind. He would then just hear her out and not encourage her one way or the other.

- **Referrals**

In some cases participants would not engage with the victim and just refer them either to a female priest, the church's community worker or social work services for intervention. Some participants referred victims and later followed up to ensure that the victim has been helped as explained in this narrative:

> *"I think I said to you at times one would feel really bad about the profession (priesthood) itself. I'm the minister and I'm put into this situation you want to give assistance to the sad women but all I could do was to refer the sad women into the relevant professional places like FAMSA or social worker. I would take to the sad women to FAMSA I would take her to the social workers and the social workers could see what they can do about it".*

One participant gave food parcels, arranged job creation opportunities and continued to follow up with home visits.

A few participants offered legal advice and options and offered practical help for the victim to obtain protection orders.

- **Intervention challenges**

Most male participants struggled listening to the victims' reports of domestic violence. Those participants who have walked in on situations of physical violence reported feeling very angry at the abuser as explained in the following narrative:

> *"Do I have, as a man myself, a right to listen to this because it is someone of my own species who has done this to this woman? That's my first challenge. And then the second thing now something always come into my mind because honestly it makes me furious. How do I respond to this? This is not on. I cannot allow this to happen to her".*

> *"I think they come to me because I'm a priest. They forget about me being a man now. And then to me now I say to them while I'm a priest, I'm also a man. This is also what that man has done means also that I've done it too".*

Three male priests indicated that they are *not equipped to deal with the victim in domestic violence;* they are trained as priests and not counsellors. When victims do not want the priest to approach the perpetrator out of fear for her life – priests did not know what to do.

All female participants have offered counselling to the victims. Except for one, all the others had also referred victims to counselling and legal advice services. Except for one female participant, the others were generally outspoken about encouraging victims to leave their abusive relationships if that was what victims wanted. Victims struggled with Scriptural issues and the church's teachings relating to submission and their perceived responsibility to keep the family together.

The following narratives explain some challenges experienced by participants when dealing with victims of domestic violence:

> *"Well the couple of things I do say is that when a man hits you and calls you names and abuses you in different ways like that, then and there's a pattern, then that man has divorced you. He has broken the oneness of the bond the oneness that you and he made it before God. If you go and get divorce in the courts you are just legalizing what he already has done. So you are not divorcing this man by his behaviour he*

divorced you by disrespecting you. Now that has been a very liberating thing for a lot of women".

"Well it is an extremely complex situation when you are abused by the person that you trust and love and so you'd often you get mixed messages from survivors or people in abuse. They don't want the abuse, but they don't also want to leave because they believe in eternal hope that the promises made to them after the abuse are true and that those promises things are going to be wonderful from now on. So it is an extremely challenging walk with somebody whose in a abusive relationship because whilst I might want to say get out, it's got to be the decision of the person who is in that situation. And often the line that I take is I show them windows of hope choices are choices that we need to be made but it could open up a new life. But then ultimately the decision has to be that person's. You can't say look you've got to get out of here and I'm gonna get you out there tonight. Sometimes you know that this person's life is in danger and you strongly advise her, but you can never ever force somebody because they can turn around and say she told me to leave my husband. So what we try and do is show women that there is a life afterward and show them some of the steps they need to take to make that life happen. And then the practical things come in to play. The church is not equipped really for on a national base the bases is where do I go to? Who will look after my children? Where will I find money? Cause you know money is always a problem what is my family going to say? What happens if he finds me? –Those kind of practical questions are also very difficult to navigate around cause we don't have the structures here the state doesn't have them the church doesn't have them and so those are incredible to try and assists somebody to get out of a abusive relationship".

In summary, participants have expressed mixed feelings and views on their intervention with victims of domestic violence. They struggled with their concern for the hurting victims and the theological perspectives on some of the church's teachings and how this is internalized by victims.

Literature reviewed suggests that when confronted with families locked in the cycle of violence, religious advisers need to reassess the form of their commitment to the sanctity of

marriage. According to Leehan (1989:75) as quoted in Londt (2004) advisers need to focus on marriage as an institution for the mutual welfare, personal development, and spiritual growth of all the members. They must admit that abusive families are insidious institutions that destroy their members – the abuser as well as the abused – physically, emotionally and spiritually. Pastors must admit that such marriages cannot be saved merely through more prayer, greatest patience, and further sacrifices by the victims, but only by dramatic changes on the part of the abuser. Accepting such premises means that religious advisers need to reassess their interpretation and application of some critical scriptural passages: those dealing with the place and responsibilities of children in the family, forms of discipline, the role of women in marriage, and the factors involved in the indissolubility of marriage.

From the limited research available on clergy's response to domestic violence, Alsdurf and Alsdurf (1989) reported that many pastors were opposed to advising victims to seek legal actions against their partners, such as calling the police or getting a restraining order. One third of the respondents in their study thought that the abuse would have to be life threatening to justify separation from the abuser. They also confirmed that clergy reported feeling concern for battered women, but they were torn by the theological perspectives that counter the concern.

Literature reviewed confirms that it is embarrassing for victims to talk about their personal involvement in domestic violence, which makes them reluctant to discuss this with either pastors or family members. When they manage to muster enough courage to talk, a listening ear is the best reaction (Albright, 2004).

Similarly Martin (1989) in Rotunda *et al.* (2004:356) found that 54% of the 143 clergy members in their study had counselled female victims, and those with more liberal theological views counselled more victims of domestic violence than clergy from more conservative or traditional theologies. Their study also found that clergy across denominations did not take a proactive role in addressing domestic violence.

In 1994, Wood and McHugh reported that 22% of the responding clergy members of their study also reported ambivalence about theological ideals (e.g. maintaining a marriage) and victim issues. These pastors reported difficulty in advising separation or divorce as opposed

to trying to maintain the marriage commitment. The Joint Churches Domestic Violence Prevention Project, Queensland (1994:7) acknowledges that marriage vows are probably the most important and for Christians the most sacred promises ever taken. The Christian tradition understands marriage as a covenant relationship entered into freely by two parties and it is based upon commitment and trust. To think about getting a divorce, much less going for one, is very difficult for many women who have been raised as Christians. The words of Jesus about marriage and divorce seem very strict. Matthew's gospel (19:6) reports Jesus as saying "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (*The Holy Bible*, New International Version 1984:900). According to this project committee, even a woman who believes strongly that the Family Court cannot dissolve a bond of marriage, will seek a divorce for the legal separation it gives her from an abusive husband (1994:8).

Leehan (1989:87) still on the issue of sanctity of marriage argues that the important role of the family is not to be denied or in any way minimized. However, the fact of family violence and particularly spouse abuse, requires that we look closely at what we consider the essence of a family and what truly constitutes a marriage. A key characteristic of marriage in the Judeo-Christian tradition is faithfulness.
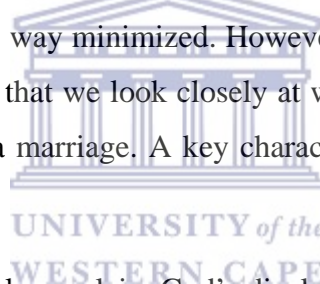
The prophet Malachi does not merely proclaim God's displeasure with divorce, he argues, the Lord also says, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment … So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith" (Malachi 2:16, *The Holy Bible*, New International Version 1984:877). According to Leehan (1989:87), Jesus' admonition about divorce is made in the context of his concern for the misuse of divorce proceedings for reasons other than unfaithfulness. Paul's advice to married couples in I Corinthians chapter 7, is intended to encourage those experiencing difficulties to seek every possible source of reconciliation. None of these scriptural admonitions insist that marriages be maintained in the face of threats to life and limb for one of the members. The most common justification for divorce is adultery. However, we must ask whether family violence is not also a form of unfaithfulness.

3.2.3.2 Intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence

All participants echoed that they never had an abuser approaching them for help except in the one case after a sermon that an abuser approached the participant admitting his abusive behaviour. In this case, the abuser wanted the participant to help him reconcile with his ex-wife who had divorced him.

In the limited cases where abusers were being dealt with, it was often on the victim's request for a home visit. Participants also experienced that abusers did expect them to pray and get the wife to forgive them and reconcile with them. In the few confrontational interactions by the participant with the abuser; one abuser responded with complete silence and passive compliance with whatever the priest was saying, another stopped hitting the wife but continued his verbal abuse in the presence of the priest and apologized later.

One participant voiced this as a very *passive approach* to dealing with abusers:

> *"We are helpless in front of these things. And it may be our very helplessness which enables some people to turn, because we don't come at them as either the law you stop or else we'll arrest you; and we don't come at them as trained psychologists and say you've got this syndrome and that problem. We just come and say we are people whom the Lord has loved and that is all that we can do. I don't think you can professionally train priests in counselling techniques too far.*
> *Because the priesthood is the presence of the One who allowed Himself to be crucified. That's crazy but I believe it".*

Three participants recalled isolated instances where they proceeded to call the police and helped the victim to get legal help. One female priest visited an abuser in prison on request by the victim on two occasions and offered counselling in a way that he understood that he had to take responsibility for his abusive behaviour.

There also seemed to be conflicting responses as some participants in the researcher's view made lots of excuses for the abuser and struggled with gender equality, passive Christian teachings and its impact on the male identity:

"We portray a very passive picture of Christianity and I don't think that's helpful for men. We almost emasculate them. Almost removes from them the need for them to get up and go the things that men would say make us male i.e. strength and courage and initiative drive determination not that those are exclusive reserved for men, but those are things that men would see as very important".

- **Counselling**

Marriage and couple counselling seemed to be a trend with the participants who did have dealings with abusers of domestic violence, except for the one who is working in the field of Domestic Violence. All participants mentioned that it is hard to get the abuser to step forward for help. One participant said:

"For a man to face the priest is to know that the male priest is looking into his soul cause he is a man as well. For a woman to face the priest, is in a sense when the priest is male is there's a complimentary. She is going to be almost protected in a sense where as a man is likely to be confronted".

One participant was part of a multi-disciplinary team who dealt with the court case of an abuser; he spoke of how he offered spiritual counselling and support but kept the abuser responsible for his abusive behaviour. In this case the abuser had to attend a men's programme for abusers at FAMSA and this participant had to also submit reports to the court about the abuser's progress. According to this participant, the experience of working closely with the justice system, social workers and the church, made a lot of sense.

- **Pastoral home visits**

Participants generally depended on the victims to arrange appointments with the abuser or for home visits where abuser would be present. The general consensus reached from the participants contributions, is that only in very few cases did participants have direct intervention with abusers.

"Certainly I'll go, but how do I address the issue that technically I don't know anything about?"

"If you go to this individual houses of domestic violence you are exposed to something else. Then you start asking yourself 'God have you called me for these things?' You ask yourself coming - if you see a man molesting his wife".

Some participants said that it is very hard to reach abusers who are not church members, while another said that when he was called in during a domestic violence episode, he told the abuser (a non-church member) that he is taking him to the police because he had no right to assault his parishioner.

While clergy themselves are the first to admit that they lack sufficient training in pastoral counselling, the need of parishioners has taken precedence over their feelings of personal inadequacy. Given the level and nature of violence in relationships both within and beyond faith communities, the task facing the pastoral counsellor is immense Nason-Clark (1997:107).
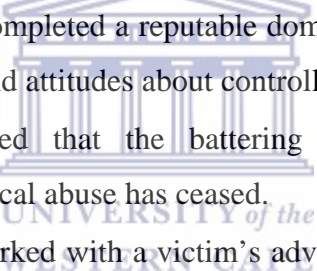
In the following narrative the participant did take action, reported the case to the police and ensured that the participant takes responsibility for his action:

"What I did with this man I took him to the police station a case was opened they wanted the lady to with be I went back and took the lady and then I made a follow up of the case and today they're my closes friends cause I mean to leave them at the police station with the social workers and the court that wouldn't sort the problem but I made a follow up I went to court and the court was also aware that there was Umfundis involved and they started asking about the social workers was also present we had to deal with this as a team he went for counselling FAMSA. He went in and there was reconciliation and there was improvement and so we would write reports as well and whatever there want to appear in this I don't know if there's this Family Court we had to write reports I had to write my report on the religious part of it and today they happy".

Some participants noted that abusers would act indifferent when confronted, blame their wives or they will verbalize compliance out of their respect for the priest but they never seemed to own up to their abusive behaviour patterns.

The one abuser who was visited in prison clearly expected that the priest would help him to be released and was very upset and blamed the female priest for siding with his wife. This participant did however recall that the abuser did come around just before he was released from prison after serving his full term. There was no follow up to indicate how his imprisonment for domestic violence influenced his relationship with his wife.

Paymar (2000:226-227) asserts that marriage counselling can be dangerous to a victim of spousal abuse. If a woman freely discusses relationship issues before important criteria are met, she risks physical and emotional retribution by the man who abused her. With reference to the argument that marriage counselling is never appropriate in abuse cases, Paymar believe that this position is misguided because some couples do stay together. He suggests that practitioners should follow clear guidelines and agencies should adopt strict policies to protect victims. Marriage counselling should be provided only when the following criteria have been met:

- The man has successfully completed a reputable domestic abuse program that focuses on changing sexist beliefs and attitudes about controlling women.
- A practitioner is convinced that the battering – violence, coercion, threats, intimidation, and psychological abuse has ceased.
- The battered woman has worked with a victim's advocate and has developed a safety plan to get help if her partner becomes abusive.
- The battered woman feels safe.
- The practitioner has discussed the risks associated with marriage counseling privately with the woman, and feels relatively sure abusive acts will not take plac as the result of these sessions.

Again under this theme there was mixed reactions by participants. While some felt very strongly about protecting the victim and thus confronting the abuser, other participants responded in a very passive manner. Participants did report that dealing with issues of domestic violence and especially with the abuser is very challenging based on how the priest is perceived by the abuser. In some cases the challenges experienced by participants were also related to their own personal struggle with their maleness in the face of men abusing women.

A few subtle excuses for men's abusive behaviour were also observed by the researcher especially when some participants referred to how women are supposed to support their husbands and not make them feel like they are as bad as those men who abuse their wives and children.

> **"***If you study ten men and find that ten of them are abusers, it would be fare to say that a lot of men are abusers. But you couldn't go to one man and say because a lot of men are abusers he is an abuser and when the TV shows that another child is been raped by some man or another this and men have been doing these HMM some women now are in actual fact pinning that on their own man which puts him in a position where he can simply can do nothing about it. He feels rejected because of what men outside are doing. And there's no way that he can break through that. He cannot break through that. He depends on his wife to "say that's terrible thank the Lord that you don't do that". He can respond to that".*

- **Challenges Faced by Participants in Dealing with Abusers**

Some participants really struggled with their identity as males when dealing with abusers and expressed emotions of anger towards the abuser. One participant was tempted to hit the abuser and said:

> "*Sometimes you feel like taking part because this man is physically stronger than the women you want to take part but you're restricted".*

Some participants said that they did not know how to respond to abusers. Other participants did not know how to handle the situation when the victim refuses that priest confront her husband because of her fear. Yet other participants said that there is not much that a priest can do if the abuser is not a church member.

Another participant seemed to say that the church has failed the men. In a very sad way he said the following:

> "*I look at our churches and I say: Where are our men? Where do our men fit in what can they contribute because a lot of the way that we portray things are very feelly, feelly. It's good it's nice for women where is it for men? Do men feel comfortable here at all? The tremendous emphasis there has been and quite rightly so on women*

becoming empowered and claiming their space and not simply being a kind of doormat. I think for many men there's perhaps the uncertainty as to where men fit in. Where what is the image of the godly man?"

Responding to violent men is not a strict matter of punishment or reminding them of their sinfulness. In stead the community must find ways of helping the violator to view himself as worthy of love, as respected and cherished by a community. This response is couched within a primary understanding of the potential danger of these men. (Livingston 2002:85). According to Livingston (2002:91), "once the batterer realizes that he has violated his 'lover', he must start on a road of that has no final destination, no final place of rest, no place where he will escape from his responsibility."

In summary it is fair to say that most participants in this study really struggled with exactly what they should be doing for both victims and abusers. Generally participants did not feel equipped on one hand and on another some felt that it was not their job to counsel, yet all of them recognized the problem as serious. Only in a few cases participants seemed to use the opportunity of intervention to address issues of patriarchy, gender inequality, theological and biblical teachings.
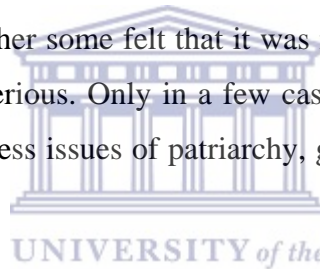
The researcher also got the sense that most of the participants, felt that they are preachers of the Bible and their priestly duties are overwhelming enough as it is. Most of them did not appear to think that they had a crucial role to play in a broader sense to help stop domestic violence, except for the one participant who is directly involved in the field.

Some participants really struggled with their own maleness and often drifted from being a priest to just being a male during the interview. The researcher sometimes had to course direct to ensure that some male participants stayed on track with the study.

During these interventions as recalled by participants it is then clear that they do have a good understanding of domestic violence regarding theoretical information; but their understanding based on their experience is limited to the few cases that have been reported to them. The researcher also observed that in the instances where cases were reported to participants, they would often offer couple counselling which suggest that they perceive domestic violence

sometimes as related to a marital problem and not a problem on its own. There were indeed mixed responses about whether it is really clergy's responsibility to offer domestic violence counselling or other professionals. Some participants, based on their own assessment of the cases presented to them, would either just refer or deal with it as a pastoral matter.

Referring to the challenges faced by clergy in addressing domestic violence, Nason-Clark (1997:105-106) confirms that clergy often find themselves in the cross fire between the ideology of the family the churches hold dear and the reality and persistence of male aggression and abuse. With the demand for counselling services on the increase, many pastors feel stretched beyond their limit to provide pastoral counsel to needy individuals and families on the basis of very poor training.

Participants who are either more experienced in the field or who have a strong focus on pastoral care, make referrals to nonclerical counsellors. This trend is confirmed by Nason-Clark (1997) who also stated that. She also confirmed that contrary to what some might think, clergy appear reluctant to offer direct spiritual counselling to abused women. Nevertheless, clergy are very slow to suggest dissolution of even a violent marriage, preferring instead a temporary separation, followed by counselling and eventual reconciliation. Pastoral counsellors are quite optimistic about the possibility of reform and renewal in an abusive man's life, but their optimism is frequently tempered by the unwillingness of such men to engage in the therapeutic process or to change their behaviour. Under these conditions, many clergy advise permanent separation and divorce.

From this theme, we move on eager to reflect on how participants experienced their theological training in preparing them for dealing with domestic violence.

TABLE 3d

SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM FOURTH QUESTION

First theme:
Participants' Theological Training
Second theme:
Intervention Guidelines offered by Church

3.2.4 Fourth Question Theme: Guidelines offered to Clergy by the Church

The two central themes to be reflected upon under this question theme are the Participants Theological Training and secondly, Intervention Guidelines offered by the Church.

Except for two participants who obtained their theology degree through universities, all the other participants could not recall any specific module or course that dealt specifically with Family and/or Family Violence or any Gender Related issues at the Anglican Church's theological training college.

With reference to the church offering any guidelines, the majority said that there were no official guidelines for clergy to deal with domestic violence. Clergy are basically left to find their own way regarding such issues as domestic violence as reported by all participants. Two participants referred to the church's general pastoral standards for all leaders in ministry in the church as guidelines that are available. It was generally only the female participants who acknowledged the existing Domestic Violence efforts of one of the participants and some male priests did not even mention it until researcher asked specifically. Some of them were unaware of the services offered by this task group in the church and in some instances they blamed the task team for not advertising clearly enough what services they offer. Few participants acknowledged that they know that they could pick up the phone and enquire; but each one of them seemed to work in complete isolation even the ones who knew about the task team.

It was also observed by the researcher that participants seemed to separate the issue of domestic violence from their general work as priests with families within the context of their profession. The fact that they marry couples, and some spoke with great concern about the marital problems that consequently surface, has not moved priests to a place where they feel that this issue requires their informed intervention on a broader scale.

3.2.4.1 Participants' theological training

Based on participants' responses to this question theme, their theological training did not prepare them for dealing with domestic violence. While some felt really overwhelmed when having to deal with domestic violence, and expressed their frustration, others indicated that

clergy have a lot on their plate already. It was mainly since they had the opportunity to speak about this during the interview that it was apparent to the researcher that some of them used the time to debrief. Those who were really drawn into one or two cases sounded exhausted and disillusioned and did say that they did not expect to also have to deal with such issues.

The following narratives give participants' responses:

> *"… most of what we did at the college was more on the theoretical part of the other courses but it would never come to the grass-root level of the you know family life".*

One participant who went to a university for his theological studies, said:

> *"… within our practical theology, we did set things around feminism".*

Except for the few who had community involvement, had some exposure to related training workshops, it would appear that most participants relied on their personal experiences of domestic violence as they grew up or on their general knowledge.

> *"I was prepared and what prepared me more was my nursing background, because I was working with domestic violence"*

> *"I went to Grahamstown for a year to the College of the Transfiguration. And what I was trained for at the seminary there wasn't anything. From my BTh from UNISA there was stuff around the interpretation of scripture which was helpful. It was very liberating".*

In summary, participants all agreed that they basically have to equip themselves and very few of them actually regarded domestic violence as a priority on their full agendas as priests. While some participants reported that their theological training did prepare them, all of them indicated that there was no specific focus on family or marital counselling. The ones, who did have some exposure in their training, were mostly trained at university and not necessarily at the church's theological seminary. Participants were generally reluctant to verbalize the limitations in their training as priests and emphasized that their current workload is overwhelming in itself and that they are not trained counsellors.

3.2.4.2 Intervention Guidelines offered by the Church

The majority of the participants said that the church did not offer any specific guidelines for clergy to deal with domestic violence. Some participants referred to the Standards for Pastoral Care which is a booklet with disciplinary procedures for any leader/minister in the church; which some regarded as the guidelines to be used also when dealing with domestic violence. Only one referred to the Tamar Task Team's training which served as a very useful guideline to her. Except for the women who were aware of this domestic violence task team, other participants only referred to it when the researcher prompted in that direction.

The following comments were made by some participants:

> "I'm trying to think but I can't remember anything. The guidelines that we have been looking for from the church were in this sexuality, homosexuality and what –what not... I should think it's something one acquires on an individual basis".

> "No, I think you have to kind of find out by yourself"

> "I don't think so. We have what we call the pastoral standards which use to be the shepherds of the flock document. But that's more to do it gives very clear guidelines with regards to any people anybody who ministers who ministers within the church in any level of responsibility whether it is a Sunday school teacher, a youth worker or lay minister, bishop or priest or anybody who does anything in the name of the church whether stipendric ordained or lay person or volunteer whatever".

> "What we have not been given is up to date uhmm guidelines as to how to respond to the reality of abuse or DV. Say for example I get a call of DV, please come we have a crisis here uhmm. I would certainly go, I would not be terribly sure what would be the most helpful approach. What I I have heard in my time of clergy who one priest in particular, if he knew that the husband was beating his wife, he'd go and beat the husband. He'd go and take on the husband, ya. So, if you beat your wife, I will come and sort you out, he would he will physically sort him out".

The one participant who had extensive experience in the field said:

> "There are no guidelines in our diocese or in our province of Southern Africa for how to deal with domestic violence there are not any guidelines they don't exist in our

diocese in well when I was ordained in 1993 I found an existing group in the diocese that were dealing with domestic violence. And we started looking at issues and it had no teeth in it had no recognition and it had no say in or help clergy to if somebody looked for help on the matter it would be and in 1996 we took a motion through to the diocese in Cape Town and debated the fact that it was a subject that needed to be addressed and voted that a task team should be set up at the diocese to look at the issues to raise awareness of the issues to get the theological commission to look at some guidelines in writing workshops or whatever and to do training and support for clergy. That's what the out lay of the group was supposed to do. The Archbishop appointed a few people to from the task group the diocese is so huge it goes from Springbok to George and there was this motley group of people trying to do this enormous job without any funding -without any structure because it's not a organization that is recognized by the church like mother union is an organization they have a banking account – they have structures –they have executives etc, this was a task team set out to do a task which was overwhelmingly large didn't have time frames and had no support from the diocese accept to say that they've set it up so then my task group tried in it's own ways to attend to do the task of addressing domestic violence how does one measure ones success I don't know but slowly over the years the clergy got information from this task group send out all kinds of information about domestic violence. We've ran workshops to try and train laity in the local context to deal with domestic violence. We've attempted to also via diocesan synod we got synod to acknowledge the need for all the leaders of the church to be gender sensitized to understand what gender is and understand that the impact gender inequality has on relationships that can be abusive so we did I designed a booklet that the commissioner of gender inequality of the state has endorsed it is a faith based workshop used to raise awareness on gender within the Christian faith because it deals with the bible and gender so that has served as possibly the only kind of guideline unofficial guideline that the clergy in this diocese have … by clergy it wasn't received at all well many of them boycotted it and didn't come more than half of the Archdeacons supposed to contact our office to set up a date in which the Archdeaconries could do the course did not do that the Archbishop sent a letter to all the Archdeacons saying

could you please make contact with the Tamar office set up a date more of half didn't those that did in fact there was an Archdeacon that you might fall into sent none of their churches except one came and they sent their laity and I would put it on record that in that meeting the laity said our priests needs to hear this workshop so she asked the question the clergy did not receive it".

In summary the general response is that neither the theological training prepares clergy for dealing with domestic violence nor does the church offer any specific guidelines. It was very clear that in the absence of guidelines or some official framework for clergy to use when dealing with domestic violence; clergy are left to deal with it in what ever way they deemed fit. This came through very clearly in how participants dealt with victims and abusers of domestic violence, there were no congruent flow each one, depending on their own understanding and theological persuasion dealt with these cases accordingly. In the absence of accountability and debriefing most participants expressed feelings of isolation. Some are hesitant to even preach about it as it may open a can of worms that they are not prepared for.

Literature reviewed confirmed that clergy feel a pressure to keep families intact which is a pressure that is reinforced by the Christian family literature and a theology that emphasizes reconciliation and dramatic change in a believer's life as recorded by Nason-Clark (1997:102). Added to this pressure she writes, is the expectation of many women and men who seek help that clerical intervention will be a "quick fix" for ongoing family difficulties. If they have received training in relationship counselling (and many have not), it ends it tends to focus on strategies for reducing conflict that keep the family together and enrich the family experience.

Findings in this study where participants reported that they are not adequately trained to deal with domestic violence is confirmed in Nason-Clark (1997:102) reports that clergy feel poorly trained to deal with issues involving intense conflict or abuse where keeping the family intact may neither be desirable nor possible.

Literature also confirms that once members of congregations become aware of a pastor's sensitivity, concern and knowledge about domestic violence, they will be anxious to share

their struggles and seek help (Fortune, 1991; Leehan, 1989; Nason-Clark, 1997; Livingston, 2002).

Leehan (1989:116) offer the following as some examples of pastoral responses to domestic violence:

- To acknowledge that they recognize the prevalence of family violence. This can be done in a variety of ways such as acknowledging national observances like National Women's Day, Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign on No Violence Against women and children, International AIDS Day, and so forth.

- Concern for family violence can also be evidenced by the way pastors approach traditional religious and secular celebrations such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, baptism and weddings. Pastors can also open the door to survivors of family violence by the way in which they conduct pre-marital counselling. They should be alert to any indication of violence in the relationship.

- Sensitivity to hints of violence should be part of all pastoral counselling.

Participants did express the need to have such guidelines and the need for the church to review how clergy are trained at theological training institutions.
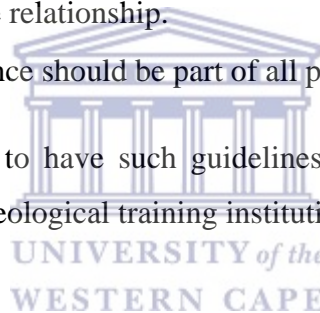
TABLE 3e

SUMMARY OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM FIFTH QUESTION

First theme:
Education and Training
Sub-themes:
*   Domestic Violence Specific Training for Clergy
*   Use Existing Resources & Create Support Services:
Second theme:
Revisit Theological Teachings and Scriptural Interpretations

3.2.5   Fifth Question Theme: How the Church can deal with domestic violence

Participants had much to say about what the church could do to address the challenges faced by domestic violence. The two central themes which emerged included *training and education* and secondly, *revisiting theology and teachings*.

How the church is to deal with the challenges of domestic violence reflected participants' issues of struggle and areas that hampered their effective intervention. They expressed it in the following manner:

3.2.5.1   Education and training

All participants agreed that specific training and education is required to enable priests to deal more effectively with domestic violence. There was a strong feeling that priests should preach about domestic violence more often and also invite professionals in the field to come and speak about it from their pulpits. The following narratives express participants convictions:

> *"I won't pass a month in my sermons without mentioning this violence. I will always make sure that I speak about it and then I think at one stage I was saying, I must have opened a can of worms now cause lots of women are coming out in terms of them speaking to me about It".*

> *"There should also be a stronger emphasis and a scanning of it during pre-marital education. Bishops should make it compulsory for clergy and laity to attend domestic violence training".*

> *"Prevention workshops with men as well as affirming good relationships and positive role models especially for the youth".*

> *"Use the house groups already existing in the church or create commissions to address fears and myths about gender equality and issues of power and abuse of power".*

- **Domestic violence specific training for Clergy**

Participants were asked what they would include in a domestic violence training course for clergy and they responded generously by highlighting the importance that such a training has an educational focus exploring the social context by giving indicators, statistics and inviting victims to come and share their stories, research findings on types of homes where it takes

place, personality profiles of abusers and women's responses, legal options and practical steps to intervene as well as clarifying the role of the priest, police and social workers. The intersection of HIV & AIDS and Domestic Violence, the Bible and gender; and the Bible and relationships should also be explored at such a training. The following narratives explain their views:

> *"… give indicators; explore research findings on types of homes; personality profiles of abusers; women's responses; give social context by giving statistics; educational focus…"*

Other comments about what should be included in such training are:

> *"… the Bible and gender; the Bible and relationships; legal options; practical steps to intervene".*
>
> *"get women to come and share their stories as part of training".*
>
> *"what is the role of the priest, police, social workers and at what point does the priest intervene?".*
>
> *"Address HIV and AIDS and it's link to Domestic Violence".*
>
> *"Create resource material for Sunday school education purposes".*

- **Use existing resources and create support services**

Some participants felt that the church is not using its existing resources on domestic violence effectively and suggested that the Tamar Task teams should be present at all the churches.

Existing institutions like the Mother's Union and others must be enrolled on this issue to ensure family preservation. Furthermore some participants felt that the church needed to create forums for women where they can speak out about the abuse, while another participant suggested that trauma centres must be created. Finally another participant said that the church should help the perpetrator and not cover for him.

3.2.5.2   Revisit theological teachings and Scriptural interpretations

Revisiting the church's patriarchal theology was only mentioned as a priority by two participants, but most of the participants felt that the church needed to urgently look at issues of interpretation of scripture and contextual relevance of its teachings.

"Priests must address the misinterpretation of scripture as well as highlight gender inequality in the Bible".

One participant reported how crucial it is for the church to reflect on its teachings she said:

"Very often the church says to the woman you can't leave him because that's a sin. Cause you are breaking up the marriage which is a sacrament of God. But when you can say to them listen, he poured petrol around your shack and wanted to burn you alive with your child, he broke the marriage. In the sight of God, the marriage is now broken and now it's just the paper work. It's quite liberating for her".

The participant who works in the field felt very strongly that the church needed to change from focusing on a patriarchal theology and emphasise the creation theology of equality as well as focusing more on the Pentecostal doctrine which speaks more about people's oneness through the Spirit in God.

"Challenging the masculine images of God must also happen more often and embracing the feminine images of God would be central to this process of changing our patriarchal perceptions and understandings in our intimate relationships".

All participants referred to the church's traditional misinterpretation of the teaching on submission as something that needs to be revisited. Some participants spoke with some resentment towards Paul's writings and teachings about the role of the woman as subject to men. While many participants found the teachings on submission as problematic, there was no strong commitment to address the matter on a broader platform in the church. Participants acknowledge that in the absence of guidelines, they give counsel and guidance based in their personal interpretation and understanding.

Literature reviewed confirms that the church in its commitment to address domestic violence, can respond via sermons, Sunday School lessons, and informal social interaction. Religious groups can also help define appropriate marital conduct and validate the efforts of partners to fulfil their familial roles. In addition religious communities may offer resources to support committed relationships through classes and seminars, pastoral counselling and other mechanisms that may provide guidance on improving communication and resolving tensions and conflicts (Weaver, 1997).

Gottlieb and Olfson, 1987 as cited in Taylor *et al.* (2000:76) noted that because clergy are a heterogenous group, with respect to education and training, their counselling and service referral practices are not uniform. Friesen, 1988 and Weaver, 1995 (cited in Taylor, 2000:76) confirmed what was found in this study that "specialized training in counselling regarding basic life issues and concerns for example, marital relationship problems, is minimal even among ministers who have pursued postgraduate education.

Literature also confirms that generally clergy are unfamiliar with standard procedures and the availability of services offered at community based organizations. Members of clergy with advanced education and liberal theologies are more likely to make referrals to mental health centres. In contrast, those with less education and who endorse conservative theologies are more likely to treat people themselves as referred to by Taylor *et al.* (2000:76).

In his writings Livingston (2002:93) asserts that the Christian understandings of violence and marriage have perpetuated violence for many couples during the past two millennia. He argues that the "ecclesial community should recognize the dangerous dimensions of its historical claims: 'marriage is a covenant that cannot be broken', 'the man is the head of the home', or 'punishment is acceptable within marriage'". He continues to suggest that the church should rethink the religious bond or sacrament of marriage as a means of addressing the complex character of the interhuman sphere. "It should embrace the idea of a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation as the centre of Christian marriage. It should emphasize the behaviours presented in the Equality Wheel as recorded by Pence & Paymar (1993:109). It should stress the mystery of truly encountering the other, and recognize the possibility that violence in a marriage could dissolve this sacred trust. It is through these revisions of its current understanding of Christian marriage that the church will begin to perform its acts of satisfaction as an institution".

Fortune cautions pastors when called upon to intervene with abusers. She says that from a pastoral perspective, the temptation to skew the justice and forgiveness processes is great because the road to healing and restoration is long and time consuming. The first pastoral encounter may well be when he is arrested or when he approaches the pastor expressing remorse and asking forgiveness. Fortune explains the importance of assuring the offender of

God's forgiveness, praying with him and then most importantly supporting him in taking responsibility for his abusive behaviour by following the process of law if it has reached that stage. Fortune also refers to the offender's religious conversion. An experience of conversion may well be genuine, but should not be used as a reason to avoid the consequences of the offence. If the conversion is a genuine experience, it can become an invaluable resource in the healing and repentance process. Fortune also urges pastors to avoid the temptation of playing the role of mediator. Mediation only becomes a valuable resource to call upon after the violence and abuse have stopped and family members need to resolve division of property, custody, and other such problems. But it should never be used as an intervention to stop domestic violence (1991:176-178).

According to Carlo (2004:3), the church must develop both short-term and long-term approaches in its attempts to promote justice. In the short-term, the safety of the victim and family members must be protected and batterers must be held genuinely accountable for their violent actions. This he suggests can be accomplished first "by listening and believing victims' stories, second by appropriate referral of all family members to agencies poised to provide immediate aid and long-term treatment". Carlo also asserts that "it is equally important for clergy to develop a long-range plan for ministering to the broken by becoming educated about abuse, wrestling with God and scripture, adopting policies that bring God's peace through justice, and training leaders and congregations in implementing an appropriate response".

The church and clergy must look for deeper theological themes and truth to confront domestic violence with authority and love. Speaking directly to ministers, he said "We must seek wisdom and learn, teach and preach against domestic violence from the pulpit with knowledge, understanding, and grace. Domestic violence is not only a physical or social crisis; it is a crisis of the human spirit and soul. It is a fallacy to think that God wants anyone to "just cope" with it.

3.3   SUMMARY

This whole experience of analyzing and engaging with the data was quite an experience for the researcher. The researcher was often really moved and could empathize with the

participants struggles and frustrations with their own limitations when it comes to dealing with domestic violence. While participants had a fair understanding intellectually of the nature of domestic violence, their ignorance about the dynamics did often surface as they reported on their intervention experiences with victims and abusers.

Participants' definition of domestic violence as oppressive and controlling abusive behaviour formed the foundation for the discussion and their limited reported intervention experiences. Fortune (1991:74) asserts that battering is not the result of a batterer being out of control but rather is the attempt of the batterer to stay in control. To substantiate her argument she writes:

- He chooses when and where he batters.
- He chooses what parts of the victim's body he hits so as to hide the evidence from others.
- He chooses to direct his violence only towards the victim or those whom he perceives may be helping her.
- His need to control family members seems to increase with stress in his life e.g. trouble at work, dinner late, a friend died, or other upsetting emotions. These feelings are uncomfortable for him. They are not what he considers "masculine" because they make him feel "out of control." So instead of expressing his feelings honestly, he expresses them as anger and lashes out at his family, seeking to regain control in his life.

Further more, Fortune explains that his physical violence (whether an ever present threat or a memory for the victim) is the means by which he carries out the psychological or sexual battering. There may have been only a half a dozen physical beatings in the past ten years. However the victim remembers them vividly and knows from experience that he is capable of this violence at any time (1991:74).

It was also clear to the researcher that for all participants, (except one) talking about the issue was a first and they often needed to debrief while at times they were a bit hesitant and defensive about what they shared during the interview.

It is indeed very clear that participants really struggled with the church's teachings on submission and the patriarchal system in which the church finds itself. This theme again was

met with mixed responses ranging from eagerness to discuss to hesitance and sometimes defensiveness.

Based on how participants reacted to how the church can deal with the challenges of domestic violence, it appeared to the researcher that they felt strongly about the need for training and to revisit the church's teachings and the interpretation of scripture. The researcher was not convinced, that participants' limited direct intervention experience had really moved them to a point where they would pursue corporate action from the church's side. It felt again mainly like an intellectual part of the discussion except for very few participants who are already involved or those who have realized through this study how critical the church's involvement is to help end domestic violence.

Taylor *et al.* (2000:74) in their argument that religious involvement may provide unique insights in addressing domestic violence amongst other mental health issues. I wish to raise the following characteristics as pointed out by them:

- The head minister or pastor is recognized as a pivotal figure in the church, whose leadership and direction are critical for understanding the types of programs organized in the church and the church's relationship with formal service agencies in the broader community.
- Ministers are sometimes the first and only professional that individuals encounter. As a consequence, pastors' positions as personal counsellors and advisors are important ones with respect to the mental and physical health of their congregants.

They also noted that specific information about the role of clergy in mental health services delivery is particularly scarce.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 of this study provides and introduction to the study reflecting on the research problem, motivation and significance of the research as well as literature reviewed. In chapter 2 the research methodology is explained with a comprehensive overview on the research approach and process, data collection and ethical considerations. Chapter 3 focused extensively on the actual research findings, well supported by relevant literature.

This chapter presents firstly conclusions drawn by the researcher on the findings as discussed in the previous chapter, and secondly recommendations relating to empowering clergy to deal with domestic violence. The chapter closes with a reflection on the limitations of the study and suggestions for future researchers.

4.2   FINDINGS RELATED TO QUESTION THEMES

4.2.1   Question theme one: Participants' understanding of domestic violence

Defining the problem is crucial in the responding with interventions and solutions. In reviewing relevant literature a host of terminology is used to describe family violence. These include relationship violence, gender-based violence, wife battering, spouse abuse, marital abuse, women abuse, intimate violence, domestic violence to mention but a few. For the purposes of this study terminology has been used interchangeably. Most activists seek to include all acts or omissions by men that cause harm to women because of their gender status (Abrahams, 1997 as cited from Heise, *et al.* 1997; Ponton, 2002).

In 1993, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women tried to encompass a wide range of aspects in its definition of gender-based violence. It refers to any act that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (as cited from Heise, *et al.* 1994:3).

Participants mainly understood domestic violence as multifaceted oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour by males toward their intimate female partners. Participants acknowledged that violence can also be exerted by women on men, and in same-sex relationships, but in their experience it was mainly women that suffered violence and abuse usually within the framework of husband-wife relationships.

Participants identified aspects of controlling and abusive behaviour, namely: emotional and psychological control, financial control, physical abuse and control, and sexual abuse. They also defined domestic violence as relating to gender and power issues and as a disease of silence.

4.2.1.1 Emotional and psychological control

Participants firstly perceived domestic violence as emotional and psychological control relating to emotional degrading, verbal abuse and threats.

Literature reviewed confirms that emotional and psychological abuse being a prominent feature in violence against women is often dominated by the theme of control. Such control is enforced via direct and indirect means including isolation, unpredictable punishments, sporadic rewards and acts of kindness. This kind of violence results in a profound state of dependence, severe anguish and disintegration of self on the part of the victim (Peterson and Green, 1999).

Social isolation is a common feature in psychological violence as the victim is prevented from having any close friendships and is monitored by the perpetrator. Heise, Raikes, Watts and Zwi, (1994:1167) confirms that this form of violence is the most common form of abuse and is considered by most victims as more severe than physical violence. Literature also confirms that this form of violence almost always precedes or goes together with physical abuse (Fortune, 1991; Nason-Clark, 1997; Paymar, 2000).

4.2.1.2 Financial control

Secondly participants identified financial control as another form of oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour whereby male partners exert financial control on the female partners. Examples of such abusive behaviour are when the husband gives limited funds to his wife, expecting her to see to all the household bills and needs, and he refuses to disclose what

he earns and how he spends the rest of his money; and men feeling threatened by their women earning more than them.

The literature confirms that women during economic disruption, when a partner is unemployed, are more likely to function independently and take on greater economic responsibility, whereas men may be less able to fulfil their culturally expected roles as providers (WHO, 1998) as recorded by January (2003:105). Literature also asserts that Financial / Economic Abuse can take various forms. According to Ponton (2002) an abused woman can be forced to be the sole provider for the family or she can be prevented from earning an income. As per a study by Evason (1982) as cited in Ponton the model employed by most abusive husbands was one where he controlled all the finances and allocated to his wife at his discretion. In this way wives are kept financially dependent and financial control can be viewed as a structural constraint, which keeps women from leaving abusive relationships.

4.2.1.3   *Physical abuse and control*

Physical abuse and control were explained as kicking, slapping, hitting, beating and shaking. While a number of participants spoke about physical abuse, they addressed it in a very vague manner. Only isolated examples of cases were mentioned during interviews.

According to literature reviewed, physical abuse may or may not cause injuries that require medical attention. This often affects the seriousness placed on the crime. Literature confirms that physical abuse involves anything from scratching, shoving, spitting, grabbing, shaking, pushing, restraining, slapping, punching, choking, burning, use of weapons such as guns, belts, bottles, knives or ordinary household items, kicking, pulling her, biting, ramming a car or moving object against her or pinning her against a wall or enclosed area with a car or moving object (Londt, 2004:24, Ponton, 2002).

4.2.1.4   *Sexual abuse*

Sexual Abuse was very briefly mentioned by participants as a form of oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour. The examples given to explain their understanding were rape, child sexual abuse as forms of domestic violence. None of the participants reported any cases of having counselled a victim or perpetrator except for the participant who worked in the field

of violence against women. In the context of an abusive relationship, sexual violence is often in the form of rape or sexual assault.

According to Londt (2004:24) some abusers use sexual violence as a primary choice of intimidation and harm to batter their victims. Sexual battering may include pressured sex when the victim does not want sex, coerced sex by manipulation or threat as well as physical forced sex. Victims may also be forced by the perpetrator to engage in sexual activities, which they experience, as humiliating, painful or unnatural. Referring to her work with some victims, one participant reported that victims recalled that their perpetrators have refused to wear condoms despite the fact that they engaged in high-risk sex with sex workers or multiple partners. These victims are sometimes also forced to have sex with third parties or face the risk of being beaten and humiliated.

4.2.1.5 *Gender and power issues*

Participants also explained domestic violence as relating to gender and power issues relating to male perpetrators abusing their power.

Literature confirms that it does not matter what form of domestic violence, the abuser uses, the aim is ultimately to coerce and use force to control the victim and members of his family (Fortune, 1991:73).

Literature also confirms that domestic violence must be defined as far more than the number or force of slaps, punches or strikes against the body. Such abuse, The Clergy Committee of York County Task Force of Domestic Violence (1999:4) explains is the use of forceful, controlling behaviour to cause a person to do what the abuser wants without regard to the person's rights, body or health. In terms of the gender of the majority of reported domestic violence cases, the clergy committee cites that approximately 95% of reported cases lists women as the adult victims.

4.2.1.6 *Disease of silence*

Participants finally described oppressing and controlling abusive behaviour as a disease of silence. Participants referred to the fact that the secrecy or silence implies non-reporting of domestic violence due to shame, social status or fear.

While most participants acknowledged that domestic violence happened in all spheres of society, none of them reported any cases from the white affluent communities. All reported cases came mostly from the very poor socio-economic coloured and black communities where poverty and unemployment are rife.

The failure of clerical leaders to be direct in their condemnation of violence against women has been understood by some as tacit support (Nason-Clark, 1997:153).

My conclusions drawn from participants' understanding of domestic violence are:

- They have a fair understanding of the problem. For them domestic violence is primarily about oppressive and controlling behaviour of men toward their intimate female partners.
- They mostly observed emotional and psychological oppressive and controlling abusive behaviour.
- They also experienced only a few cases of physical abuse. They did however reflect an academic understanding of this form of domestic violence.
- They also explained that domestic violence is a disease of silence and that it is an issue of gender and power.
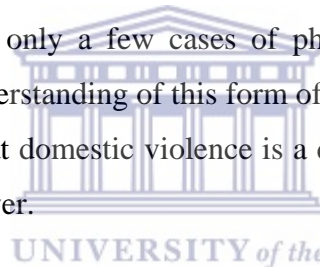
4.2.2 Question theme two: Participants' perceptions of the root causes of domestic violence

Participants indicated that there is no one specific root cause for domestic violence; but that it is complex and multi-faceted. Participants' experiences and explanations of the root causes of domestic violence were categorized into the following themes:

- The patriarchal societal practices and beliefs, with sub-themes which referred to traditional and cultural practices, religious teachings and interpretation of scripture and theology
- Gender stereotyping and family roles; with sub-themes relating to role confusion and insecurity, role modelling, and poverty and family roles
- Violent society and apartheid legacy.

4.2.2.1 Patriarchal societal practices and beliefs

Participants were concerned about what they labelled as patriarchal societal practices which are reflected and summarized in cultural practices and religious teachings which promote male domination and female submission.

Participants argued that most religions, including Christianity and cultures are hierarchal in structure and nature which makes it open for abuse and it gives license for the abuse and oppression of women. Violence against women has been taken for granted by our culture for so long, that women themselves have taken it for granted (Fischer, 1989:155).

Participants spoke extensively and with great concern about the church's teachings on submission and its implications for women who find themselves in abusive relationships. Participants had very strong feelings and opinions about St. Paul and his interpretation of the role of women in the church and society. Participants did not reach consensus on what should be done with or how a biblical scripture like St. Paul's letter, Ephesians chapter five verse twenty two, should be interpreted. Some said that if it causes so many problems then it should not be used at all. Others explained that it must be interpreted contextually. Some felt that Paul was confused about the role and place of women in the church and home. I did get the sense that most participants felt desperate and disillusioned about the church's teachings on submission; yet none of them indicated any passion to take this concern forward with the church.

Clergy seemed to be uncomfortable about how the church's teachings, misinterpretation of scripture and theology impacts on domestic violence.

There were some interesting conflicts about Paul's teachings about women and Jesus Christ's enrolment of women into religion. While some participants felt that Christ introduced a new era and challenged the patriarchal system and order of His day through His interaction with women; one participant felt that Christ could have been stronger in His attempts at gender equality.

Fischer (1989:83) said "Far from supporting the oppression of women, Jesus' vision calls for the elimination of structures of domination and submission. All who call themselves his

disciples share this prophetic mission". She further argues that the stories of women in the New Testament portray the liberating power of Jesus' presence and message. He expands women's horizons and calls them forward. Jesus' message of liberation tells women to expect and seek life now, not simply to wait for life after death. It provides a motivation for changing the relationships which oppress them as well as others (1989:83).

4.2.2.2 *Gender stereotyping and family roles*

With reference to the theme on gender stereotyping and family roles, participants were generally concerned that attitudes of traditional patriarchal gender role stereotyping were being perpetuated especially in the poor communities where they worked. Men were regarded as the head of the home and had to provide for the family. Women were required to play a submissive role, to honour her husband and never to shame him. The lack of education, unemployment and poverty were attributed to the perpetuation of these perceptions and attitudes in society according to participants.

Pence and Paymar (1993:147) argue that while gender roles are changing, many men who batter still hold traditional beliefs that support male privilege. When his authority is challenged, a batterer reacts by employing controlling and abusive behaviours, including violence to maintain control and retain the privileges to which he believes he is entitled. They contend that the historic oppression and continued subjugation of women in most cultures occurs because men have defined almost every facet of their societies, thereby perpetuating a sexist belief system and institutionalizing male privilege. In the family system, use of male privilege is both controlling and abusive. It ranges from making all major household decisions to demanding the absolute right to sexual access, keeping women in a state of servitude, and applying punitive measures to maintain the status quo.

Londt (2004:96) refers to a number of experts who agree that violence against women emanate from potent socializing messages from family, peer groups, media, the law and other institutions of a sexist society that lead to acceptance and normalization of gender-based violence.

The three sub-themes which emerged from this theme referred to role insecurity/confusion on the part of men, role modelling, and poverty and economic hardship.

- **Role insecurity/confusion**

Participants argued that since this new era of women's empowerment, men have become confused and insecure in terms of what their role should be in this new are. Some participants – especially the white males – were very concerned about the impact of women's empowerment on men in their homes especially, since men are often not able to provide for their families due to unemployment and the fact that their wives now have to go out and work. It seemed that on some level participants were blaming women for being indirectly instrumental for the domestic violence that they experience. Participants also indirectly said that men were threatened by this.

- **Role modelling**

With reference to role modelling, participants spoke about the poor examples of role models available to men in their families and communities. Again there was a very specific emphasis on the poor socio-economic communities where boys grow up to see how their fathers and uncles abuse women. Participants also referred to the images about men in the media which almost always depict men as being tough, macho and aggressive, using guns and violence to resolve problems.

- **Poverty and economic hardship**

With reference to poverty and economic hardship, participants again felt that men are becoming more frustrated about not being able to provide for their families needs. Women who find themselves in an abusive relationship are often stuck because of a lack of resources as well as having no support from their extended family who also struggle with over crowdedness and poverty. Reference was also made to the large number of children borne by women, their lack of skills, their being uneducated and unemployed factors that make it almost impossible to break free from their abusive situation.

4.2.2.3 *Violent society and apartheid legacy*

The final central theme under the question around participants' perceptions of the root causes of domestic violence, referred to the violent society and apartheid legacy of South Africa. Participants referred to the oppressive and dehumanizing manner in which black and coloured men and women were treated during the apartheid era by their white bosses. During that era

they were not treated as adults and men were referred to as boys, which is just one example of how their human dignity was destroyed.

Participants argued that men use violence and abuse to show that they are superior and in charge. The violent images portrayed in the media which are always associated with men exerting their power and authority to the vulnerable. Here reference was made to the fact that the wars of our world are always initiated by men, while women and children are always the ones who suffer the most.

In conclusion, participants explained the root causes of domestic violence as follows:

- The patriarchal nature and structure of Christianity and cultural practices which give license for the abuse of power by men against women.
- Problematic teachings on submission of women by the church and the misinterpretation of scripture which participants believe needed to be revisited and contextualized; as well as more feminine inclusive images for God was necessary.
- Women challenging the traditional patriarchal gender role stereotyping.
- Issues of poverty and economic hardship.
- The legacy of apartheid with reference to oppression and the destruction of human dignity in men.
- The violent male images portrayed by media and society.

Brown and Bohn (1989:67) contend that a crucial agenda in the conversation from patriarchy is the transformation of God-language and imagery. Exclusively male imagery and language for God continues to legitimize patriarchy. The paradigm of male "control over" under girds the violence-laden situation the world finds itself in. They continue to say that it is not that male God-language generates violence in itself, but that it comes to function in that way within the central power-over which dictates patriarchy.

Hayter (1987:25) reflected on the discourse on masculine imagery in the Bible for God. She writes that it is assumed that the intention of biblical writers when calling God "Father" was to emphasize his masculinity. Some radical feminists like Goldenberg demanded that the image of Yahweh be overthrown because of its "very basic quality of maleness". She goes onto to say that she has no intention of encouraging the traditional address of God as

"heavenly Father". Symbolism, she says, is of little value unless theologians discern that it requires correct interpretation.

Nolan (1988:99) asserts that all the forms of oppression and sin are interrelated. He confirms that it is possible that a person can be oppressed in one respect and an oppressor in another respect, such as a black worker who oppresses his wife.

4.2.3 Question theme three: Participants' experiences of intervention with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence

The main focus of the discussion under this theme question related to themes summarized as participants' interventions with victims and challenges experienced; and interventions with perpetrators and challenges experienced. With the exception of the one participant who works in the field of violence against women, all participants reported limited cases of direct intervention with both victims and perpetrators.

4.2.3.1 Interventions with Victims and challenges experienced

- **Interventions**

Participants primarily reported that they offered pastoral counselling to victims of domestic violence which sometimes included supporting them to pursue the legal intervention. Two participants reported calling the police and supporting victims through the court procedures. Fischer (1989:167) asserts that depending on the situation, the victim may need immediate help to protect herself and assure her safety and that of her children. This she says may mean calling the police or a crisis line.

Some participants indicated that they would refer victims to a female priest or community worker in the church. In very few instances did participants speak of referring victims to reputed specialist non-profit organizations.
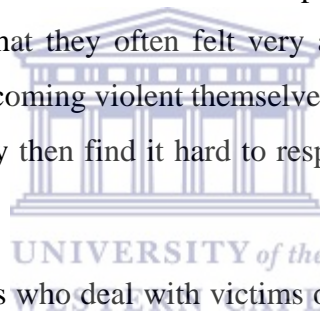
- **Challenges**

With reference to the challenges experienced by participants in dealing with domestic violence, they reported many victims' conflict regarding their own Christian beliefs about marriage and divorce. In the absence of guidelines, participants mainly relied on their own interpretations on these issues and would sometimes give specific guidance to victims. There

was a clear conflict detected in the study for participants themselves on this issue and some reported that they would not give any direction to a victim on the matter of divorce, but would support whatever decision is made.

Some participants also reported struggling to understand how victims would stay in the situation and would endure the suffering. Drumm *et al.* (2003) refers to (Heggen, 1996) and writes that often times conservative Protestant women are encouraged to stay in the abusive relationship reasoning that they share Christ's suffering, and that by their example and forgiveness, they may even save the abuser's soul.

There were also particular concerns raised by participants around the lack of resources available in the church to women in abusive relationships. Most male participants reported that they found it particularly challenging to engage victims because of their own sex and acknowledged that they sometimes internalized what the perpetrator has done to the victim. Male participants acknowledged that they often felt very angry with the perpetrator to the point that they often considered becoming violent themselves. In the light of this tension some male participants reported that they then find it hard to respond to the victim in their role as priest.

The lack of support for participants who deal with victims of domestic violent situations was reported as a particular challenge. Participants sounded really stressed, very concerned about victims, frustrated about their personal and the church's limitations in helping victims of domestic violence. Those participants who did feel that they wanted to be able to do more for victims, reported feeling frustrated that the church is not equipped to respond to victims' real concerns about their family, their personal safety, their economic situation and their need to wrestle with their Christian beliefs as they try to make sense of their situation.

Literature confirms that a major critique of Christianity by feminists is that it leads women to believe it is their place to suffer, blinding them to oppression. With reference to Mary Daly in her book Beyond God the Father as quoted in Fischer: "*The qualities that Christianity idealizes, especially for women, are also those of a victim: sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humility, meekness, etc. Since these are the qualities idealized in Jesus 'who died for our sins', his functioning as a model reinforces the scapegoat syndrome*

for women". It is such a justification of suffering that can lead women to remain silent about sexual abuse, stay in marriages where they are battered, and set aside their own legitimate needs in order to take care of others. (Fischer, 1989:86-87).

4.2.3.2   Intervention with perpetrators and challenges experienced

- **Interventions**

All participants reported that they have never had a perpetrator of domestic violence approach them for help except in the one case when he wanted to be reconciled with his wife who had divorced him. Participants were generally not very optimistic about counselling perpetrators.

Other forms of intervention with perpetrators related to home visits and one prison visit. With reference to the former, participants depended on victims to arrange this contact. When participants then did visit, the intervention mainly took the form of couple counselling. Participants reported that perpetrators mainly expected them to pray and to restore the peace in the relationship by getting the wife to forgive. There were also reports of perpetrators being unhappy with participants who insisted that perpetrators take responsibility for their abusive behaviour. Some perpetrators expected especially that the male participants would understand them better because of their sex. These unsatisfied perpetrators blamed participants for siding with the women.

- **Challenges**

With reference to the challenges experienced by participants regarding intervention with perpetrators, the following matters were raised. Firstly male participants expressed a particular struggle with their own anger and desire to protect the victim against the physically stronger male person. The lack of respect that some perpetrators had for participants whether male or female was also raised as a concern and challenge. What also made it more difficult to approach perpetrators is the fact that some of them are not church going members; and participants sometimes felt that they had no pastoral right to step in. Some participants also struggled with the increasing focus on women's empowerment and the limited support for men as they seek to redefine their role in this process.

The conclusions drawn from this theme question are that:

- Male participants were generally uncomfortable during their interventions with victims of domestic violence and often referred them to female priests or counsellors in the church.

- Participants had no proper training or guidelines and thus followed their personal theological convictions when they were confronted with issues related to teachings and misinterpretation of scripture during interventions with victims.

- Participants struggled with conflicting beliefs about domestic violence, its causes and theological issues during interventions with victims.

- Lack of theological support for participants and lack of resources in the church available to victims were expressed as frustrations.

- Generally participants were not optimistic about intervention with perpetrators.

- Participants harbour a lot of resentment toward perpetrators for their violence against women.

- Participants were unclear about their pastoral role and authority over perpetrators who are not members of the parish.

- Participants were disillusioned about the decreasing number of authentic male role models with the rapid emancipation of women.

4.2.4   Fourth question theme: Guidelines offered during theological training and/or by the church for clergy in dealing with domestic violence intervention

The two central themes to be summarized based on the study relate to how participants' theological training had prepared them for dealing with domestic violence, and secondly, what domestic violence intervention guidelines the church offers.

4.2.4.1   Theological training

With reference to theological training, participants received training from various institutions including universities as well as from the Church's seminary. The general consensus amongst participants was that their theological training did not prepare them for dealing with domestic violence. Very few participants had direct dealings with domestic violence experience through their previous vocations, but the majority reported no formal training on this issue.

With reference to the Anglican Church's training college, some participants recalled set lectures on feminism and interpretation of scripture, but nothing on family life; while pastoral care was an option to those interested.

4.2.4.2 *Guidelines offered by church*

Regarding domestic violence guidelines offered by the church to support participants in their work, there were mixed reports on this matter. Some participants regarded the Pastoral Standards booklet as the guideline. Yet the majority agreed that there was no specific guideline offered by the church to help participants deal with domestic violence.

Participants did also mention that the church does have guidelines on issues of human sexuality, but nothing on domestic violence.

The church has a task team (called Tamar) which works on violence against women issues, but does not receive the required support in terms of resources, capacity and acknowledgement for its work. In 2004, through the efforts of the church's task team, it was agreed at synod that all clergy must undergo gender sensitizing training. These workshops were offered with very low number of clergy in attendance.

One of the key problems as reported by one participant is the lack of commitment by the church to the issue, because only a few archdeaconries responded and arranged for these workshops to happen. None of the participants interviewed spoke about this training – they only did when prompted. It was clear though those participants were uninformed about the work of the task team and thus did not use their services.

The general consensus amongst participants was that they are left to equip themselves on the issue of domestic violence.

Conclusions drawn from this question theme were that:
- Participants' theological training did not prepare them for the challenges of dealing with real life issues such as domestic violence.
- The church does not offer guidelines to clergy on dealing with domestic violence.

- While the church has given their blessing and mandate for the task team, Tamar, to raise awareness and provide training, there is no real support for its work in terms of promotion and financial support.

4.2.5   Fifth question theme: How the church can address domestic violence

The two main central themes which emerged from the question on how the church can deal with domestic violence, related to education and training; and the question of theological teachings, and scriptural interpretation.

4.2.5.1   Education and training

With reference to education and training, participants firstly suggested that clergy should preach about domestic violence more often from the pulpit. There should be a stronger focus on pre-marital education and bishops should make it compulsory for clergy to attend domestic violence training workshops.

Participants also felt that the church should use its existing structures for example the house meetings / cell groups, mother's union and men's groups, and so forth, to educate people on domestic violence. With a specific emphasis on prevention, some participants said that the church could create platforms to address fears and myths about gender equality, issues of power and the abuse of power.

According to Drumm *et al.*'s study (2003:11) between 25-30% of their respondents reported that it made a significant difference or solved the problem when they, bought a self-help book about domestic violence, went to see the pastor, went to a support group, and discussed it with a family doctor.

With regards to domestic violence training for clergy, participants were very specific about the content of such a course and that it should include topics like: the Bible and gender, the Bible and relationships. Participants also wanted victims to come and share their experiences as part of the training; as well as information on research findings, the profile of the typical abuser. The role of the priest should be very clearly spelled out along side the police, social workers, justice system and so forth. There must be a focus on the intersection between HIV/Aids and domestic violence. Practical steps that clergy should follow when dealing with

domestic violence situations must be included in such training. Training material should also be prepared for Sunday school education purposes.

4.2.5.2 Revisit theological teachings and scriptural interpretations

Fischer (1989:163) suggests that with reference to biblical passages that seem to justify the subjection of a woman to her husband as sacred, must be viewed in a new way. She then offers the following aspects to this new way of reading:

- Situating these writings in their cultural context. This means accepting the human authorship and cultural conditioning of the bible.
- Highlighting biblical passages which call for mutual love, respect, and care.
- Sharing results of current research on problematic passages. Such study has been especially helpful with the Genesis stories. It shows, for example, that the creation account in Genesis 1 implies no inferiority of woman. God creates humanity immediately as male and female.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea…and over all the earth …. So God created man in his own image he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26-27, *The Holy Bible*: New International Version 1984:1-2). Munroe (2001:60) confirms that this account of the creation story implies equal dominion. He explains that "man" is the name of the species God made. According to him, "man" is spirit which has no gender. He then continues to argue that God took "man" and placed it into two separate "houses" called male and female to fulfil His purposes for humanity and for the world.

With reference to the theological teachings and scriptural interpretations which seemingly reinforce domestic violence, participants generally agreed that the church has to revisit these. Many participants said that gender inequality in the scripture must be challenged. They also said that the predominantly masculine images for God must be challenged and embracing feminine images for God would help with the process of changing patriarchal perceptions and understandings in intimate relationships.

The 1995 consultation on theological formation at the Moffat Mission, Kuruman, attended by Christians of many confessions and traditions from various parts of Africa, focused

particularly on the challenges and opportunities facing ecumenical theological formation in Africa. Amongst other aspects to be included in curriculum reform at theological seminaries and colleges gender issues and perspectives, and an understanding of the social and ethical issues surrounding human sexuality as reported by Archbishop Ndungane in Suggit and Goedhals (1998:113). The Archbishop also said in the same report that both God and Scripture are dynamic. Our understanding of them changes in the same way as living organisms do. Constant review and reinterpretation of our understanding of God and Scripture from a social and analytical point of view is therefore a prerequisite in the twenty first century.

In conclusion on this theme question it is clear that:

- While participants did recognize the need for transformation in their theological training to address gender inequality issues in the church's teaching and in biblical scriptures, there was no strong commitment from them to initiate such a move.
- Participants acknowledged the need for domestic violence training for clergy and they detailed the contents of such a course which reflected their questions and concerns on the issue.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS ON FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of the research was to explore challenges experienced by clergy (within the Church of the Province of Southern Africa) in dealing with domestic violence. The researcher wishes to conclude that:

Consistent with literature reviewed, findings confirmed the complex nature of domestic violence and the extreme underreporting there of. The finding that not many victims approach clergy is inconsistent with research which was done by Casa (2000). In this study it was found that women did approach the church, but found that support was lacking. What was consistent with literature is that if clergy was experienced to be sensitive to the issue, more victims seek help.

It seems as if victims' reluctance to report cases of domestic violence relate to the church's silence on the matter. Literature reviewed and experiences reported by some participants

reveal that victims do ask for support when there has been sermons on domestic violence and if clergy are perceived to sensitive to the issue.

There was an overwhelming report by participants of various challenges that they experience on different levels in the ministry pertaining to issues of domestic violence. These challenges related primarily to the lack of training in dealing with real life issues as pastors, and secondly the lack of theological guidelines to address problematic teachings and misinterpretation of Scriptures.

While it is understandable that clergy have received insufficient training to deal with domestic violence, the question is whether participants and the church do regard this as a serious enough priority. In this regard one of the participants reported that as much as the church at a time was not ready to face the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but organized itself very quickly to respond with training resources and various awareness campaigns; in the same spirit the church should become radical in addressing domestic violence.

Literature reviewed and conclusions drawn from this study indicate that the challenge for the church goes much deeper than just offering the traditional services to victims; it also means that perpetrators will have to be held accountable and helped. The latter seem to be a matter that is avoided, based on the findings of this study. The church would also have to do some deep and serious reflection on some of its patriarchal/gender bias scriptures, practice and teachings.

Participants did acknowledge that religious beliefs play a crucial role in domestic violence. It can help or hinder efforts that seek to establish non-violence in relationships. These findings are consistent with literature and research done on the phenomenon (Fortune, 1991, Nason-Clark, 1997; Casa, 2000).

With reference to explanations about the root causes for domestic violence, participants again acknowledged that it was multi-faceted, yet they have put a lot of emphasis on oppression, control, and patriarchal gender stereotypical roles. They also spoke passionately about the patriarchal nature of the Christian teachings and scriptures. These explanations amongst others in my view reflected the seriousness of the issue and participants' deepest challenges.

The prevalence of violence in the South African society and its apartheid legacy was regarded as a causal factor which was again regarded as an important factor to acknowledge by literature. Nolan (1988:86) writes that it would be impossible to exaggerate the evil of the apartheid system in South Africa. He says "It has wrought havoc in the lives of people, caused a barbarous excess of violence and suffering, deprived people of their humanity, produced blindness, alienation and violent conflict".

The secondary goal of this study was to identify training needs to inform the church's attempts to address the issue head on. The church has put in place a task team with the intention of training and addressing issues relating to violence against women, but the question is whether this is a priority on the list of social issues to be addressed.

All participants expressed a definite need for training and have eagerly spelled out what should be covered in such training. In the same breath participants' true commitment to the issue is questioned because some participants have indicated that they are not trained counsellors, implying that it is not really their responsibility to deal with it. I am therefore of the opinion that much more work is required to help point clergy to their responsibility as spiritual care givers of the families in their parishes.

4.4   CONCLUSIONS ON RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study succeeded in attaining the research objectives as stated:

- **To explore participants' understanding of domestic violence and its root causes**

Participants understood domestic violence primarily as oppressive and controlling abusive behaviour by men (husbands) toward their female partners (wives), expressed predominantly as emotional and psychological control; and that it is a disease of silence embedded in gender and power issues.

Participants explained root causes of domestic violence as relating to the patriarchal nature of the Christian church, its teachings on submission and misinterpretation of scripture.

The fact that traditional patriarchal gender role stereotyping is being challenged by the empowerment of women in society was also regarded as a cause for men's controlling and abusive behaviour toward their intimate female partners in marriage.

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The South African history relating to the oppression and dehumanization of adults during apartheid embedded in the legacy of poverty and economic hardship are all regarded as root causes for domestic violence.

- **To explore intervention strategies in dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence**

Participants mainly offered spiritual counselling to victims who approached them and at times would refer them to professionals at community based organizations.

Generally participants were not completely comfortable to intervene with victims and they were not very optimistic about intervening with perpetrators of domestic violence.

Only isolated cases were reported where participants supported victims and perpetrator through the legal process and worked closely with the police, social workers and the justice system.

With reference to one of my motivations for pursuing this study and what these findings reflect, it deepens my concern that many Christian women will remain disappointed with the church for not offering help to their abusive husbands, leaving them (women) with limited options to break out of the abusive relationship. In very few instances did participants step into their pastoral authority and confront perpetrators, but the majority shied away from this crucial intervention. While I can understand that a lack of training can be a contributing factor, a greater part of me feels that it is more of an excuse on the part of participants to assert their pastoral authority where it is really needed.

Challenges experienced by participants can be summarized as relating to their conflicting beliefs about domestic violence, its causes and theological issues during interventions with victims, lack of resources for victims and lack of support to clergy.

- **To explore participants' suggestions regarding training needs and professional support in dealing with domestic violence**

Participants were very vocal about their lack of training and thus their ability to deal effectively with domestic violence issues. They gave a detailed description of what ought to be included in domestic violence training for clergy.

Revisiting the church's teachings on submission and misinterpretation of scripture resounded as a bottom line in redressing issues of gender inequality and domestic violence. The researcher was not convinced that any of the participants were committed enough to take this cause forward.

In the final analysis, the researcher concludes that it was incredibly valuable to assess participants' understanding of domestic violence and their intervention experiences. There was a very clear thread in their definition and explanations of the root causes of domestic violence which informed their intervention strategies.

Participants felt particularly unprepared to deal with domestic violence issues. Because of the lack of training during their theological training to address issues relating to teachings on submission and the misinterpretation of scripture, and the absence of domestic violence guidelines offered by the church, clergy seemingly have to rely on their own theological convictions in addressing these matters.

While it was encouraging to hear participants giving detailed descriptions of what domestic violence training should include, it was disconcerting to realize that the issue had to be forced onto the church leadership based on the fact that they stressed that the bishops should force clergy to attend such training. The researcher was particularly puzzled about this because she believes that family life is central to church life, and expected that family crises would be on clergy's priority list.

Participants raised some crucial theological matters such as revisiting teachings, contextualizing misinterpreted scriptures and challenging gender inequality in the Bible as pertinent to breaking the silence of domestic violence in the church. It must be noted that they did not seem convinced that these issues will be addressed soon enough and none of them indicated a particular passion to pursue such a call.

4.5   CONCLUSIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY

With reference to the research methodology, the researcher believes that the qualitative approach was the most practical based on the sensitivity of the phenomenon. The use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews was the most effective tool, considering the aims and objectives of the study.

While the researcher was generally comfortable with the methodology because of its resonance in many ways with social work practice, it was challenging at times not to step into the role of counsellor. Through constant processing and reminding myself of the purpose of the study, I remained focused on my role and continued to listen and explore acknowledging participants for sharing deep personal issues. It did indeed help to remember that my role as researcher was to be an active learner rather than expert. I was pleased to be able to just learn and listen attentively to participants' experiences.

With reference to the population, the researcher felt that it was appropriately chosen for the purpose of the study. With reference to the choice purposive sampling, the researcher initially thought about selecting only male priests for the study, but in the end choosing a multi-racial and gender equal sample gave a very thin spread, but made the study inclusive in some ways.

4.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

I wish to start presenting my recommendations by presenting a personal contention and saying to the Anglican Church that it seems to be time to condemn domestic violence as a sin which violates the image of God in humanity. The Anglican Church has such a rich history of fighting social injustice in South Africa and has gained a lot of societal respect for its contribution to end apartheid. In the same way the Church is called upon to address domestic violence head-on so men, women and children across all racial, gender and religious groups in society can live in peace and harmony.

The Archbishop has been very vocal about poverty alleviation and gender equality within society; I am convinced that the church can again be in the frontline to radically help put an end to violence against women from a faith perspective.

The following are my recommendations based on the finding of this study:

- The church must develop policies, procedures and guidelines for clergy and churches to address issues around gender based violence and abuse. Guidelines on interventions must be practical with step by step points to follow when clergy encounters such a family or relationship crisis.

- Organize conferences to address theological concerns around domestic violence and use these as platforms to develop written documents to inform previous point and to develop resource material.

- Revisit the aims and content of theological training of clergy to ensure that curricula also prepare them for real life issues such as domestic violence and other social evils. This is a crucial part of the formation of the church leadership, and shapes the future of the church and family life.

- Research should be done on the work of the Tamar task team, the role it played and challenges experienced in the church.

- Consider the training needs as pointed out by this study in reviewing existing training programmes offered by Tamar.

- Broaden the scope of the current violence against women task team and establish a gender desk which will help address all the related issues and inform the church of critical theological and practical issues to address. Such a gender desk should also be appropriately funded to extend its initiatives beyond the borders of the Western Cape.

- The church must build into its structures debriefing and self-care services to support clergy as they are working with domestic violence issues.

- As with the HIV/Aids programme, all churches should be trained by the Church to offer education and support to families who experience domestic violence.

- More comprehensive research on the issue is recommended using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to be able to generalize the findings.

- Similarly, research is also recommended for other Christian denominations and other faith traditions with the aim to create a collective religious response to domestic violence which can lead to an overarching sense of how the Christian Church in South Africa is responding to domestic violence.

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