



MISSION

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CATALYST

Intelligent comment on faith and culture



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FREE DVD: DIGNITY

A gender based violence resource for churches from BMS World Mission

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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE: LET'S SORT IT OUT



FIGHTING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) IS ABOUT AFFIRMING THE PERFECTION AND BEAUTY OF GOD'S CREATION

It is unimaginably difficult for us to envisage real beauty. Not subjective beauty as defined by a particular image, but beauty as perfection. A circle cannot be made more circular. If it's a circle – it's perfect, it's beautiful.

When God created the cosmos, he saw on different days that the work in progress was good, but when he created and surveyed the completed creation he said it was very good. By God's standards it was infinitely perfect. It was beautiful.

And men and women were the difference between 'good' and 'very good'. Very good is beautiful.

But now it isn't. All of creation groans and, within the cacophony of discordant notes, the sound of human voices can be heard. The God-breathed bond between male and female is, in places, deeply fractured.

We see this in war zones when rape is used as a tool of terror and

oppression. We see it in homes when men slap or punch their wives and partners. When a woman stands up for the right to have at least one woman featured on our banknotes, she suffers the most appalling sexualised messages of abuse from so-called trolls. Women are not as safe as men to walk the streets.

But victimhood is not a woman's primary identity. Her primary identity, like that of men, is as someone created in the image of God. Therefore, the Christian perspective on GBV can be a truly redemptive voice, flowing from the God who created us male and female and declared the result to be very good.

In other words, when something breaks, going back to the manufacturer is a wise thing to do.

Dignity (the attached DVD and our theme for the next 18 months) has not been an easy project to put together. Not just the amount of work but also its content.

For many years we have been involved in ministries addressing the fall-out from GBV – women sold into prostitution, tricked, trafficked and traded. But in past months we have studied together what Phyllis Tribble calls the *Texts of Terror*, accounts of appalling sexual violence in the Old Testament, and maybe for the first

time we have begun to understand why these uncomfortable stories are there. We have listened to women brave enough to put their stories on video, and we have wept.

This is not an easy subject to talk about either. Because GBV is a reality in our churches too. A 2006 report presented to the Church of England Synod, (*Responding to Domestic Abuse*) stated: "Domestic abuse occurs in all types of households and amongst all professions, including clergy and those in positions of leadership." This is not another 'out there' problem. This is an 'in here' problem.

The DVD accompanying this magazine contains a lot of material that we hope you will find helpful. There are theological articles and Bible studies, stories, videos, tangible actions for churches and individuals, and links to trusted organisations working in the field.

Most importantly, there are signposts of how we can begin to address this in our churches and more widely.

David Kerrigan
General Director

Andrew Caplen

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LEGAL AID CUTS HURT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROSECUTION

THE EFFECT OF RECENT CUTS TO LEGAL AID HAS BEEN TERRIBLE FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

We have often been told that we are in a seemingly never-ending age of austerity. Jobs in the public sector have been under threat with resulting redundancies. Many Government departments have had their budgets slashed. Without doubt, the provision of Legal Aid has been one of the areas hardest hit.

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) came into effect on 1 April 2013. The original consultation paper talked about "reforming" Civil Legal Aid, but LASPO was not about reforming. It was about cutting – cutting payment rates to Legal Aid lawyers who had had no increase (either real or actual) for over 20 years and, even more concerning, cutting the scope of matters covered by the scheme. In a number of categories of law,

Legal Aid advice and assistance became a thing of the past.

Victims of domestic violence could still receive help. But there was a catch – it would only be available if survivors could provide "prescribed evidence" that they had in fact been abused.

Those words "prescribed evidence" have caused severe problems. Such evidence is far from easy to obtain. Generally, it has to have taken place within the preceding two years. Further, psychological abuse is difficult to prove. And it is particularly galling where evidence is required from a victim's GP "that they have been examined within the past two years about an injury or condition... as a result of domestic violence". Anecdotally, there are reports of some doctors charging more for such a letter than the victim receives each week in benefits.

Rights of Women and Women's Aid have recently published the results of a survey commissioned on the effects of the LASPO changes. In their publication, *Evidencing Domestic Violence: a Barrier to Family Law Legal Aid*, they state that the impact of not being eligible for Legal Aid in domestic violence cases, according to their survey, was as follows:

"60.5 per cent of respondents who answered the question did nothing as a result of not being able to apply for Legal Aid, 23.7 per cent paid a solicitor privately and 15.8 per cent represented themselves at court."

The 60.5 per cent figure is deeply concerning. What we are effectively talking about here is a non-molestation injunction designed to prevent further abuse happening and one that imposes severe penalties if it is, ie: straight to jail. If such injunctions are not in place, providing for example that the alleged perpetrator does not come within a stated distance of the previously shared home, the risk of further violence is clearly increased. In fact, on 10 September 2014, the Guardian published an article highlighting the problems, saying: "Women will die – it's not too dramatic to say that."

Quite simply, these changes mean that it is markedly more difficult for those who have suffered abuse to go to court so that the court can test the evidence – and provide a remedy meaning they are protected in the future.

Should the Church be concerned? Of course it should. The provision of access to justice is a fundamental part of the rule of law. And there is the biblical command to "speak up and judge fairly" and to "defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31: 9).

How can the Church help? In the small ways by assisting individuals. Funding could perhaps be provided so that the necessary documentary evidence can be accumulated. In the larger arena? By petitioning politicians to review, consider, amend and get this right.

In his role as Law Society President, Andrew Caplen is supporting the BMS Dignity initiative. Find out more about it on the DVD enclosed with this issue.



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Deborah Jamieson

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BEING THE CHANGE

DEBORAH JAMIESON HAS SERVED GOVERNMENT AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL ON THE SUBJECT OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV). HERE SHE ADDRESSES KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHURCH AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The problem of domestic violence doesn't necessarily start with a violent act. What are its roots?

It's usually part of power and control. It can start with psychological coercion and control. It can be financial. And one of the important things to remember is the impact globally is that women aged 15 to 44 are more at risk of rape or domestic violence than they are from cancer, motor accidents, war and malaria. So it is something that we all need to be working towards reducing and eliminating. It's also affecting over 133 million children per year who are witnessing violence in their home.

So, what can be done to effectively stop it?

Well there's a whole range of things, but a lot of it is about forming partnerships and working together. And starting with young people. Having young people challenge harmful attitudes and behaviour will help us change the future for generations. There are things all of us can do, in whatever capacity we're working, and also through the Church.

Has the Church failed so far to do something about this? Has it been in denial?

I think some churches haven't known how to approach this topic or the impact that they might have on advice given. One of our partners is Restored. Restored is a Christian organisation working to reduce violence against women and they have guidance for churches. I think many churches need to understand the dynamics behind domestic violence and what appropriate advice and support is possible.

To what extent is patriarchy operational in western countries like the UK?

We still have problems in the UK of things like forced marriage and honour

based violence (and it's better to call it dishonour based violence). And that can be perpetrated by the partner, the husband, but also the extended family more widely. Forced marriage is where one or both parties are under duress and do not consent to the marriage. A forced marriage unit has been set up in the UK which is helping to reduce that and they see well over 1,200 to 1,400 incidents a year where they're helping girls (or even sometimes young boys) who are being taken abroad and forced into marriage. There is also female genital mutilation (FGM) and that is another thing that is perpetrated by family, extended family and community, and often done to very young girls.

programme design and implementation and advocacy and research and policy. Some countries are quite resistant, and again there are very challenging and harmful attitudes and behaviour and it may take much longer to have a positive impact on that country or on that state.

What kinds of things could faith groups be doing to help?

They can raise awareness and they can also download things like the [Restored] guidance for churches. There are faith groups across the UK that are also addressing this issue, and more widely around the world. We are the lead partner for Peace One Day for the Reducing

in fighting gender based violence?

I think it's important to raise awareness and to try and eliminate very negative stereotypes of women. The Geena Davis Institute recently conducted a study, including in the UK, on the number of and the impact of women in film. Studies like that help to raise awareness that we need to do more and better around the way women are portrayed in film, in television and in the media, and the impact it has on young people in particular.

Cuts to Legal Aid in the UK will potentially mean that victims of domestic violence will not be able to access their rights. Do you have a view on that?

Yes, it has had a negative impact. There is a higher threshold for domestic violence victims to meet in order to prove that they are victims of domestic violence and should receive Legal Aid. There are some organisations that do help free of charge to give restraining orders and things like that, but we do need to make sure victims have adequate access to justice and are legally represented, particularly when the perpetrators may use the court system to suppress them either through custody disputes or frightening them from even going to court. There are independent domestic violence advisors that do help them through the court process and if they choose not to go to court they help them with safety planning and other really important issues.

And in terms of the scale of the problem, are those non-governmental or charity bodies sufficient to meet the challenge?

There's a lot of funding cuts. Therefore, there's a big campaign going on right now to save the refuges, because there have been cuts to refuges and some of the specialist ones have been having to close down. So I think one of the things that's important is that this is an issue for everyone and cuts to services for women and children shouldn't be the first cuts made.

If you have one message to faith groups in the UK, what would it be?

They can be part of the change that we wish to see in the world. They should be part of the voice challenging harmful attitudes and behaviour and stand up to violence against women.

“ WOMEN ARE MORE AT RISK OF RAPE OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THAN THEY ARE FROM CANCER ”

While the UK has a pretty coherent view on forced marriage, marital rape and FGM, on an international level, such as at the UN, there is less clarity because of differing cultural attitudes to these practices. How are we to deal with that?

Many countries are now signing up to things like the Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, there is also across Europe the Istanbul Convention which went live in May this year. And that looks across [the spectrum of] violence against women, including FGM and forced marriage, and looks at how all the different sectors should play a role in trying to reduce it. It encourages states to take a more active response. As an example, it was launched in Istanbul and in Turkey the government there launched more robust legislation around violence against women.

In countries from Mozambique to Afghanistan, there may be formal rights enshrined in the law, but there seems to be a huge gap between that and people actually being able to access those rights. How does one bridge that gap?

Well, you're correct there. There is a big problem with the actual enforcement of legislation and what we try to do is work with countries and states and organisations with a model that can help reduce violence against women. And that includes through

Domestic Violence coalition. And within that coalition we have a wide range of groups across all sectors, including some faith groups, that are participating and raising awareness. And in the UK this year, as an example, we have a large number of police forces that took part and tried to raise awareness and drive greater learning around this issue.

Can you work with religious groups that have a theology that proposes strongly differentiated gender roles if they are against things like domestic violence?

Yes, because I think sometimes people don't understand the true impact of domestic violence and believe it may not happen in their community. Our patron, Baroness Scotland, had a round table with community and faith leaders while she was in government and it was extremely helpful. One of the ways to encourage participation from every religious leader around the table was to discuss specific case studies. And I think many were shocked at some of the cases that had occurred. They had believed that it couldn't happen in their community and afterwards were more willing to participate and be a positive lever of change.

How important is it to be challenging other examples of patriarchy in our society (I'm thinking of the campaign against page three as one of the examples)

You can find more information on facing GBV in the Church with the In churches too videos on the Dignity DVD.

ARE ALL FUNDAMENTALISMS MISOGYNISTIC?

FUNDAMENTALISM MAY BE MORE IN THRALL TO PATRIARCHY IN OUR CULTURE THAN TO SCRIPTURAL LITERALISM

The question took me by surprise; it was not a connection I had ever considered before. “Are all fundamentalisms based on patriarchy?” Of course, most (all?) fundamentalistic religious movements perpetuate – indeed, promote – traditional gender roles; this was one of the findings of Martin E Marty and Scott Appleby’s massive fundamentalisms project in the 1990s. This, however, might be coincidental, not central. After all, fundamentalisms are reactionary, and all traditional human societies are patriarchal, so it may be that fundamentalisms are inevitably, but not interestingly, patriarchal. Is there anything more interesting to say?

I think there is. Whilst fundamentalistic religious traditions are reactionary, they clearly engage in what Karl Rahner called “selective retrieval”. These are not movements that are dedicated to uncovering and preserving (or restoring) historical orthodoxy; they are movements that select certain strands of history, often enough distorting them in the process, and focus on those ‘fundamentals’ as identity-markers. It seems as if an aggressively hierarchical account of gender relations in family, religious organisation, and wider society is very often, perhaps always, selected as one of these fundamentals (in contrast to, say, traditional devotional or ascetic practices: Christian fundamentalisms do not typically demand regular fasting). This is not inevitable, and demands explanation if true.

Whether it is true depends on our estimate of what counts as fundamentalism.

Marty’s early narratives (for instance, his 1988 essay on *Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon*) mentioned a wide variety of potential examples, including Latin American Pentecostalism and UK student evangelicalism (following James Barr, of course). Evangelicalism (in the 19th century) and Pentecostalism (in the first half of the 20th century) have both had moments when they were much more open to the public ministry of women in the Church than mainline denominations.

It may be that Marty’s point was not that evangelicalism and Pentecostalism are necessarily fundamentalistic, but that (in the mid-1980s, presumably) the live expressions of them in, respectively, UK universities and Latin America had become so. I have examined Barr’s claims in some detail elsewhere, and would certainly dissent from half that conclusion; I cannot speak with any real knowledge about Latin America. I suspect, however, that in fact Marty would recognise, having concluded his research project, that his early examples were not necessarily good ones in every case. Self-identified Christian fundamentalists invariably stress a very hierarchical account of gender; the same seems to be true in Islam and Hinduism,

at least. There is good reason to suppose that aggressive patriarchy is a defining feature of fundamentalism, and if certain evangelical or Pentecostal – or Hindu, or Muslim – groups are not aggressively patriarchal, that is significant, perhaps sufficient, evidence that they are not fundamentalist.

“ THROWING
OUT THE MAYBE
WITH THE
BATHWATER ”

What, then, is a good definition of fundamentalism? It is more, of course, than traditionalism or religious conservatism. I think of two lines that help me in definition. The

first came to me at a meeting of a recent research project on ‘Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain’; we were in Oxford, listening to an excellent paper on Methodist conservative evangelicals. The presenter, Martin Wellings, told us of a leader who was conservative through-and-through, and stood on stage announcing that he would rather cut his right arm off than compromise on these questions. Was he a fundamentalist, Martin asked, and if not, why not? The phrase came to me at once: ‘a conservative threatens to cut his own limb off; a fundamentalist is generally after someone else’s limbs...’ There is always an aggression about real fundamentalism, even if there is restraint from actual violence.

The second comes from a



“ A DISTORTION OF GENDER
NORMS IS CLEARLY STATED TO BE
A REALITY OF OUR FALLEN AND
DISORDERED EXISTENCE ”

friend of mine, Lincoln Harvey. On Twitter recently, he suggested that fundamentalism involved ‘throwing out the maybe with the bathwater’. (Lincoln’s Twitter feed is endlessly quotable and often hilarious; you should follow him.) Fundamentalisms of all stripes depend on a certainty of interpretation that is baffling to other sincere religious believers; whereas the most conservative non-fundamentalistic religious expressions will acknowledge the possibility of erroneous interpretation,

genuine fundamentalisms have no space for questions. As Marty says, they are ‘anti-hermeneutical’.

It would be easy to suggest that aggression and certainty are masculine characteristics, and so that fundamentalisms necessarily devalue feminine attributes; such concretely applied gender stereotypes, however, play into the hands of sexists. Women can be as certain of things as men, and as tenacious in pursuing them; men can be conciliatory and diplomatic also. If these

sorts of gender essentialisms appear to be true, that is only because we live in cultures that teach, from birth, boys and girls to behave in different ways. There is no biblical teaching that men are more decisive, or logical, or aggressive; nor is there any biblical teaching that women are more nurturing or conciliatory or gentle. This is fallen and broken culture, not God’s truth.

Of course, there are created gender differences; but, beyond some echo of the merely physical, we have no access to what they are. A distortion of gender norms is clearly stated to be a reality of our fallen and disordered existence (Gen 3: 16). We have no ability to imagine what undistorted gender norms might have looked like in an unfallen world.

That said, in being reactionary and anti-hermeneutical, it might be inevitable that fundamentalisms here (as elsewhere, for instance in embracing aggression and violence) read culture as normative. Lacking an adequately biblical imagination, the Christian fundamentalist is simply unable to look beyond his grandfather’s patriarchy to a better, more biblical way of constructing gender norms and relations. The same is true for the fundamentalist of any other tradition. Even if aggression and certainty should not be constructed as masculine characteristics, the fundamentalist does construct them like this. And so, embracing aggression and certainty as essential components of the right way of expressing his religion, he inevitably assumes that proper piety is masculine, and so embraces the aggressive subordination of women as a central component of his faith.

So are fundamentalisms ‘based on patriarchy’? I think I would rather say that there is a symbiotic relationship: fundamentalists embrace and even magnify (whilst simultaneously distorting) traditional gender inequalities, because those inequalities make their particular misshapen versions of faith seem more certain. The collision of fundamentalistic religion and patriarchy creates a resonant system where each magnifies the other and is then magnified in turn.

Steve Holmes has written the *Theological overview* and two of the *Deeper scriptural insights* for Dignity. You can find them on the Dignity DVD or at bmsworldmission.org/dignity

HERMENEUTICS FOR WOMEN

DOES THE BIBLE
DOMINATE
OR
LIBERATE?

A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW ON BIBLICAL 'TEXTS OF TERROR'

As women we have learned our behaviour, what our expected roles and responsibilities should be. As Christian women, who honour the Bible as the word of God and accept it as an authoritative, pedagogic text, it shapes our gender identity. The problem is that the biblical text was written against the backdrop of societies and cultures that were strongly patriarchal, with assumptions about the role and place of women that we would not only find unacceptable today but some of which are positively repugnant. For example, according to the legal institutions enshrined in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, women were regarded as the possessions of fathers or husbands, with no autonomy of their own. A woman's role was to be faithful, child-producing and married. Such patriarchal attitudes are still reflected in the New Testament when Paul comments that a woman will be saved by bearing children (1 Tim 2: 15). Should we allow this narrative to shape our gender identity in the 21st century? How do we sift out what is of value, what is right, pure, lovely and admirable (Phil 4: 8)? I suggest

“EVEN THE
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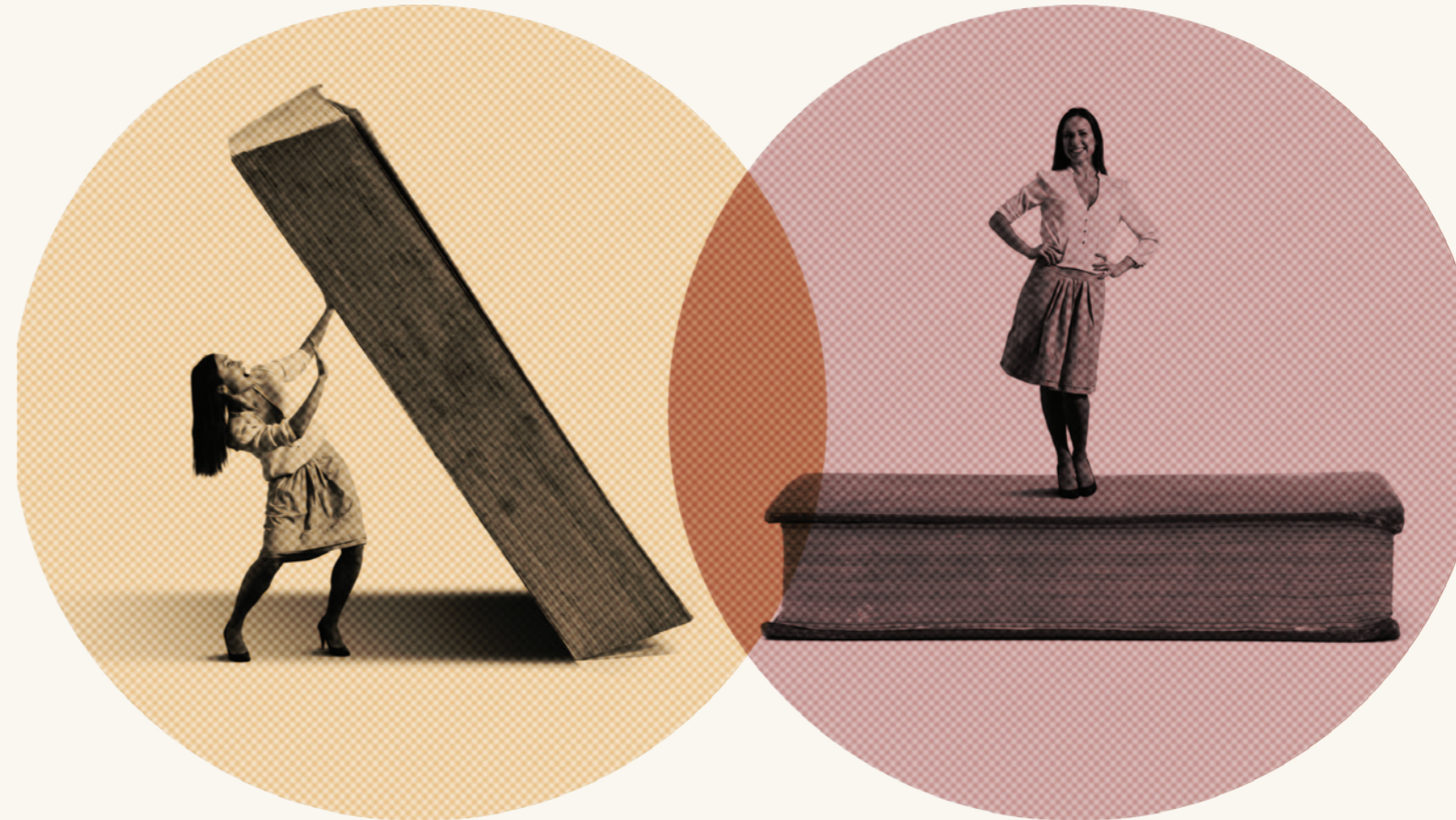
we need to take hold of the 'golden thread' that runs throughout Scripture and shines out from darker, dominant patriarchal threads.

The problem is further compounded by stories of gender based violence. Gender based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological suffering to women, sadly, is nothing new. It is

clearly documented in our Old Testament scriptures. Thirty years ago Phyllis Trible's *Texts of Terror* (1984) drew attention to four passages that narrate the abuse of women in ancient Israelite society. The slave girl Hagar experiences banishment along with her child, Tamar the princess is raped by her half-brother, the Levite's concubine is raped and dismembered, and Jephthah's daughter is ritually murdered (Gen 16: 1-16; 21: 9-21; 2 Sam 13: 1-22; Judges 19: 1-30; 11: 29-40).

The 'terror' of these texts lies not just in their subject matter but in the way they are told. The heart of the problem is that there is no judgement of the characters who abused these women. How do we interpret the silence of God? What do we do with our anger over the violence these innocent women experienced at the hands of characters who are never explicitly condemned in the text, some of whom are validated elsewhere in Scripture? Jephthah, who sacrifices his own daughter, is remembered for his military victories (1 Sam 12: 11). He is praised in the New Testament for his faith (Heb 11: 32).

Is it enough to state that these were stories written in a very different time and culture, in the context of ancient patriarchal societies that are light-years away from our own? Tragically, they resonate in societies today. Furthermore, these tales of abuse, rejection, rape, murder and ritual sacrifice are part of



our canonical text; tales of terror that understandably have often been ignored by the Christian community. They stun us into shocked silence. How do we move to saying something positive? Firstly, they should lead us to repent, secondly to lament and reflect, and finally to resolve to work for change.

Read in isolation, these and other texts could appear to condone terrible abuse and violence towards women. Many feminist biblical scholars, as a result, approach the text with suspicion and distrust, reading 'against the grain' of the text in order to uncover the assumed ideological power structures that subvert and subdue women. By contrast, when I come to the biblical text I adopt what I call a 'hermeneutics of hospitable awareness'. By this I mean I come not in an uncritical way that accepts everything at face value, but with a desire for an encounter.

I come to the text with a hospitality that welcomes the text not just as a friend but recognises that sometimes the text might appear as stranger, or even enemy, antagonistic and challenging. In different ways we all have to wrestle with God's word.

Such texts must never be read in isolation. Judges closes with the telling words "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21: 25b). It is followed by the book of

“A HERMENEUTICS OF HOSPITABLE AWARENESS”

Ruth that presents a very different story of women who, through courage and risk taking, overcome their poverty and loss, who find shelter under the 'wings' of both YHWH and Boaz. We worship a God who cares for the widow and foreigner, for the abused and violated, whose faithful loving-kindness, especially towards those who are trapped and exploited, extends to the heavens.

God's silence is not a silence of complicity or a silence of disregard for the women involved, but a silence that makes us reflect on the horror of the depth of violence that we as humans are capable of. To be honest, I wish that God were not silent sometimes. In these particular cases I wish God had shouted his condemnation. Yet, in Christ, I see a God who is abused and violated, yet says, "Father forgive them..."

Disturbingly, even the crucified figure of Christ has been used to trap women in abusive relationships; they like Christ

must suffer in silence, they must bear their cross. As a female Baptist minister in the 21st century I am aware that the biblical text itself has been abused in many ways and over the centuries to dominate rather than liberate. However, God's final word is a word of liberation; the word is Christ. We are called to let the light of Christ shine into the darkness of all forms of gender based violence. In our churches, families and communities there are women and girls who are being hurt; across the world women are being abused. We must pray and act to see God bind up the broken hearted and accomplish the message of God's life-giving, liberating gospel in women... and men.

Some of the texts mentioned in this piece are explored in more detail in the *Deeper scriptural insights* section of the Dignity DVD

POSITIVE MASCULINITY AND WHY IT MATTERS

What does it mean to be a man
without denigrating women?

I hear many stories of appalling acts committed by men against women and girls in my work for Restored. The extent and severity of violence against women by men around the world is truly shocking. This creates a risk, however, that men are seen as a dangerous problem to be controlled, or even as enemies of women. The truth is very different. Most men are not abusive and want to love and respect the women in their lives. Central to this is our identity as men. From a Christian perspective, we stress the centrality of positive relationships and societies built on strong marriages and families. We have not done so well, however, in exploring masculinity, and what it means to be a successful and non-violent man in our rapidly changing societies.

Positive masculinities are essential to help our boys to grow into men. Positive masculinities do not need to be at the expense of women. Men as leaders, men as lovers, men as courageous and men as risk takers are all exciting models that do not need to exclude women from demonstrating the same characteristics. This is not a zero sum game.

Sadly, some of the models of masculinity that are out there are not very inspiring. Society glamorises physical strength, good looks, political power, financial wealth and the conquest of women. The models of men for teenage boys to aspire to in popular culture, and particularly films and television, are often violent and ruthless, with women portrayed as objects for their

gratification. The extremes of this are seen in pornography which is violent, abusive and increasingly influential.

Christian writing on masculinity also has its drawbacks. John Eldredge in *Wild at Heart* characterises a man's identity as being based on "a battle to fight, a beauty to rescue and an adventure to live". This does not go down well with women friends who are not content to spend their lives waiting around to be rescued. John Piper, Mark Driscoll

and women. They promote stereotypes and exclude men who do not conform. They encourage a passive acceptance from women, whose role is primarily that of being supportive of men rather than pursuing their own God-given visions. They look down on weak and excluded groups that Jesus was keen to promote and honour. I do not believe that we are called on to accept a pattern driven by the fall and centuries of human history that restricts the roles of both

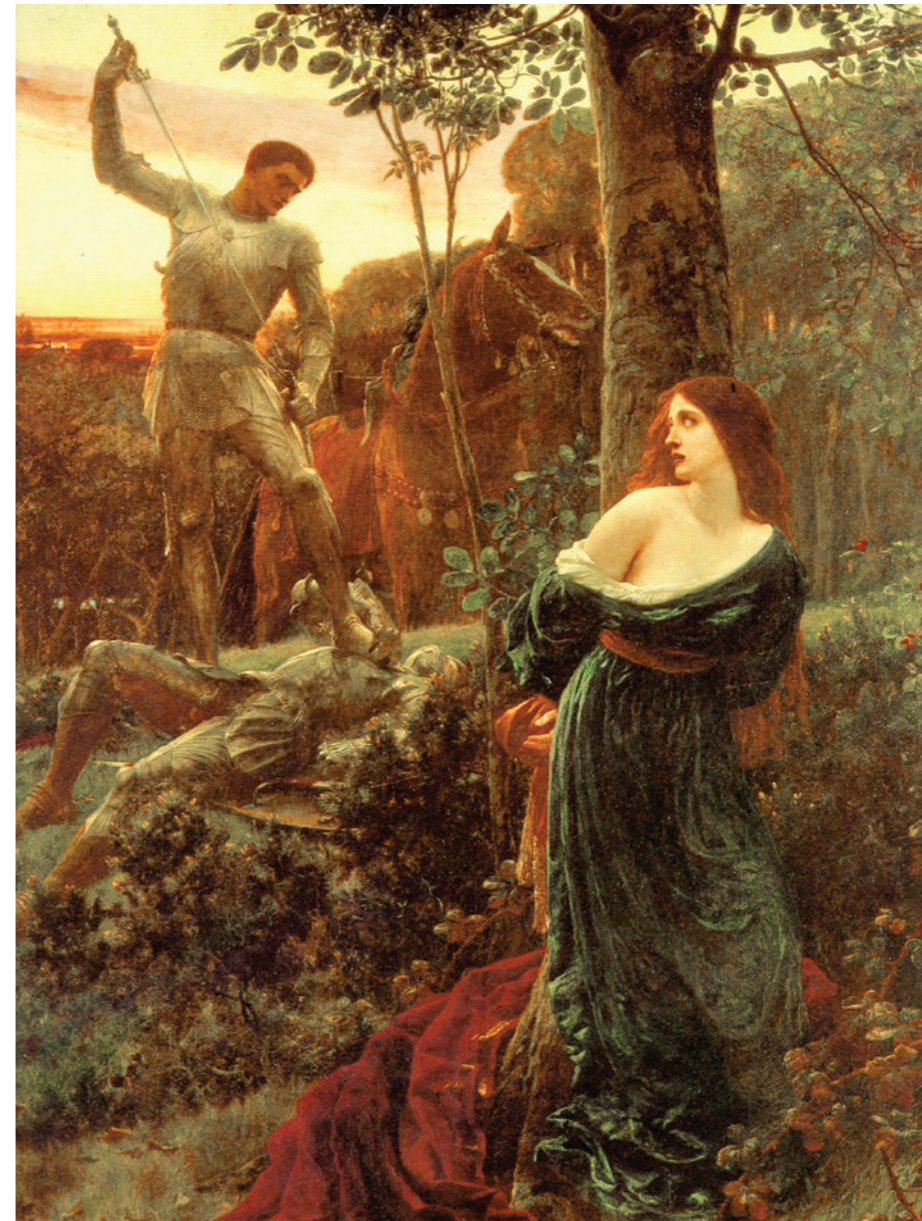
“ JOHN PIPER AND MARK DRISCOLL
HAVE CONFLATED THE IDEA OF RUGGED
MASCULINITY WITH THE NEED TO
REFORM THE CHURCH ”

and other American church leaders have conflated the idea of rugged masculinity with the need to reform the character of the Church. John Piper comments: "God gave Christianity a masculine feel," echoing the 'muscular Christianity' movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. David Murrow has picked up these themes in his influential book *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, warning his readers of the 'feminisation' of the modern Church.

I believe that these approaches are bad for both men (whether muscular or not)

men and women and endorses a hierarchical view of gender relationships. Rather we are to reflect kingdom values of equality and the uniqueness of each individual.

Others have produced more balanced views, but have not captured popular attention in the same way. Roy McCloughry argued in *Men and Masculinity - from Power to Love* for an understanding of masculinity rooted in relationships and based on love and not power. If you want to follow this debate further check out the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood which adopts a complementarian approach, and



Chivalry, Frank Dicksee 1885 © Public Domain

“ CENTRAL TO A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF
MASCULINITY IS THE POSITIVE USE OF
POWER IN SERVICE OF OTHERS ”

Christians for Biblical Equality, which is egalitarian.

My sympathies lie very much with the more inclusive and egalitarian approaches. I believe that our concept of masculinity needs to have three main elements.

• Firstly, it needs to be based on Jesus Christ as our model. Jesus was loving, non-violent, respectful of men and women and lived as a servant to others.

• Secondly, it needs to respect the diversity of men. We are all different and stereotypes restrict all of us from fulfilling our unique potential.

• Thirdly, it needs to be positive and fun. In particular, men need to be able to celebrate their sexuality in a positive way. We know that pornography is trash which degrades women and ourselves in both its production and consumption. But we

enjoy sex and want to be fulfilled in passionate and committed marriages.

Central to a Christian view of masculinity is the positive use of power in service for others. Jesus gave up power and exercised what power he retained in the service of others. Men are physically strong and in most societies have the lion's share of leadership roles. All men in leadership need to be conscious of their use of power, to exercise it positively on behalf of the weak and vulnerable and share it wherever possible. One outworking of this is in marriage where, in Ephesians 5, husbands and wives are called upon to submit to one another and husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave up his life for her.

In Restored we are keen to make our own small contribution to positive masculinities. We believe that men and women need to stand together to end gender based violence. We have developed First Man Standing, a campaign which calls on men to respect women and challenge each other in terms of our behaviour, pledging never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women (sign up at restoredrelationships.org/firstmanstanding). The world would be a different place if we all followed the call of 1 Timothy 5: 2 to treat "older women as mothers and younger women as sisters with absolute purity".

The practice of respecting women and challenging other men quickly tests us all in terms of our attitudes towards women and our

courage in speaking out. Will you be the first man in your club, church or workplace to stand up and speak out about ending violence against women? It is in standing on behalf of those who are vulnerable and oppressed that we can show what it really means to be a man. There are brilliant men to emulate all around the world. Let's celebrate positive models of masculinity in whatever shape they come and especially those which are explicitly supportive of the rights and dignity of women.

The Dignity DVD features, alongside the main content, videos from Restored about addressing GBV in our churches.

THE 'F-WORD'

FEMINISM, FAITH AND FACING DOUBTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

BEING A CHRISTIAN FEMINIST IS NOT ALWAYS EASY, BUT SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATIONS ABOUND

I am both a feminist and a Christian. I don't think the two are mutually exclusive, but it isn't easy. I became a feminist when my mum told me her parents wouldn't let her go to university because she was a girl, but that it would be different for me. I believed her. I became a Christian when I heard John Stott preach on Jesus' words, "Blessed are the peacemakers". It struck me as a message for women as much as for men and as a vocation for this woman in particular. I believed him. When the minister in my church said that the Bible taught that leadership was male and that ended the matter, I didn't believe him. And later, when a regional minister patted my hand and said I couldn't be a minister alongside my husband because no church would employ us both, I didn't believe him.

My problem is often with the church, but the boardroom would be no better – with a small fraction of them finding room for women and even then paying them less to sit in the comfy chair. In the wider world, women and girls head only the wrong lists, being the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable of the vulnerable.

Sometimes I have my doubts about the gospel's capacity to address the injustice and protect the innocent. Why didn't Jesus name any women as his

disciples when they were the bankers and logistics managers of his campaign? How did Paul move from the magisterial, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus", to asserting hats and headship? And what do we do with what Phyllis Tribble calls the 'texts of terror': the horrific gender based violence against Hagar, Tamar, the daughter of Jephthah and the unnamed concubine in patriarchal Israel? Why was there no redress?

Why does the text remain mute, like complicit and colluding family members at the scene of so much abuse?

Along with the anecdotal atrocities, there are the statistics. If only five per cent of Old Testament characters are female, and the New Testament barely improves the count, then what has Scripture to say to women?

Faced with these doubts, I turn to the encounter of the Syrophenician woman with Jesus. After the controversial 'dog-gate' incident, does the Syrophenician woman win an argument with Jesus and get him to change his mind about healing women and foreigners, saying "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs"? I like to think so. I look up at those women standing at the cross when the men had run away and who were still there come resurrection morning. I search deep in the Old Testament past Deborah the judge and Jael with her tent peg, to the daughters of Zelophehad. They bravely demanded that Moses rewrite the inheritance law to give women the right to land. "Give us property among our father's relatives." Moses took their case to the Lord, who

declared, "What the sisters said is right."

I hear this and I am a believer again. Being a Christian feminist is not about claiming my own rights – as my daughters remind me often: "check your privilege". But it is about standing for the rights of our sisters – the Hagers, the

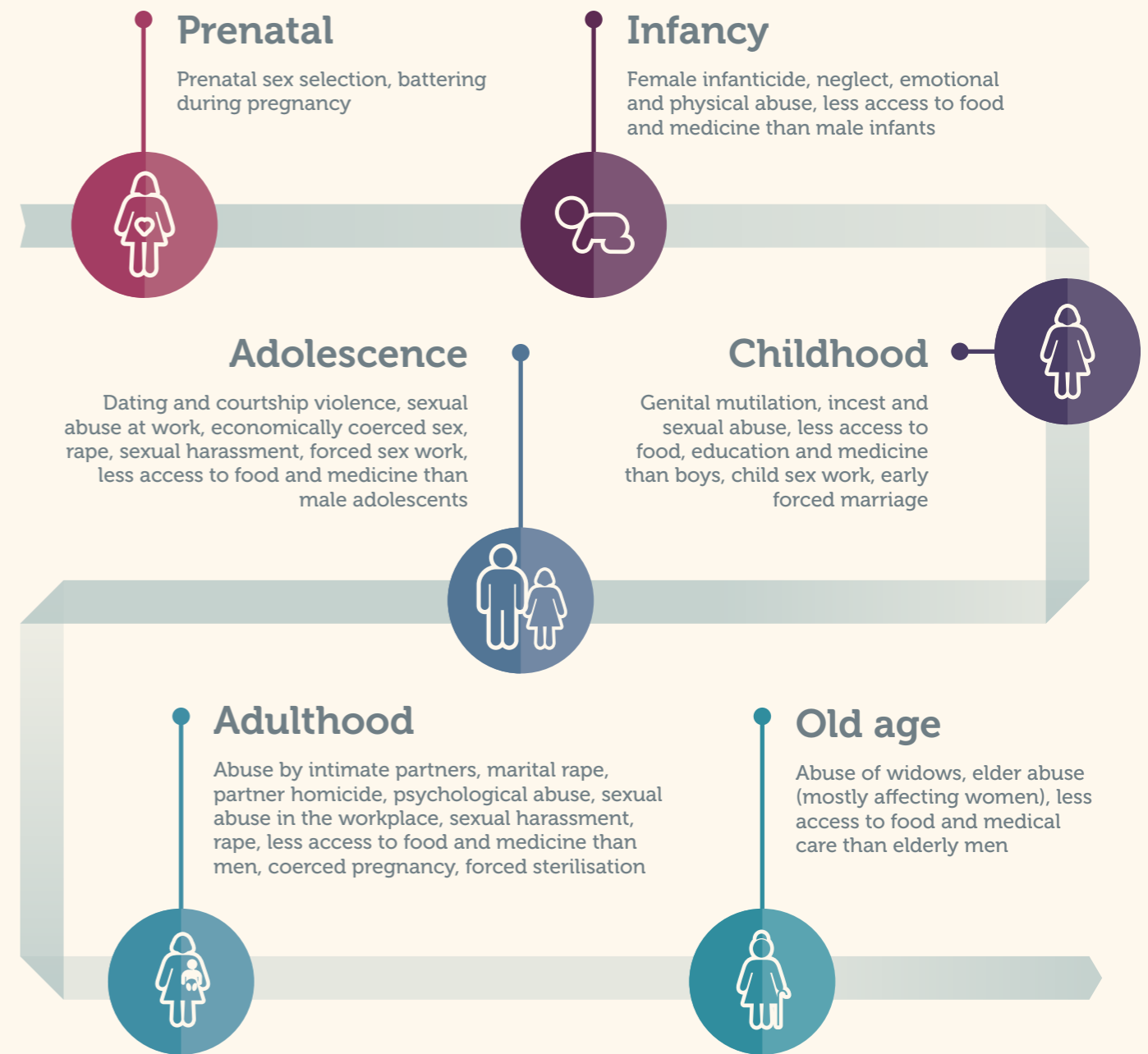
Tamars, the Syrophenician women, and the thousands of unnamed ones who cry out: "Lord, even the dogs under the table can eat the children's crumbs." I believe them, but why should they be content with the crumbs? After all, the word of the Lord says: "The sisters are right."

“ HOW DID PAUL MOVE FROM 'NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE,' TO ASSERTING HATS AND HEADSHIP? ”

A lifetime of violence

WHAT 'EVERYWOMAN' CAN EXPECT

The need for the Church to address the issue of GBV is perhaps best understood by understanding what women around the world face at every stage in their lives.



Information care of the Gender & Development Network. Table adapted from *Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden - World Bank Discussion Paper* by L. Heise, Washington DC, 1994.



THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

Violence against women is the least recognised human rights abuse in the world, and yet it is the most pervasive. The 2013 World Health Organisation report on violence against women reveals shocking regional and global statistics, but it is the stories of victims and survivors that can open our hearts and minds to the realities of physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse. Their stories speak of lives, families and even whole communities devastated

and diminished by it. It is tempting to imagine that gender based violence is not happening on our home turf and among members of our congregations, but sadly it appears that it affects every community and culture. All gender based violence is a fundamental affront to the dignity that is gifted to us when we are made in God's image.

If we are honest, we have to admit that the Church as an institution has a history of failure in this area. It has colluded with prevailing cultures which have too

frequently treated women as second-class members of the human race. This has fed a culture of silence and denial that has veiled the awful banality of gender based violence and the suffering it causes. Such collusion has failed to ensure that that the Church is a place where victims and survivors of violence find safe, stigma-free space where they will be listened to, believed and not blamed for the violence perpetrated against them, and where they will find the information and practical support they need to get their lives back

together again.

Pastorally, mistakes have been made. The sanctity of marriage has too frequently been championed without considering the behaviours which have led to a breakdown. Women have been sent back into violent situations and counselled to pray about it, or to try harder to bring their husband round, or to avoid anything that might 'set him off'.

Beyond the pastoral situation, the Church has shown a hefty degree of what can be described as structural violence. It has subtly endorsed and contributed to the enculturation of attitudes that perpetuate the unequal power relations between men and women which make room for violence against women. Instead of being a beacon for gender justice in the world, the Church has, at various times and places, modelled a patriarchy which has eroded the status and agency of women – within and beyond our church communities and structures. Women and men have equally become trapped in distorted mythologies around power. All this has at times been given theological respectability through cherry-picking texts from the Bible rather

“ IT'S TIME TO RECLAIM SCRIPTURE'S POSITIVE AND SUBVERSIVE NATURE ”

Galatians 3: 27, that the baptised life means being clothed with Christ and all that this implies, then ending gender based violence is all of our concern, for there are no second class members of the human race.

The good news is that there are many signs of a movement within the Church to break the silence and act in response to gender based violence. Programmes, ecumenical coalitions, church leaders and local churches are raising awareness. In different ways we are reaching out to survivors and challenging attitudes and behaviours within and beyond our churches which tacitly permit or overtly

“ GOVERNMENTS, POLICE FORCES AND JUDICIAL SYSTEMS ALONE CAN'T END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE ”

justify violence against women and girls. Contextual Bible studies and liturgies are being developed. More churches nationally and locally are participating in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence and the male-led White Ribbon movement to end men's violence against women. BMS World Mission and the Anglican Communion are among the membership of the global We Will Speak Out coalition of churches and faith-based organisations committed to ending sexual violence.

For sustainable change to happen, these faithful and commendable initiatives need to be accompanied by self-scrutiny within the Church and a determination to catch up with our own gospel values. It's time to look at Scripture again and reclaim its positive and often subversive nature – reclaim it, preach it and teach it. In Baptism preparation, in the marriage homily for the benefit of those marrying and the congregation witnessing the marriage, in our theological colleges

than considering the context or broader brushstrokes of Scripture. Around the world, national legislation is increasingly supporting women, though it takes time for judicial procedures to catch up, to gain community support for legislation and for men and women to learn what their rights and responsibilities are under the law. In the UK, police forces have been launching their own anti-domestic-violence campaigns and setting up domestic violence units and victim-centred procedures. But governments, police forces and judicial systems alone can't end gender based violence. Women alone can't end gender based violence. This isn't a women's issue; rather it's an issue for men and for women, for boys and for girls. It is certainly an issue for a Church which seeks to proclaim God's liberative mission in our world. If we are serious about the image of God of Genesis 1: 27, believing that women and men are made in God's image, and if we are serious about the baptismal character of

and ministerial training courses, the implications of our Bible-based belief that women and men are created in God's image has to be part of our foundation and part of our formation. We can be intentional about letting our young ones know about God-given human dignity and the dignity we should afford one another. We can liberate them from behaviours learned from prevailing attitudes around them. 'Using our power to diminish another is not ok.' 'Violence – whether physical or emotional – is not ok.'

How we care for survivors of violence and support their reintegration into society will vary according to context. In some parts of the world, it might mean getting a woman to a clinic within 72 hours of her being raped for post-exposure prophylaxis that could block transmission of HIV. It might mean income generating schemes, helping survivors who have been rejected by their families to find their feet and fend for themselves. Or it might mean praying with a woman who is being beaten at home and making sure she has a safe place to go and is in touch with the agencies that can help her.

We also have a role in working with perpetrators of violence. As Dr Rowan Williams has pointed out, the liberation of the oppressed has to include liberation of the oppressor. At the very least we can make sure we know about specific projects or agencies working with perpetrators of violence in our area. Good things are happening and they need to be noticed and blessed because the work is often counter-cultural and it is not easy. But if we want to change the narrative in our churches, if we want to see change in our communities and be seen as instigators and as credible partners in the work of gender justice – if we want to exemplify the change we long to see – then we have much more work to do. The way forward is not a battle of the sexes, but exactly the opposite; it needs men and women, together, finding in their Christian faith the deep things that will lead to transformation – our own transformation and the transformation of our diverse cultures, not least among our church communities.

You can find out more about structural violence against women by accessing the Gender and Development Network factsheets and the *Introducing Dignity* video on the Dignity DVD

GENDER AND GBV

VIEWING

INTRODUCING DIGNITY

Dignity DVD

This moving video introduces the importance of and need for a campaign like Dignity. It is a great way to begin engaging with this difficult subject and is easy to find on your Dignity DVD.

Also available at:

bmsworldmission.org/dignity

INSIGHT VIDEOS

Dignity DVD

Survivor testimonies from Uganda and India, as well as videos focusing on issues of justice, abuse and the realities of GBV in countries like Thailand and Mozambique are all available on the Dignity DVD.

IN CHURCHES TOO

Restored

A series of videos by BMS partner Restored that address the issue of GBV taking place within churches. Available under Further resources on the Dignity DVD.

READING

TEXTS OF TERROR: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives

Phyllis Trible

A key work of feminist Christianity that has influenced many of those writing in this issue of *Mission Catalyst*. It is almost unthinkable to try and understand the Christian response to GBV without engaging with this book.

THE CRY OF TAMAR: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response

Pamela Cooper-White

A challenge to churches today as much as it was in 1995, Cooper-White's book has become essential reading on gender for Christians around the world.

MINISTERIAL REFLECTIONS

Dignity DVD

Rev Anne Wilkinson-Hayes

A brilliant set of reflections for pastors and church leaders addressing questions such as: 'Why is this important for me?', 'Why is this important for my congregation?', 'Is this really something God is calling us to do?' and 'What can we do?'

DEEPER SCRIPTURAL INSIGHTS

Dignity DVD

Stephen Holmes (featured on page 6) writes two of these resources that will help you

think in a deeper way about key scriptures with GBV implications. David Kerrigan and Graham Doel from BMS also contribute. Brilliant for engaging small groups at your church with these important issues.

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE: From Hegemony to Partnership

Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth and Philip Vinod Peacock

This set of guidelines for discussion, theological reflection and Bible study was developed by the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches and aims to strengthen men's roles in ending gender violence. bit.ly/1na1JUw

PASTORAL GUIDANCE LEAFLETS

Baptist Union of Great Britain

A pack of resources produced for churches in partnership with BUBG to give us guidance

on how we can deal with GBV and understand the issues surrounding it in our churches. Available on the Dignity DVD in the Further resources section.

STREAMS OF GRACE

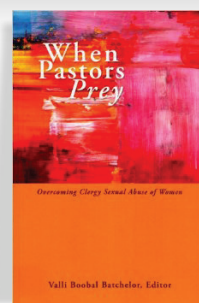
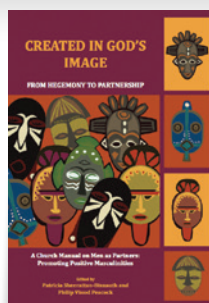
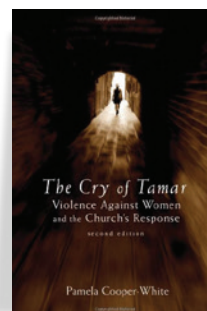
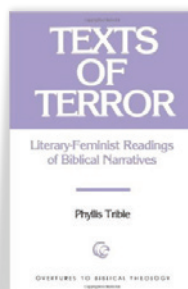
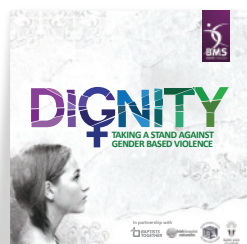
World Council of Churches

This dossier gathers examples from churches around the world of good practice regarding violence against women. bit.ly/Z9pK0j

WHEN PASTORS PREY: Overcoming Clergy Sexual Abuse of Women

Edited by Valli Boobal Batchelor, WCC Publications

This book looks at the sacred trust of ministry, tells the stories of women whose trust has been abused by their pastors and offers a framework within which to understand and address the problem.



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Mission Catalyst



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