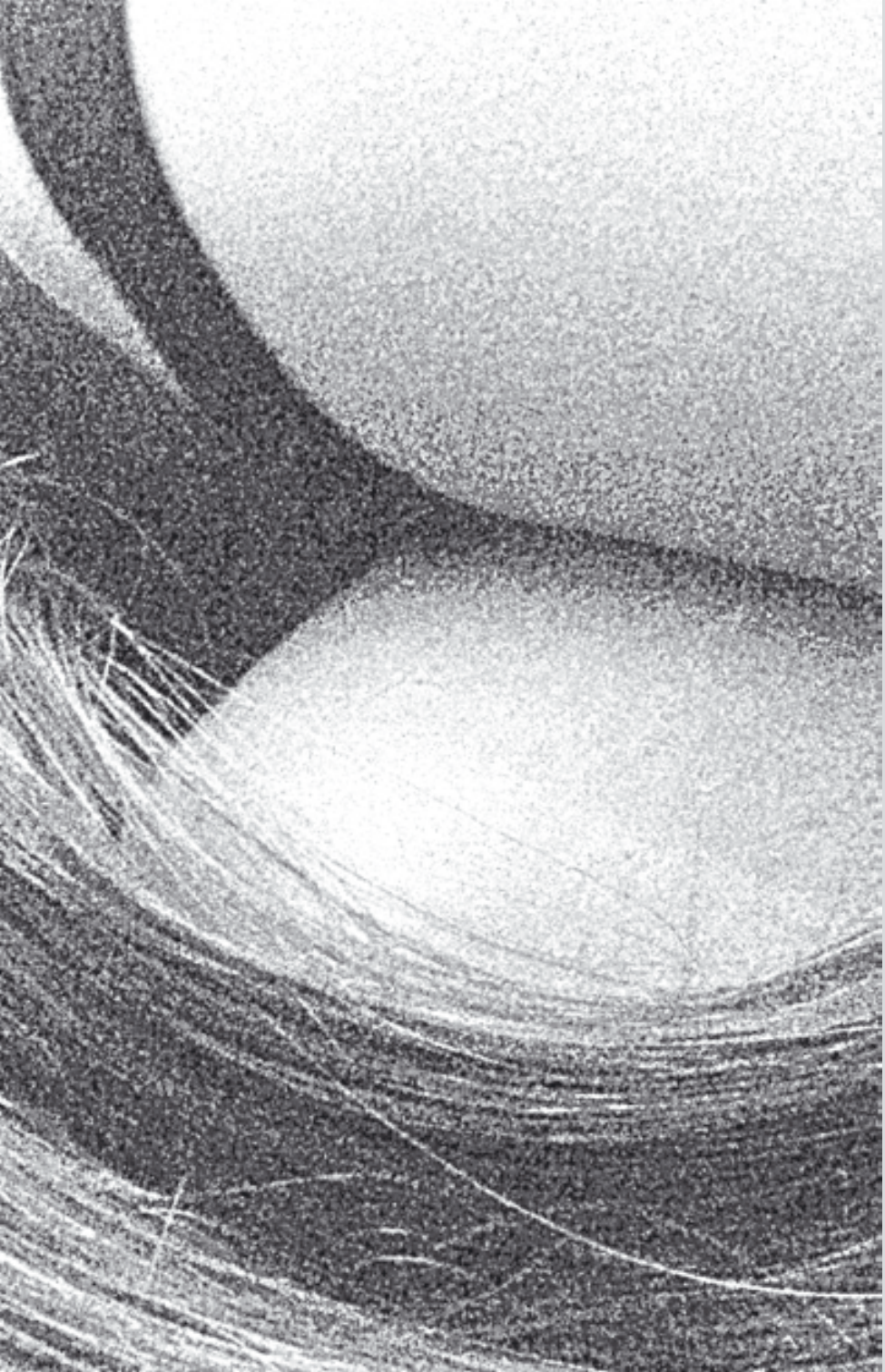

Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men.

UN Security Council, 2002

The sounds of women's silence run deep. Let us attune our ears to the sounds of women's silence, to attend and listen to what is not said, what has never been said, what is only now beginning to be said. Let this silence cry aloud in our ears, let it resound and reverberate inside our heads, let it deafen our whole being with its colossal roar.

Nicola Slee

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Isaiah 58:6

Editorial

‚I don't know,' he replied. ‚Am I my brother's keeper?' The LORD said, ‚What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.' Genesis 4; 9b-10

Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech... Proverbs 1; 20-21

As the breakout of World War I seemed eminent, WSCF distributed decorative pins to its students throughout the continent. If they ever met, on either side of the war zone, and saw an 'enemy' wearing the same pin, they would recognise that they were a part of the same student Christian movement.

What a stark symbol of the futility of war and violence. Such a sharp reminder that I too am like the other, that we are part of one humanity. I have not heard personal stories of conversations or meetings resulting from the pins, but the symbol itself is enough to remind us of our common humanity, to help us break out of the senseless cycle of violence.

But cycles of violence are often much more hidden than those present internationally in times of war. This publication follows the three year Lingua Franca campaign, Stop Being Silent! Identifying, Overcoming, and Preventing Domestic Violence. As statistics reveal – and there are many statistics in the coming pages – domestic violence permeates our society, churches, friendships, and families.

What does it take to identify and break cycles of domestic violence? The Lingua Franca seminars gathered students and activists from throughout Europe to examine and study this question. The first section of this Mozaik provides an overview of the Stop Being Silent! programme and related themes. In the second section, in articles from Slovakia to Azerbaijan, you can read about present realities of domestic violence in Europe today.

As a student-led ecumenical network, we must search inside our own churches and structures to root out the violence hidden within as we seek to follow biblical callings to free the oppressed. Are our homes and churches oases of healing and renewal that challenge injustice in society or do structures in our churches keep victims locked in oppression? An exploration of domestic violence and the Church by young theologians and activists makes up the third section of this publication. Let us raise our voices to create loving, safe places of sanctuary in our congregations.

I was given one of these WWI pins from WSCF in 2009. This pin, an average needle with a cross of about 4mm at its head, was much smaller than I expected. Much attention is required to locate it in the pocket where I keep it at the back of my journal, much more to notice it hidden on a uniform. But this is also a reminder that we sometimes are required to look closely to see the flaws in our traditions, mentalities, and ruling structures, to notice the humanity of the other, whom might easily be passed by as we go about our rushed daily schedules. How essential this is to being human, to following the Biblical call to love our neighbour, to being my sister and brother's keeper.

Yet the violence and devastation around us is so overwhelming. How can we respond to domestic violence and the violent tendencies that permeate our societies? How can we raise our voices in public discourse? In addition to being attentive to the needs of the neighbour, articles in the third section give creative examples of a variety of initiatives responding to violence against women throughout world.

In the Stop Being Silent! seminar in Serbia, at the end of one particularly challenging session examining war crimes against women by all sides in WWII, I was reminded of my pin. As I had brought my journal with me, I had also carried the pin. The pin was passed carefully from hand to hand throughout the room, between students from Czech Republic to Ukraine, Sweden to Romania, reminding us all of those hurting, those who are just like us. This symbolic pin challenged us to remember even those most difficult to relate to, those caught in generational cycles of abuse, who after being victims become abusers.

As explored at the seminars, even the connotations of the words victim, abuser, and observer often affect the way we view those involved in domestic violence. May we look beyond the surface of labels. May we not be silent witnesses. May we be pricked to action only by the sight and story of a gentle needle, by a reminder of the humanity which we share, to call aloud with wisdom in the streets.

A special thanks to the many who helped with the Stop Being Silent! campaign, namely to Jaanus Teose for all three seminars, and Lenka Matuskova in Slovakia, Gabor Nemet in Serbia, and Marta Gustavsson and Natallia Vasilevich in Belarus. We are thankful for the contributions of the participants who opened themselves to learning and dialogue in each seminar. Also, I thank Jill Piebiak for editing this issue with me.

That we all may be one in hope and deed,

RACHAEL

Overview

Present Realities

Violence and the Church

Responses

Final things

Stop Being Silent!

0verview, 2008 – 2010

Markus is a 34-year old Finn with a Master of

Rachael Weber

Domestic violence, i.e. violence occurring within the household, is the most widespread form of violence against women. Studies in thirty-five countries suggest that one-quarter to one-half or more of all women have been physically abused by a current or former partner or husband. It is the leading cause of injury to women that, for some, recurs almost every day leading, in some cases, to death.

Priscilla Singh, Churches Say 'No' to Violence Against Women[1]

The Lingua Franca programme of WSCF Europe started in the early nineties, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, to facilitate ecumenical exchange and to break down barriers of language and culture between the East and West. Student groups in Central and Eastern Europe, in Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, etc., would request teachers from the West, from Germany, the UK and France, to teach widely spoken languages. The teachers would then live with local families and become acquainted with the culture and daily life, and the families and students would learn about the teachers' cultures and lifestyles, thus facilitating a true dialogue of living and communing together.

Emerging from this beginning, Lingua Franca has developed into an ecumenical leadership training programme, gathering students from diverse backgrounds to live, dialogue, and learn together. The original idea for the Stop Being Silent! (SBS!) campaign was initiated in response to the World Council of Churches 'Decade to Overcome Violence' campaign.

We had many questions in the beginning. How can Lingua Franca address the issue of domestic violence from a unique perspective to fill unmet needs in our churches and society? How should the seminars develop from each other? And most importantly, how can we challenge students and young people to break the silence and speak out against domestic violence in their homes, churches, schools and governments?

The first SBS! seminar was held in a scenic hilltop convent in Nitra, Slovakia in August 2008, and provided a general overview of the topic. Expanding upon the event in Slovakia, in July 2009, the second seminar was held in Novi Sad, Serbia and examined the link between violence in society and violence in the home.

As WSCF has never held an event in Belarus, it was exciting to have the final seminar in Minsk in August 2010. The final training focused more specifically on overcoming views in society, politics, and the Church which perpetuate violence in the family, leading to domestic violence, exploitation, and trafficking.

1 The Lutheran World Federation's publication, Churches Say 'No' to Violence Against Women: Church action plan, was a valuable resource, among many others, for the SBS! programme. It can be found online at http://www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/resources/lwf-publications.

Introductions

If I would have been told in early 2008 that the seminars would have been in a hilltop convent in Slovakia, a Hungarian boarding school in Serbia, and in a seminary in Belarus, I would have doubted the possibilities. The seminar themes ended up flowing from each other in ways I would not have foreseen, from the evolution of the first as an introduction, to the specialisations and applications of the the second and third.

Providing an indirect way of introducing the topic, a home-made 'Myths and Facts' game of memory opened the thematics at each seminar. First, a myth was identified, such as "Domestic abuse is caused by excessive alcohol or the use of drugs". Then the fact was matched with it, "[A]lthough some abusers are more prone to being violent when drunk, many more abuse when completely sober. Alcohol and drugs may increase the violence, but they do not cause it... [B]laming chemical dependency for abuse is missing the point, the abuser is responsible for his actions".[2]

Jaanus Teose, the former WSCF-E gender coordinator, gave the introductory lecture at each seminar, introducing the topic of domestic violence and examining its warning signs. Making the introduction personal, thermometer exercises and role-plays on values and boundaries provided ways for all to introspectively examine personal beliefs relating to the topic. These role-plays were highlights in the programme, and the resulting discussions often went far beyond the allotted time.

To further help to break down barriers of language surrounding the topic, participants examined the meanings, connotations, and implications of the terms victim, abuser, and observer (and their synonyms, survivor, perpetrator or offender, and bystander). Brief lectures and games explored the use of gender-neutral language. Worksheets and discussions were used to further encourage speaking.

Roots, realities, and responses

The input of local activists and health professionals uncovered the ever present reality of domestic violence and its challenges and manifestations in society. Reflecting on the local setting, Bernardina Bodnárová, a local researcher, lectured on statistics about domestic violence throughout Slovakia. Such data is important to both raise awareness about the problem and to support legislation, but also to set up adequate response facilities. Similarly, examining the local context in Novi Sad, Serbia, Biljana Rakic led a session on 'How to Respond', based on her experience working as a psychologist in a local women's centre.

To explain the long term effects and interconnection of war rape, domestic violence, and trafficking on both the individual and on the community, Marijana Senjak, a

2 Some of the myths and facts used for this exercise, including this one, came from this website: http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/Victim/myths.htm.





psychologist from Croatia, spoke on the 'Impact of War Trauma on Domestic Violence in Post-Conflict Societies'. She worked at Medico Zenitsa, women's therapy centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for fifteen years during and after the war. Though she and other staff were Croatian, the Bosnian women bridged the racial hatred perpetrated by the war and allowed themselves to be helped. The stories and links she shared were very challenging, and she framed her lecture with a personal reflection activity often used in group therapy. Before she spoke, participants chose symbols to represent their feelings and strengths from a pile of stones and shells. The session closed when participants picked another symbol, this time representing future dreams.

In Minsk, Marta Gustavsson, a theology student from Sweden, gave an interactive lecture examining the multi-faceted relationship of globalisation, views of the body, theology, and violence. Dr. Agnes Galajda, a Hungarian judge, spoke on 'Domestic Violence and the Legal System' and examined legal protections, including the restraining order, which are used to safeguard victims. She also examined the challenges which make it difficult for these cases to reach criminal courts and receive verdicts before major injury or death.

Examining links to violence in the Church, Dr. Valli Batchelor, an activist from Malaysia, led an interactive session on 'Redefining Domestic Violence: Sexual Exploitation in the Church'. She focused on the issue of clergy sexual violence against women. The victims of clergy exploitation often do not receive the same help and care as those who are victimised by other professionals. Valli also led participants in dance to help release, through movement, the challenging stories they had heard.

In addition, participant-led panel discussions further explored the roots and realities of domestic violence in Europe. In panel discussions at each seminar, four to five participants from different countries presented on the realities of domestic violence in their own national and local settings, examining societal stereotypes, legislation, and social resources available for victims. These discussions allowed the participants to see examples of strategies used in different countries, as well as to observe the amount of resources still needed.

Responses to domestic violence were discussed and explored further in a variety of ways. In Nitra, much time was spent on learning to recognise situations of domestic violence and exploring ways to respond and get help. In Novi Sad, Andrijana Covic, from the local ombudsman office in Novi Sad, led a training session on 'Raising Awareness and Holding a Public Dialogue'. Using examples of challenges in the region, participants were divided into groups to brainstorm solutions and to identify where these solutions could be implemented (in the general public, the local government, or NGOs). In Minsk, a young Belarussian activist led a session on campaigning. He talked about efforts in Belarus to raise awareness of human rights and about the challenge of helping people to overcome fear and realise that they are capable of speaking out for change. He described the deep interconnection of faith and action, which provides the reason and internal strength for all of his work for social justice.

Breaking the silence

Direct responses to domestic violence are essential to help all get out of danger. Indirect responses, to change attitudes and mechanisms in society that ignore domestic violence or diminish its effect, are also integral to work to break the silence and end violence against women.

Sessions explored using alternative means, such as art, to address and transform stereotypes about domestic violence. Contrasting with media forms that reinforce gender stereotypes, current campaign and publicity materials used to combat domestic violence were shared in Nitra. In Novi Sad, Zana Hoxha Krasniqi, a theatre director from Kosovo, gave a presentation on 'Using Theater as a Tool in Fighting Stereotypes on Gender Roles and Domestic Violence in the Balkans'. In the final SBS! seminar, Dr. Valli Batchelor shared about her work with 'Journey Towards Hope', an intercultural project which works to break down barriers and empower women through dance.

Examining the necessity of breaking the silence, in Novi Sad, all listened to a broadcast discussing the release of a coming film, A Woman in Berlin, which explored the crimes committed by the Soviet army in East Berlin against German women. Even decades after the crimes were committed in East Germany, it was important for the German women to break the silence. Previously, because they felt guilt for their country's crimes, they had been even more reluctant to share their own experiences. The broadcast also explained how all armies in WWII, Allied and Axis alike, were guilty of such crimes, emphasising that the challenge of fighting violence against women is universal.

The 2001 film Chocolat, shown in Minsk, and the 2005 film North Country, shown at all 3 seminars, further explored the challenges of speaking out. North Country is based the true story of Lois Jenson, who experienced sexual harassment in her work at the coal mines. Her response to this abuse led to the first class-action lawsuit about sexual harassment in the work place, Jenson vs. Eveleth Taconite Company, setting a precedent for legal code throughout the world. The film starkly depicts the challenges and hardships faced when speaking out against violence, as other silent victims, friends, and the community re-victimise the victim. Yet, for all of the victims and the community in the film, breaking the silence was essential to find justice, healing, and safety for the future.

Prayer and Bible study

Bible study was an essential part of the SBS! programme. In Nitra, participants divided into groups to explore stories in the Bible related to the topic. Intense discussion followed, beginning with Adam and Eve, and continuing to Dinah and Shechem, Tamar and Amnon, to Christ's teachings and Paul's letters. The World Council of Churches' Tamar Campaign, a Bible study on 2 Samuel 13, was shared as

an example of a way to use Bible study to raise awareness about domestic violence in society.

In Minsk, in the Bible study on 'Christ and Four Women in the Gospels', participants divided into four groups to study passages about risks and healing (Mark 5:21-43), condemnation (John 7:53-8:11), worship and anointing (Luke 7:36-50), and prejudice and faith (John 4:1-42). Participants explored these questions in small groups and plenary: Is there any violence in this text? What barriers are present? What are the responses of the disciples, the women, Jesus and/or others? Is a cycle of violence broken? Does any vindication or healing take place?

In all seminars, in daily ecumenical prayers, participants joined together in prayer on domestic and gender violence in the world today. In the Sunday morning prayer, following the same pattern at each of the three SBS! seminars, participants read stories of women throughout the Bible, from Rehab to Mary Magdalene, and reflected on the voices of women silenced throughout history. In denominational prayers in the evenings, participants created and shared liturgies based on their own home traditions, allowing all to learn from and share in the diversity present.

What can we do now?

Each seminar ended with a 'What can we do now?' session. This took various forms in the different seminars, from using a four corners exercise to interactive skits. This is a challenge inherent in the subject and in the aim and work of WSCF. What can we as young people do?

The Stop Being Silent! campaign was the first of WSCF-E's efforts to develop the Lingua Franca training program into a sustainable campaign. We hope to branch from it, to launch into another focusing on combating trafficking and sexual exploitation.

But what are our responsibilities as individuals as we continue on with our daily routines after the seminars? By learning about domestic violence, and by being able to name and recognise the problem, already one hurdle is overcome. In closings sessions, from the organisers to the participants, all were challenged to raise the awareness of others and to respond when discovering situations of domestic violence. Echoing the quote from Martin Luther King, Jr, on the SBS! flyer,

'We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality... Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.'

Observing Violence

David Masters

Only once at university did I feel a twinge of regret for failing to read the required text. We were studying the military dictatorship that marred Brazil in the 1960s and 70s. The reading was from 'Nunca Mais', Never Again, the stories of victims tortured in those decades. I hadn't bothered to search out the text in the library, so I had no idea what the reading was about until I got to class. It was a chapter from the book documenting, in exact detail, torture techniques used by the regime.

I listened to my classmates summarise the reading to our teacher. They talked about the parrot perch, the little pepper, and the dragon's chair. My classmates respected the conventions and taboos of an academic classroom, and assumed everyone else knew what they were talking about. I respected these same taboos and didn't ask any questions. As they summarised the reading, my classmates left the graphic details in the text. Blood doesn't go down well in a classroom. It stains the carpet, worse than spilled coffee. I left class curious, and looked up the reading later, guiltily, as though searching for the secrets of power. I was fascinated by the worst things human beings can do to one another.

Violence is fascinating. It demands attention, and attention is easily given. Simply watch the evening news; look where the television cameras turn their gaze. Death and violence shout from the screen. Catholic priest Henri Nouwen puts it this way: 'Death is always glamorous. Death shines; it is always big and noisy. Death goes bang, bang!' [1]

1 H. Nouwen, *Be with Me, Lord: Prayers and reflections for the Advent season*, Creative Communications for the Parish, St. Louis, 1998, pp. 5-6.

During my time as a student, I spent a year studying the Bible at a Christian college. Before lectures each morning was a student-led devotion. Some students chose to greet the new day with worship songs; others led a Bible study. Sometimes we were sent out on a walk to enjoy the morning sunshine. Some people chose to share their testimony, the story of their life with God.

One morning we'd all gathered as usual in the lecture hall. The student leading the devotion simply stood in front of us, crying. Red eyes, tears streaming down her face, sobbing. Slowly, with stuttering words, she told the story of how as a teenager she'd been raped by a friend she trusted. Ever since she'd felt dirty, unworthy to be a child of God. That was a day we all listened with our full attention.

Another story. Blockbuster novelist Steig Larrson spent his adolescence in a shroud of guilt. At age fifteen he failed to intervene as his friends gang raped a girl. He simply watched, helpless. His self-disgust at his inaction inspired him in later life to write *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, a best selling mystery novel that confronts and exposes male brutality. Each section of the book is prefaced with statistics on male violence. Lisbeth Salandar, Larsson's heroine detective, is herself subjected to brutal sexual torture at the hands of a man appointed to protect her. Larsson shows no timidity in his rape scenes. Salander is spared no mercy, and neither is the reader. Salander's rape is described in harrowing detail. One reviewer goes so far as to denounce Larsson's

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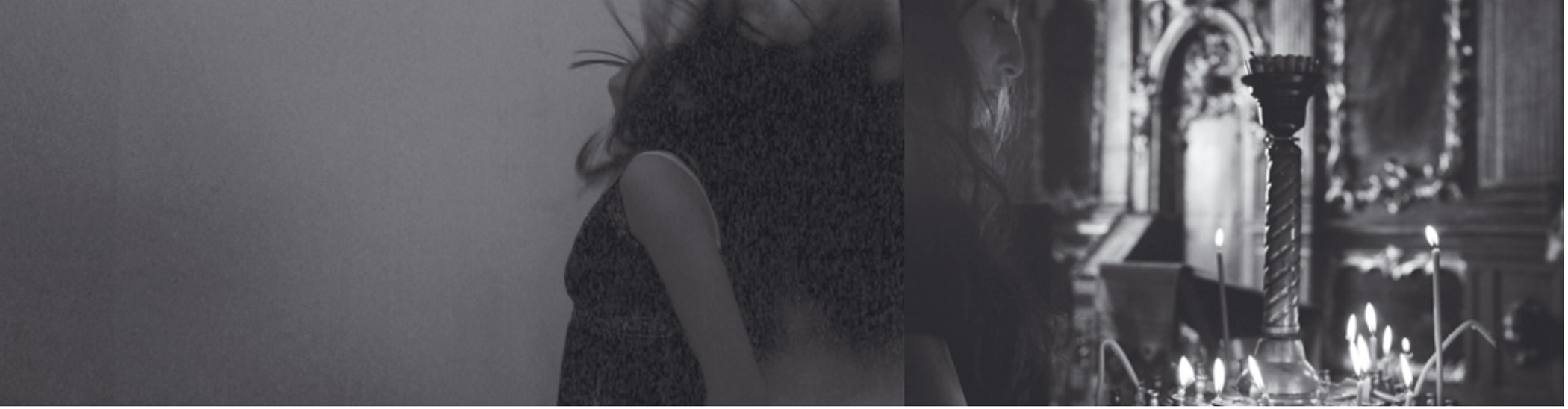

How much grace should we extend to ourselves in watching violence until we say, no, this is enough, I need to do something?

work as 'verging on pornographic'. Yet part of the appeal of Larsson's books is the grotesque violence. It lures the reader into a dark world. The violence is enticing, it holds you, you want to read more.

This voyeurism – looking on an act of sexual torture and humiliation – lies at the heart of the Christian faith. Without shame we can gaze upon a man's naked body, hung on a wooden beam, broken, bruised and bloody by the worst things human beings know how to do to one another.

As a Christian, it's difficult to understand why an image of torture lies at the heart of our faith. Why would a God of love allow such a thing to happen? Why does God allow such things to happen every day?

To cover our eyes from the questions, the blood has been cleaned from the crucifix so it will not stain church carpets. At the same time, Cathedral gift shops, Christian bookshops and high street jewellery shops all cash in on selling crucifixes, a graven image of a tortured, anguished, dying peasant.

Some Christians attempt to face up to the difficult questions. Wrestling with their faith as Jacob wrestled with God, some find themselves blaming the Christ, who willingly accepted his sufferings on the cross, for perpetuating violence, for being an inspiration for violence, or – perhaps worse – for being an inspiration for choosing the role of victim. They're not wrong. Lucia tells the story of her husband.

Still others claim that through Christ's death on the cross the sheer brutality and meaningless of violence was exposed, unveiled for all to see. Death and violence lose their sting. James Alison argues that in the torture, murder, and resurrection of Christ:

> *the whole mechanism by which death retains people in its thrall had been shown to be unnecessary. Whatever death is, it is not something which has to structure every human life from within (as in fact it does), but rather it is an empty shell, a bark without a bite.* [2]

Like the theologians who grapple with Christ's death, I never understood why my student friend at Bible college told her story of being raped. Yet to this day I remember the story and my thoughts and feelings as she told it. Perhaps it's an attempt to let go, I thought. I also remember feeling helpless. What am I supposed to do about this, I wondered selfishly. Why have you left me with this?

Did the disciples feel this way as they sat in a locked room after Jesus' crucifixion? They'd seen their leader humiliated, stripped naked, spat in the face, mocked, and whipped. They'd felt the cruel fascination as they watched the nails driven through his hands, as they heard the bone splinter; they'd felt a silent relief that this was someone else. Their hands and bodies are still intact. Only their sleep is broken; their dreams are harrowing. You can see it in their bloodshot eyes. What are we supposed to do with this, they wonder. Why have you left us with this?

Can looking on violence ever be a good thing? Can it be a redemptive experience? More crudely, can I find healing in someone else's suffering, suffering that I did not cause but that fascinates me to watch or read about?

I don't think there's a simple answer to this question. It's a messy question, tinged with all the ambiguities of being human. Looking upon violence can be simultaneously fascinating and repulsive. It can be inspiration for action. It can be met with indifference or apathy. Watching violence can leave you boiling inside with anger: I hate that this happens, but what can I do about it?

How much grace should we extend to ourselves in watching violence until we say, no, this is enough, I need to do something?

Those who speak out against violence do so in faith, hope, and love. Faith in humanity, that people are capable of change, and that telling stories of violence can bring about change. Hope that change is possible. And love for all people that creates the desire for a better world.

Violence is definite and definitive; it sets clear boundaries, black and white, right and wrong. Yet peace exists in the borderline, in the cracks in between, in paradox. And here sit the stories of violence: in the borderline between fascination and repulsion, between voyeurism and genuine concern. These cracks of peace are the places people brave enough to share their story – and those with the courage to challenge violence – choose to inhabit.

3 Alison, James, *Living in the End Times*, SPCK Publishing, p. 29.

Globalisation and the Body

Marta is a student of theology at the University of Gothenburg and a former board member for the Swedish SCM, KRISS. Last winter she finished her bachelor's thesis in Systematical Theology, exploring the theological and existential background to and challenges in global capitalism. Marta is, in general, very interested in politics, feminism, and the strive for justice, but she is equally passionate about good food, music, dancing, and beautiful things.

Marta Gustavsson

When I was asked to lead a session on 'Globalisation and the Body' at the Stop Being Silent! *seminar in Minsk, it struck me that these are the two main focuses I have had throughout my studies in theology, but I have never thought to combine them.*

I will approach this subject as a theologian. I am aware that my studies have had a Western focus and that I am coloured by a Protestant understanding of Christian faith. My aim is not to upset anyone from any tradition but to give a respectful challenge to all of our traditions.

Globalisation

In simple terms I would say that globalisation refers to the growth in the ease and normalcy of transactions of money, goods and information, and also relates to the way we perceive the world. Nowadays, we take for granted that within a few seconds an e-mail reaches our friend even if this friend is in China or Brazil. At the same time, we might open a package of chocolate, in which the beans are grown in Ghana or the Ivory Coast, but the bar itself is produced in Switzerland by an American-owned company which then distributes it – enabling me and my friend to open exactly the same kind of chocolate even if this friend is in China. It has become a small world, or at least much, much smaller than it used to be.

But globalisation does not affect the world's population equally. Participation in the globalised world varies, often depending upon if you happened to be born in Belarus, South Africa, Indonesia, or Sweden. But the people who are *not at all* affected by globalisation in one way or another are – if at all existing – an ever decreasing number.

Through the globalisation of goods, money, and information, values are also globalised. This is especially interesting when talking about the body. Our former local ideologies regarding everything from greetings and manners to perceptions of beauty are more and more undermined by a global culture, a 'lingua franca' if you like, becoming the mother tongue of many people.

I do not believe that the local traditions will disappear completely but that they will also fit in the scheme of a global self-understanding. When we celebrate the special feasts of our local cultures or uphold our special cultural habits, we will do this with the self-consciousness that we do it *because* we are Belarussian, Swedish, Azeri, or Armenian. The local traditions, habits, and preferences likely will continue only as choices beside the options of the globalised culture, which in some way we will consider ourselves to own.

Tradition and globalisation

What is the Church's view on globalisation in light of tradition? Well, the Church knew globalisation far before the word was ever mentioned. The Church is global in its essence.

First of all, the Church is the body of Christ – that is, among other things, the embodiment of God's saving plan for the world, for the entire creation. The mission of the Church is always connected to the original 'God saw that it was good' and the wish in God's being to restore creation to this goodness, as shown in the entire history of salvation. That is why the Church always has to refer to itself as global, universal, and Catholic and take the challenges of this seriously.

Secondly, the mission God gives to humanity and the Church has always been to spread and embrace all there is. In creation we read the command to procreate and fill the world. And in Jesus' ministry he tells us to go out and make *all peoples* his disciples. The Church, all people belonging to God, has from the beginning set out on a concrete globalised mission: to let the light shine all over the world.

Finally, it is about belonging. From the very start, from the first spread of Christianity from place to place – towards the Far East, Northern Africa, and the Roman Empire – we can see how belonging to the Cross and the commandment to keep peace have always kept the Church globalised. Even if it eventually divided, even if some parts of the Church lost contact with others, the prayers for the Church all over the world were not (and are not) silent.

Differing from the globalisation we know in late capitalism, the Church would never accept an end with nobody's responsibility. The Church is, on the contrary, very good at taking responsibility, guilt or sin so to speak, very seriously. The Church is called, in its essence, to acknowledge its trespasses and to express its willingness for repentance. If one part suffers it is the Church's responsibility and even duty to feel affected – as a proper body would – and therefore to act to alleviate this suffering. As the globalisation of money, goods, and information leave people suffering and nobody with apparent responsibility, the Church should form the perfected globalisation of prayer, participation, and struggle to alleviate the pain and if possible change the system of injustice to a new order of love, responsibility, and trust.

Now to the body

The body is an entity with which we express and perceive, feel, get hurt, attract and repel. The body is in one way connected to all that we are, but can also in some way be expressed as something other than our selves. The way the body has been presented and perceived varies through different times and cultures, and also has differences regarding gender, age, race, and class.

What we attach to the body is mostly ideology; our values and the values of our community condensed into habits are marks telling our position within given communities. Outside this ideology, the life-world through which we understand ourselves, much could possibly be expressed by the body. But this would all be meaningless as it would be outside the hermeneutic horizon we use for interpreting ourselves and others. The communication of our body, as all communication we participate in, is somewhat limited by the given references of our particular time and space.

The body is in one way connected to all that we are, but can also in some way be expressed as something other than our selves.

Thus, when we talk about the symbols of our body, I am not sure we always talk about the same things. I somehow rely on our common globalised ideology as mentioned before.

A body communicates power, or lack of power, through a complex web of symbols. Through symbols such as gender (which we code almost immediately when looking on a person), skin colour, origin, and beauty, we ascribe people different values and therefore places in the power hierarchies and relations we participate in. There are also ways, of course, to affect your role of power through how you present yourself and use body language.

Gender and sexual desire are often the things we first refer to when we talk of the body. Sex and sexuality are indeed some of the things we most clearly communicate bodily. Sex is one of the things we first code when facing another person's body – we almost immediately know if someone is a woman or a man. When the codes we have for the two sexes are not sufficient, this is often provocative or even upsetting. It is also important to note that concepts of sex and sexuality as we perceive them have historical and spatial limits. This was not once and for all given and understood the same way through all times; even between our local cultures and different Church denominations, we can see differences in this.

The body, communicating a sex, also communicates sexuality and desirableness according to several culturally determined parameters. This is often performed to be in accordance with an ideal heterosexual couple – women performing womanliness and men performing manliness as to attract the 'opposite', thus fitting in the economy of desire provided by society. This does not mean that the feelings of desire would not be 'real', only that the ways we present ourselves as women and men are features in our attempts to sexual attraction. Even non-normative gender presentations and sexual desires, I believe, are in some way connected to these economies by forming counter economies or other kinds of 'alternatives'.

But gender is not only a way of presenting desire but also a way to present power-relations, hierarchies, violence and fear. Swedish debater and politician, Katrine Kielos has written a book on rape where she concludes that the female gender presentation relies as much on desire and sexuality as on the constant threat of rape, which she is taught to avoid. Because if she is raped 'something' is damaged which she has been responsible for. This something, her body's value, has been broken and defiled. The warnings have been there, of course, a girl hears nothing but those warnings 'don't walk alone in the darkness', 'don't dress like a slut', 'don't follow men you don't know'. And when rape happens, within her own home by her husband or boyfriend or outside on the street, she concludes that the guilt is hers as a way to explain the violence she has experienced.

But, Kielos writes, even if the rape never occurs, the threat, the potentiality of rape and sexual violence is forming and restricting the female presentation of her body. She does not fully trust her body and learns that she is not allowed to use the public space freely. Therefore she does not develop her skills and strength as she might have been able to. If every day is spent balancing between attracting male desire and protecting the body from male desire, this will affect both the body and the presentation of self in power hierarchies.

Others, such as the theologian Lisa Isherwood using the gender theorist Margaret Jackson, have claimed that marriage is risky business in this aspect – and this challenge is important for us in Church and in religious discussions. She says that there is a dominant agenda in the way we consider sex within marriage in the missionary position as normal and natural. This norm is eroticised so that women, schooled to know how to act and feel

in this given situation, by their own desire, will wish for male dominance. This allowance for male dominance and power may also be the first step towards male violence. This is a challenge for our churches, if we wish to overcome domestic violence and continue to communicate marriage as inherently valuable. How can we change the norm for our conducted marriages so that their eroticism will give birth to love and trust and not to violence and dominance?

A historical illustration

It is also important to stress that not only the socially presented sex, what we usually refers to as 'gender', is interpreted by ideology but also the biological sex and the sexed body as such. Before the medical explorations of the Enlightenment in the 18th century, the female body was understood as a male body that had not developed to its full potential. The woman was seen as an imperfect version of the man. This was revised when the medical doctors in the 18th century explored human genitals further. Because of their discoveries, common ideology shifted to viewing both sexes as fundamentally different, which in one way engendered the two sexes into even more fixed categories. This ideology shift, I believe, was also part of the reason for a shift in theology towards concepts of female/male complementarity.

When the feminist project started in the 20th century, the strive for equality was very much about equalising the roles and possibilities for women to those of men, enabling women to go from passive roles to the traditional active and creative male roles. Soon feminist thinkers, such as Simone de Beauvoir, were criticised for using a male role model for the feminist project, meaning that the woman had to 'become a man' for completeness. Instead the idea of a feminine subject, equal but different from the male subject, took form. And now, I hear again from people who want to destabilise gender for the pursuit of gender fluid identities that the penis and the vagina are essentially the same organ.

By this I do not want to claim anything other than that the body is ideologically interpreted and that each interpretation may carry an agenda. Thus, if we need a special subject, like the feminine, for a certain purpose – such as for liberation in light of domestic violence – we should let the reason for this be certain experiences and not an essentialist notion of the body.

Christianity and the body

Any investigation on the Christian view of the body should start at the Cross, with Christ himself. The Passion – meaning both suffering and deep desire – is the image of the body which cannot be reduced to soul matter. The body on the cross tells us that our bodies have significance. It tells us of Gods enfleshment. God, humanised, being dehumanised into the very bone, on the shameful pole, abused, ridiculed, bleeding and eventually giving up his breath.

No Christian theology can escape this. Those who tried – like some Gnostic movements in the first centuries and even some preachers today – must be (and have been) accused of failure to understand the basics of Christian faith. Incarnation and redemption depend on each other, only the word made flesh can, in a Christian understanding, be the word that truly lived among us.

When facing the bleeding head of Jesus, his hands, his feet, the wound in his side, we do not only face him but also every sacrificed, slaughtered, abused, torn, and bleeding body. We see the raped woman, the abused youth, the suffocated child, the elder no one cared for. And we see ourselves, somehow, and our own littleness and our pains. But we also see another side of this: resurrection, vindication, and eternal life. The Christian hope is not only through identification with the torn body but also an eschatological hope of resurrection – of the body!

The body is also in the Eucharist, when we share bread and wine: the body sacrificed for us, the blood shed for us. We receive part of the broken bread, and we become the broken (not the perfect) body. The Church is an image of Christ who, though resurrected, still carries the wounds and remembrances of bodily pain and humiliation. So whenever anyone in Christian teachings wants to set mind and spirit over the body, remember this: the Word was made flesh. God became human, stretched out in a bodily reality, sharing our bodily experiences, and this is what we count as crucial for our salvation. This must mean that matters of salvation in a Christian understanding must have to do with matters of both individual bodies and the body of community.

The body in globalisation

In a globalised world, when we talk about the body as beautiful or disgraceful, when we approach the different symbols and meanings of body, sex, sexuality, and value, we will have increasingly the same opinions.

We must also address commodification. In globalisation, as we face it today, our bodies have become commodities – things to be bought and sold, exposed and exploited. The body has suddenly a price and no intrinsic worth; it can be exchanged in a second. Still the body often seems to be the only thing of value for those who have lost everything else of worth. The body might not give you love but could possibly give you appreciation. That is why, I believe, in the suburban areas where poverty deprives people of honour, worth, morality, and trust, the body is still very well treated, perfected through diets and exercise and then generously exposed.

And what about violence? Globalisation has given us some very concrete issues of bodily violence to deal with, those of trafficking, sex tourism, and the easy spread of pornographic material, including child porn. In the globalised world, this violence comes into our lives and affects our bodies immediately. The body sold and displayed as a commodity in a globalised format is a body submitted to globalised structures. These structures, since they are made for buying and selling, are and increasingly will be structures of hierarchical powers as power relations in general are economically generative in a short-term perspective.

Thus, the Church (and other religious institutions) must, as a parallel global system, also play the part of counter globalisation, not in terms of anti-globalisation, making local all what once was. The Church's counter globalisation must be to re-establish values attached to every part of creation, including every body on the earth – female, poor, queer, oppressed, appalling, and disabled bodies. What is poorly valued in the order of the world is known and valued by God, and this should also be visible in Her people.

Globalisation has given us some very concrete issues of bodily violence to deal with, those of trafficking, sex tourism, and the easy spread of pornographic material. In the globalised world, this violence comes into our lives and affects our bodies immediately.

Suggested reading:

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S McFague, *The Body of God: An ecological theology*, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1993.

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A Prayer Inspired by *Stop Being Silent!*

Marta Gustavsson

(R: Reader, A: All)

R: God be praised, You who wanted wholeness
and created it with breath
on the mirror.
A whispered word, be.
Then I became.

A: You saw us crying and You cried
You saw us in anguish and it tormented You
You saw us wounded and You became like us
broken and shameful.

R: The ones You loved let You down.
You were diminished and taunted and beaten.
You were denied, they turned their back on You, they
who were supposed to be there.

(If used as a Eucharist prayer, say the words of consecration here.)

A: You, who could die, encourage us.
You, who could resurrect, vindicate us.
A day for breaking up will come.

R: Blow with your healing spirit-breath
on the wounds still bleeding.
Be the wind of comfort,
the still carrying hand.

A: God be praised, You who wanted wholeness

and created us.

Domestic Violence in the Slovak Republic

Bernardína Bodnárová

Domestic violence is a serious social and health phenomenon. It includes a variety of violent behaviours by perpetrators towards victims: including physical attacks, and psychological, social, economic, and sexual abuse. The vast majority of violent relationships are characterised as partner or couple violence. In reality, no one in the family is hidden from the violent attacks of the abuser. Domestic violence is a real danger for individuals, family life, and the whole of society in general.

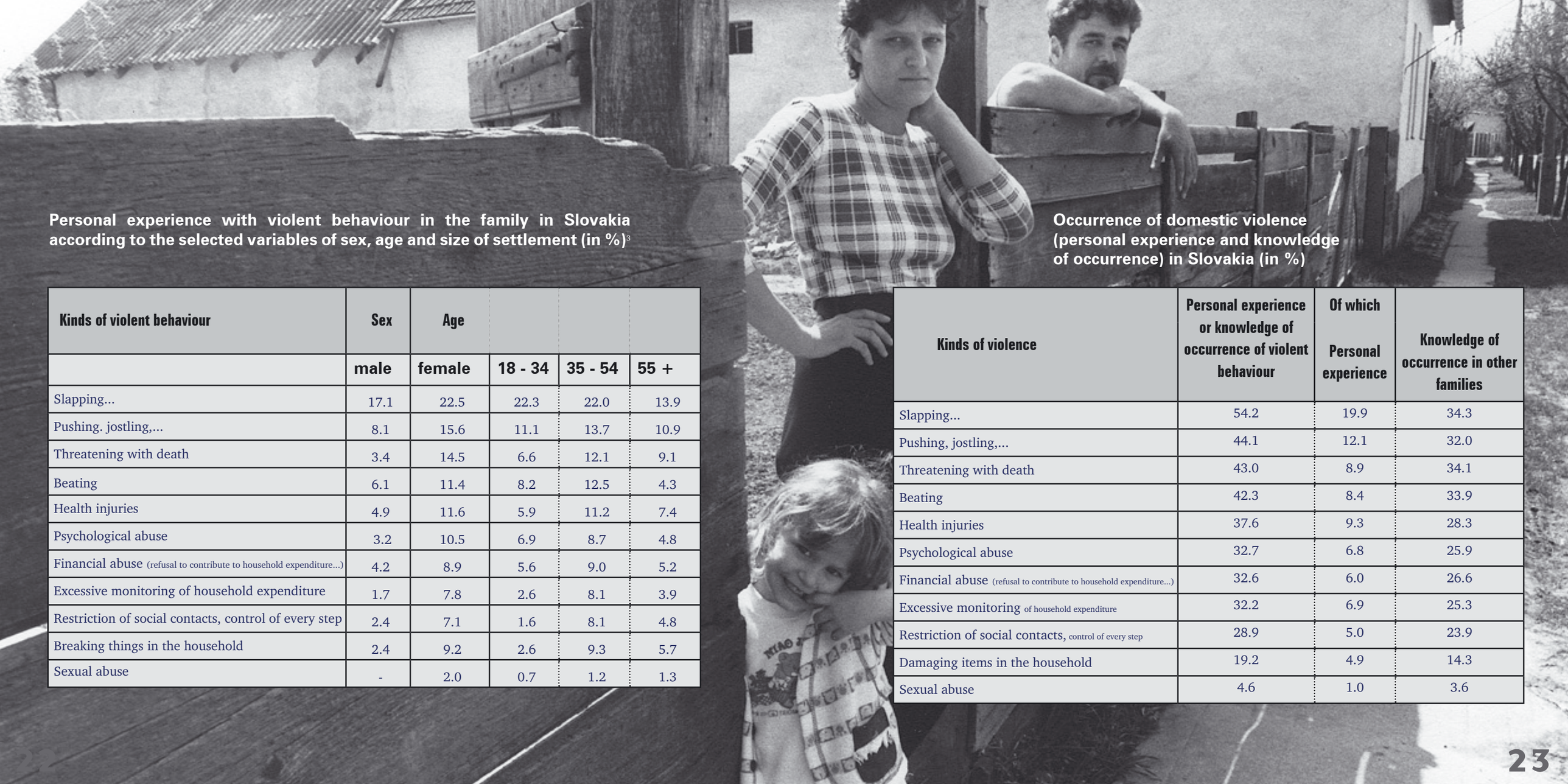
Domestic violence damages families and increases societal costs for treating direct and indirect victims of violence. Ideally, the family is a natural environment for the well-being of its members, a unit that provides protection. Domestic violence creates conditions that force victims to leave home and family and search for safety for themselves. Society often perceives domestic violence through an economic lens, through the increasing costs necessary for treating the health problems of the victims and the absence of victims in the work place or family.

Those who experience domestic violence exhibit physical and psychological effects; they feel anxious, ashamed, helpless. In addition to the direct victims of the perpetrator's violent behaviour, there are also secondary victims, those who live in the social climate and witness the violence. This group of victims consists mostly of children who exhibit many psychological disturbances: trauma, stress, insomnia, or changes in attitude towards classmates and teachers as a result of the home atmosphere. Some of them learn violent behaviour themselves.

In Slovakia, both domestic and intimate partner or couple violence have been taboo subjects for a long time. The actual situation was such that even the terms domestic or partner violence were not used. To describe these phenomena the phrases 'crisis in the marriage' or 'family crisis' were used. Both domestic and partner violence were not viewed as criminal for a long time and the perpetrators could not be punished. The couples who were living in violent relationships were referred to marriage counselling.

The perception of domestic and partner violence in Slovakia started to change in the 1990s. In the beginning, female non-governmental organisations began to address the issues of violence against women. These NGOs were the first to disseminate information from abroad and to provide help to the victims of violence. They identified partner and domestic violence as social problems that require public attention. At the turn of 2001 and 2002 they organised the first nationwide campaign 'The Fifth Woman', which focused on violence against women. To disclose partner and domestic violence, they used arguments from foreign studies since there was not any systematic collection of knowledge about domestic violence in Slovakia. The first sociological survey on domestic violence and violence against women was carried out in 2001 on a clinical sample that was later followed by other studies.

Bernardína Bodnárová studied sociology and polictical economy at Comenius University in Bratislava. Now she works as a senior researcher in the Institute for Labour and Family Research. In her professional life, she dealt with family and social policy and in recent years has concentrated her attention on family violence. She has participated in national and international research teams and is the author or co-author of several books and articles.



Personal experience with violent behaviour in the family in Slovakia according to the selected variables of sex, age and size of settlement (in %)[3]

Kinds of violent behaviour	Sex	Age			
	male	female	18 - 34	35 - 54	55 +
Slapping...	17.1	22.5	22.3	22.0	13.9
Pushing. jostling,...	8.1	15.6	11.1	13.7	10.9
Threatening with death	3.4	14.5	6.6	12.1	9.1
Beating	6.1	11.4	8.2	12.5	4.3
Health injuries	4.9	11.6	5.9	11.2	7.4
Psychological abuse	3.2	10.5	6.9	8.7	4.8
Financial abuse (refusal to contribute to household expenditure...)	4.2	8.9	5.6	9.0	5.2
Excessive monitoring of household expenditure	1.7	7.8	2.6	8.1	3.9
Restriction of social contacts, control of every step	2.4	7.1	1.6	8.1	4.8
Breaking things in the household	2.4	9.2	2.6	9.3	5.7
Sexual abuse	-	2.0	0.7	1.2	1.3

Occurrence of domestic violence (personal experience and knowledge of occurrence) in Slovakia (in %)

Kinds of violence	Personal experience or knowledge of occurrence of violent behaviour	Of which Personal experience	Knowledge of occurrence in other families
Slapping...	54.2	19.9	34.3
Pushing, jostling,...	44.1	12.1	32.0
Threatening with death	43.0	8.9	34.1
Beating	42.3	8.4	33.9
Health injuries	37.6	9.3	28.3
Psychological abuse	32.7	6.8	25.9
Financial abuse (refusal to contribute to household expenditure...)	32.6	6.0	26.6
Excessive monitoring of household expenditure	32.2	6.9	25.3
Restriction of social contacts, control of every step	28.9	5.0	23.9
Damaging items in the household	19.2	4.9	14.3
Sexual abuse	4.6	1.0	3.6

Prevalence and forms of domestic violence in Slovakia

For the purposes of research, domestic violence has been defined as: 'Any violent act in which the victim and perpetrator are currently or were in the past in a personal relationship'. The research sample consisted of 856 male and female participants over 18 years of age. The basic selective characteristics for research sample construction were the region of residence, size of municipality, sex, age, and education. Data was gathered from October to November 2002. Eleven indicators of domestic violence, covering 5 basic forms of violence, were selected to monitor the occurrence of domestic violence:

physical violence: slapping, pushing, threatening to kill, battering, and injuring;
psychological violence: psychological abuse;
economic violence: financial abuse, excessive monitoring of expenses, damaging things in the flat/house;
social violence: restriction of contacts with a member of the family or contacts with friends, etc., and control of movement;
sexual violence: sexual abuse.

Occurrence of each of the mentioned forms of violence was surveyed based on the respondent's personal experience or from his/her knowledge of family members and acquaintances. Thus, information was also gathered about violent acts (in the same structure) in larger families or in the households of friends, neighbours, and colleagues.

'Any violent act in which the victim and perpetrator are currently or were in the past in a personal relationship'.

Results from data collected showed that much of the Slovak population has both personal experience with domestic violence and knowledge about violence in other households. The rate, however, in occurrence of various types of measured violence is different.

Surveying personal experiences with violent behaviour as well as knowledge about occurrences of domestic violence in families nearby and in larger neighbourhoods has revealed that, in Slovakia, the less harmful forms of physical violence are the most common. In all monitored dimensions and for all monitored indicators of violent behaviour in families, it has been shown that women are definitely more frequent victims of domestic violence.

The personal experience of those interviewed also differed according to age. People between the ages of 35 and 54 were the most frequent to admit to a personal experience of violent behaviour from a member of their family. The only exceptions were ‚being slapped by a member of the family', where there was a slight prevalence of younger age groups, and ‚sexual abuse', where there were more answers from persons over 55.

Causes and triggers of violent behaviour

Sociologists paid close attention to the causes of domestic violence in their surveys. They tried to identify the reason for domestic violence or the situation at the initiation of domestic/partner violence.

Our data showed that respondents interpreted many phenomena as reasons for domestic violence in Slovakia. The most frequent thought cause reported was alcoholism of the violent person (87.6%). Other often mentioned causes listed by respondents included incorrect upbringing during childhood (68%), and the personal characteristics and violent character of the perpetrator (61.9%). Data revealed that violence is not the result of only one cause; usually it is the result of many complex factors.

In most cases of partner violence, it was reported that violent behaviour started after marriage (31.3%). In 12.2% of cases of married couples, the violent behaviour started when one of the partners established an extra-marital relationship, and in 9.5% it was triggered after a child was born. In most families, the violent behaviour started after the perpetrator became inebriated (49.4%). In the second largest portion of families (42.6%), violence erupted after the victim was contradictory/offensive to the perpetrator. In many families, violence is the result of complex factors and it is difficult to identify the main factor. Some victims of domestic violence share the opinion that violence in their families is continually present and the abuser does not require any trigger to act violently towards the victim. According to the study, the atmosphere of violence in the family lasts varying lengths of time, though on average it lasts over approximately fourteen years.[2]

Public attitudes towards punishment of children

It is proven that children who have lived in violent family atmospheres may learn violent behaviour. They can use such behaviour against their peers or later, in their adult life, against partners or children. Also, children whose parents used beating for discipline may learn violent behaviour and use violence to take power in situations where they want to promote something. A new approach to child upbringing prefers positive activity, including talking with the child and explaining the situation, instead of using physical punishment. There are still many people who accept corporal and other forms of punishment for children. Many parents agreed with the occasional spanking of a child´s bottom by hand when the situation requires (68.8 %), but only 2.8 % agreed with repeated battering. Physical punishment is accepted mostly by the elder population.[4]

Public opinion and domestic violence

Many people in Slovakia have adopted the idea that domestic violence is not only a private family matter and that violent behaviour must be stopped. They agree with procedures that reduce domestic violence with the support of policy makers, services, police, health workers, the education system, etc. The public condemnation of this phenomenon helps to approach a social zero tolerance of domestic violence. It appears to be very helpful to educate people that violence is a criminal act, not a private matter. Those who commit violence in the family violate human rights and it is not justifiable.

Communication with the public about various spheres of domestic violence is essential, as it makes the public sensitive to situations in violent households. It is also necessary to share the knowledge of where to find help in case of domestic violence widely. Public support helps to implement more effective procedures for stopping domestic violence.

The most effective measures used to reduce domestic violence among the Slovak population were police intervention and education systems, teaching that no one is allowed to harm another person anywhere, even in the privacy of home. Also, social services, including shelters providing asylum and safety for women who suffer from domestic violence, were much preferred measures.

Summary

In a relatively short period of time, much work has been done in the area of domestic violence and violence against women in Slovakia. From the very beginning, women's NGOs contributed massively to change. They attracted the attention of policy makers, the support of public institutions to help victims of violence, and contributed to the formation of public opinion.

Laws protecting victims of domestic violence have been adopted. Changes in legislation establish legal background for police intervention in violent homes. Further laws support service formation, including shelters for victims and their children. Police have been authorised to remove the perpetrators from the home and in this way ensure the safety of threatened persons. Experts say this is not enough to ensure the victim's safety, because this protective measure is only valid for two days.

The Social Services Act created conditions for establishing various kinds of services that, among other things, could assist the victims of domestic violence. These services could be provided by public, non-profit, non-governmental bodies. The law on social-legal protection and social guardianship created the environment and procedures for protecting abused and neglected children.

The services area is still considered underdeveloped and there is more work to be done. They play a very important task in the safety, security, prevention, discovery and treatment of the impacts of domestic violence. Effective services have to be complex and well coordinated to be able to help victims of domestic violence and return them to common daily life without anxiety, fear, or trauma. There is a gap in services to be filled.

There are many households in which children are abused and neglected but there are many more households in which children witness violence in the family. We have a lot of knowledge about children who are direct victims of violence, and we have the legislation and services to help those children. However, we have less knowledge about and services for children who witness domestic violence. Until recently, little attention has been devoted to this area. Similarly, there is not enough work done researching how to train professionals in various occupations to address this problem.

Thus, many reforms have occurred in Slovakia since the early 90s in efforts to work for the identification and prevention of domestic violence, as well as to protect victims and raise awareness about this hidden phenomenon. The latest research findings show that there are still many women who are not satisfied with the assistance they were provided with. In addition, relatively large regional differences in assistance are seen, which shows that still more is needed to improve the response, mostly in bodies that provide assistance immediately after the case of violence is reported, e.g. police. Much must still be done, and the work of both education and prevention continues on.

There are many households in which children are abused and neglected but there are many more households in which children witness violence in the family.

One of the first sociological surveys on domestic violence was carried out with the cooperation of sociologists and psychologists from Centres for Psychological Counselling Services, which are organisations that focus on counselling. People who go there to find help with various life struggles, including domestic violence. Psychologists working in these organisations asked those experiencing domestic violence to compete a reporting form that aimed to collect information on domestic violence. Within one year, there were 441 report forms. From this point of view, this research sample has the character of a clinic sample (consisted of people who decided to try to find help arbitrarily or they were advised to go there and ask for help). This data is not representative as it was collected in one type of organisation from people who had information about where to go for help. This data was processed and published in Bodnárová - Filadelfiová 2002/2.

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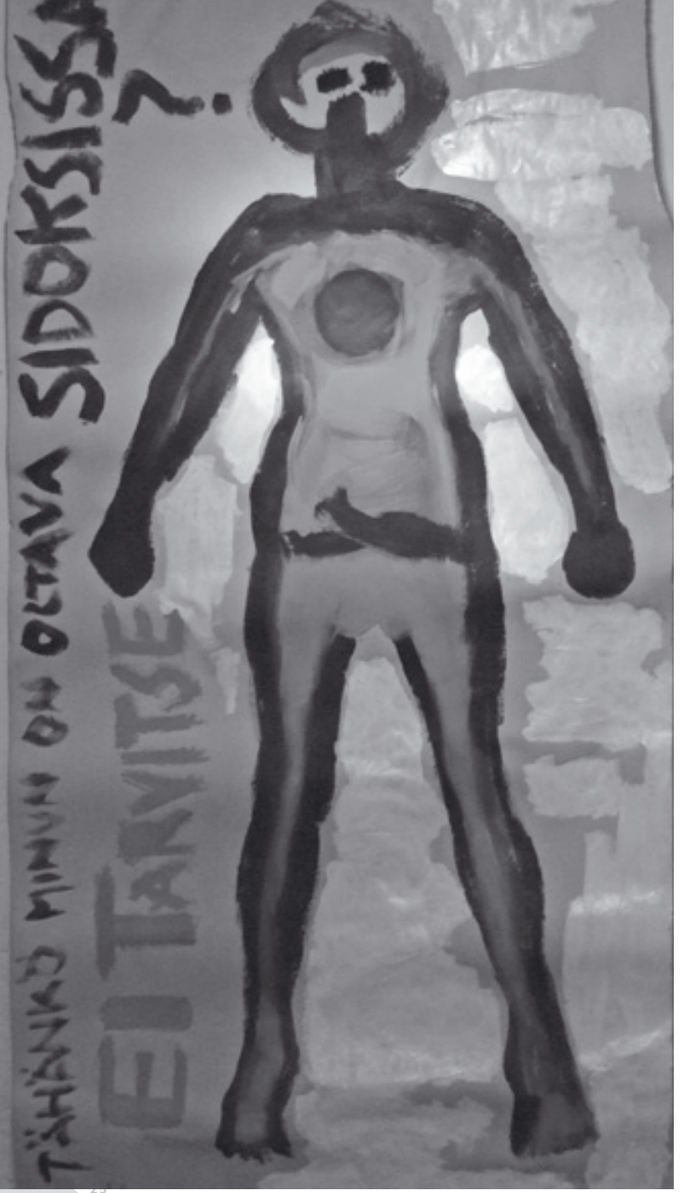

Kohtu, Kivi, Ihminen

Hanna Kuisma and Tanja Roiha submitted this reflection on their artwork, which was shown in an exhibition in Finland, and is on the preceeding pages, 20, and 28 to 46.

Simply said, the name of the exhibition was ‘Womb, Stone, Human Being’, in Finnish ‘Kohtu, Kivi, Ihminen’.

The process was a kind of journey that took almost a year. Paintings were made and therapy sessions held about once a month. The exhibition tells two stories about searching and finding, guestions and mental growth. The main idea in the paintings is to portray the genuine feelings as they were when they emerged.

Our therapist also painted two works for both of us as feedback. These are not included in the photos. We wrote a few poems along the way, but they have gone missing.

Giving the paintings to the exhibition was not an easy decision but we were glad we did it. Feedback from the visitors was great. Many of them found something which moved them or gave them something to think about. But more than that, by putting something very intimate in the public space, it changed how we ourselves looked at the paintings: it gave new perspectives to the old issues.

We discovered that the exhibition made the private something social and shared, just by hanging paintings on the walls. Maybe this is not surprising, but now we have personally experienced how this transition feels and happens. We humans are very similar, and we need to share.

The main idea in the paintings is to portray the genuine feelings as they were when they emerged.

Gender Violence in Georgia

Magda Lekiashvili graduated from the Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Social and Political Science with a degree in journalism in 2010. She is 21 years old, and currently works as a correspondent for the Georgian daily newspaper '24 Hours'. Magda is a member of the board of the NGO 'Young Christians for Peace and Democracy' (YCPD). As YCDP is interested in gender issues, she took part in the SBS! seminar in Belarus in 2010.

Nino Kikvadze is 21 and works for the NGO 'Young Christians for Peace and Democracy' as the vice chair. She often writes articles about minorities and especially about violence. Nino has taken part in many trainings, conferences and youth meetings against gender and family violence, racism, and intolerance. She attended the SBS! Seminar in Novi Sad in 2009. She graduated from the Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences.

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Young Christians for Peace and Democracy (YCPD)

Magda Lekiashvili and Nino Kikvadze

Our organisation, Young Christians for Peace and Democracy (YCPD), actively participates in activities which aim to overcome violence. After the Lingua Franca *Stop Being Silent!* seminar in Novi Sad, we held one training against gender violence in Georgia in the Tbilisi State University on 8 April 2010. Students from various universities were able to take part in this training. It was a one day meeting supported by the United Nations Development Foundation (UNFPA) and the International Centre on Conflicts and Negotiations (ICCN).

YCPD is interested in researching gender and family violence and finding ways to prevent and overcome it. This article is about gender violence, specifically about family violence in Georgia. First, we overview the challenges of definitions of gender and sex, then we briefly examine gender stereotypes in Georgia and give a few statistics on gender violence in Georgia. Following this background information, we interviewed Rusudan Gotsiridze, a member of the ICCN, an organisation that works on this theme and takes steps to address these problems.

Gender in Georgia

Gender is an English word. Originally, it was a grammatical term and meant the sex of a noun. In the second half of the 20th century, social scientists began to use the word 'gender' to explain men's and women's functions in social and cultural environments.

To understand gender, we must distinguish it from the word sex, which refers to men's and women's physiological attributes. People are most often born with a biological sex, and in most cases, for example, this denotes whether or not someone can give birth to children. Sex is determined by biology.

Different from the biological sex of a person, a person's gender refers to their appearances, expectations or roles in society (male or female), and is dependent on the social environment. People are born with a biological sex, but they are taught how to behave and feel the gender expectations placed on their particular sex. These gender roles also include expectations of the positions they will have in the family and in society. These exterior expectations are issued by the extended and immediate family and by authorities and religious or cultural institutions.

Female and male gender roles also differ depending on culture, and they even vary within different social groups consolidated within one culture. In spite of these differences, in most cases the dominating structure in Georgia is patriarchal, and women are given minor positions. But we must not view gender issues as a challenge and problem only for women, as gender issues can be difficult for both sexes.

Gender itself, however, is a neutral issue and is not innately good or bad. Gender is an instrument to understand social processes and their classifications. Despite this, many societies have or form gender stereotypes, which, in most cases, give inexact exterior expectations about men's and women's abilities, social behaviours, and functions. If the society is very traditional, the gender stereotypes are even stronger. It is said that Georgia has a traditional society, because our people strictly value our ancestors' traditions. Thus it is no surprise that there are many gender stereotypes in Georgia.

The mainline gender stereotypes in Georgia are as follows: the woman's role is to be at home, to take care of children and, opposite of this, the man must work to earn money. Women must be compliant; they are not viewed as having the same intellectual abilities as men. Men have different characters and they are more aggressive. They are seen as rougher, cleverer, and as more rational. These stereotypes often lead to discrimination, sexism, and even can fuel or be used to justify domestic violence.

Gender-based violence

Sexism is based on gender stereotypes and is discrimination against someone based on their sex. Sexism is only one example of gender-based violence.

The most common form of gender violence in Georgia is family violence (or domestic violence), which can be divided into two parts. It can be both physical (one person abusing another's body, from striking to biting to sexual assault) and psychological (aimed at manipulating someone's mind).

There has been a lot of research on this in Georgia. According to the results of a study in 2006 in Tblisi, every 4th or 5th (22.2%) woman recognises that she is a victim of physical violence. Research done on psychological violence shows that 44% of women in Georgia are victims.[1] The study questions and results follow:

The fight against domestic violence is at the top of the agenda for the Georgian government, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, as well as other agencies including local and international

The mainline gender stereotypes in Georgia are as follows: the woman's role is to be at home, to take care of children and, opposite of this, the man must work to earn money. Women must be compliant; they are not viewed as having the same intellectual abilities as men.

1 'Domestic Violence Against Women: Multi-component research', Tbilisi, 2006, p. 25 and p.41.

N1) How often has your husband or partner physically assaulted you or attempted to physically assault you?

	Distribution in %
Attempted a couple times but never did it	6.5
Once or twice	11.4
Multiple times	5.2
It took place previously but not now	5.6
It never took place	70.5

N2) Were there cases when your husband made you feel:

	Distribution in %
That you are incapable of independent decision making	***56.6***
That you are nothing without him and will perish	***44.9***

organisations. For this purpose, in 2006, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a law 'On the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection of and Extending Assistance to the Victims of Violence'.

Interview with ICCN

Family Violence in Georgia has been investigated by the non-governmental organisation ICCN. We interviewed a member of ICCN, Rusudan Gotsiridze (RG), for further information on his work.[2]

RG - ICCN was founded in 1995. Our initial aim was to hold trainings, which were linked to the conflicts. ICCN's work spreads in several directions. We pay more attention to religious and ethnic minorities and to gender issues. For over a year ICCN has had close relations to the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), which ran a program called 'Overcome Gender Violence in Georgia'. Our organisation executes this mission in Georgia.

NL and MK - *What are your main aims?*

RG - The main aim of our organisation is to raise awareness in society. We hold trainings which are executed in two stages. In the first stage, 200 people in Georgia are trained. They then will hold second stage trainings about gender violence. They also work to raise awareness and spread knowledge to others about individual rights. With knowledge of their rights, many will then be better able to identify, prevent, and overcome gender violence themselves.

NL and MK - *How you choose the participants of the trainings?*

RG – Normally, the participants are those who are in risk groups that are most likely to become potential victims. Often the participants are housewives who do not work outside the home, and thus often lack information on gender violence and their rights.

RG - Of course we do investigative research, but we are not the only ones. With this gathered information, we compiled statistics about gender violence. As usual, when studying gender violence, you get into closer contact with men and women, both of which can be victims. But our research shows that 90% of victims of gender violence are women.

The main achievement of our trainings is that people begin to talk loudly about such issues in society. Women no longer feel ashamed to recognise that they are victims. In addition, as they are now protected by the new law, every victim has a possibility to speak about their experiences and the violence committed against them. They can appeal to law enforcement or other organisations.

We must point out that there are many organisations which not only spread information about gender violence, but also work with victims of the violence. In Georgia, there are institutions, safe-houses, where victims live together. They have 'round tables' and they talk about their struggles and problems. Many of these organisations also help victims to find employment so that they are not forced to stay in abusive homes for economic reasons. This is also very important for their communication and integration with others.

The initial stage of our project, to inform and protect members of Georgian society through the first trainings, has been completed.

In conclusion, the work of non-governmental organisations to address gender violence in Georgia is generally very helpful for people who are victims and suffer every day. Nowadays, many people who could not even voice their problems before have places to talk about them and to share them with society. More and more involvement and more financial and psychological support for victims will be next step to overcoming gender violence in Georgia.
seriously concerned that insufficient efforts have been introduced to assess and combat violence against women, particularly in the light of the fact that socio-economic and physical hardships usually increase the incidence of violence, especially in the domestic sphere.

2 *An Interview - Rusudan Gotsiridze works in Gender Issues. An Interview with journalists Nino Kikvadze, Magda Lekiashvili, 18.01.2010, Tbilisi, Georgia.*

Domestic Violence in Azerbaijan

Matlab Asgar is from Baku, Azerbaijan. He is a fundraiser for AEGEE-Baki and he volunteers in the Magnus Education Center as a speaker and trainer. He is a reporter for the Free Thought University and an issue analyst for the organisation Americans for Informed Democracy. He enjoys playing the guitar and piano and dreams of being a famous reporter. He spoke on domestic violences in Azerbaijan in the panel discussion at the SBS! seminar in Minsk in 2010.

Matlab Asgar

Domestic violence against women is a taboo subject in Azerbaijan's patriarchal society. It is one of the main obstacles to achieving gender equality in all spheres of life. Realising this, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted in January 1998, that it was

> *seriously concerned that insufficient efforts have been introduced to assess and combat violence against women, particularly in the light of the fact that socio-economic and physical hardships usually increase the incidence of violence, especially in the domestic sphere.*

The Human Rights Committee also noted with concern in November 2001,

> *that domestic violence is apparently not acknowledged to be a problem and that information on these matters is not systematically maintained, that women have a low level of awareness of their rights and the remedies available to them, and that complaints are not being adequately dealt with.*

The Women's Rights Monitoring Group of the Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan carried out research on domestic violence in six Azerbaijani regions. The results showed that 35.3% of women had been subjected to violence by their male relatives; 21.3% believed that men did not respect women's opinions; 20.2% of women complained of moral humiliation; and 19.8% of women were under the physical influence of men. However, there are no reliable state statistics about the violence against women in general and about domestic violence in particular. In Azerbaijan, it is not acceptable 'to seek solutions for family problems outside of the family or household'. Moreover, women/girls are not accepted or encouraged to go to the police in the cases of abuse by husbands, brothers or fathers. A complaint to the police would be badly perceived not only by the victim's family, relatives, and public opinion, but also by the representatives of authority and the policemen to whom the woman would go to.

It is reported that women are often deprived of their rights to self-determination (independent decision-making), equal participation within the family, and to proper education and employment opportunities as compared to male counterparts. It is also worth noting that the majority of abused women do not consider the abuse, which they suffer within the home, as morally humiliating. Society largely considers the phenomenon to be a part of social life; domestic violence is also known to be prevalent in Azerbaijan's society. The problem of domestic violence is one of the most common and difficult problems in the Republic. Despite its prevalence within society, the problem is silenced. Wives, who suffer violence from the side of husbands, may refer to the authorities, but young girls, who suffer systematic violence from their fathers and brothers, almost never turn to the authorities.

The Women's Crisis Center was established in 2001 with the Institute of Peace and Democracy and represented the first, and, thus, the only women's organisation in Azerbaijan. Until 2003, the Women's Crisis Center has helped

1,884 women and girls with their problems of domestic violence. In the first nine months of 2004, the Women's Crisis Center received 1,507 cases. Created in January 2004, the Family Crisis Center, accepted 42 victims of domestic violence within the first nine months of its conception.

Women's human rights activists have also been subjected to harassment in Azerbaijan. Pressure on the activists and human rights NGOs have been imposed in several ways:

- *Despite the current legislation, the Ministry of Justice rejects the majority of human rights NGOs from official registration or fails to issue licenses to these NGOs for official operation.*
- *The media, both electronic and printed, is controlled by the authorities and constantly discredits the activities of women's rights defenders. The media depicts them as the enemies of society, whose activities are directed against the interests of the nation. It is necessary to consider that in Azerbaijan independent television is generally absent. All electronic media is under the control of the authorities, and consequently forms public opinion.*
- *Though authorities rarely follow through with their threats to use violence, they widely use law enforcement agencies against female human rights activists.*

Domestic violence is not private problem; it is national problem. Let's protect each other!

The media, both electronic and printed, is controlled by the authorities and constantly discredits the activities of women's rights defenders. The media depicts them as the enemies of society, whose activities are directed against the interests of the nation.

Gender Roles and Domestic Violence in Ireland

Jooa Miriam Vuorinen was born in Tohmajärvi in 1981. She studied Orthodox theology in Joensuu University and graduated with master's degree in 2005. Currently she is living in Helsinki and writing a PhD in theology. She is the Links Coordinator of WSCF-E. She studied Orthodox theology in Joensuu University and graduated with master's degree in 2005. Currently she is living in Helsinki and writing a PhD in theology. She is the Links Coordinator of WSCF-E. She studied Orthodox theology in Joensuu University and graduated with master's degree in 2005. Currently she is living in Helsinki and writing a PhD in theology. She is the Links Coordinator of WSCF-E.

John Delap

Phoenix Street is a single-lane road in a disadvantaged neighborhood known as Ballyfermot, just west of the Dublin city centre. Each of the houses on Phoenix Street are identical two story, brick-fronted, terraced cottages. Mick Gaynor, a retired mechanical technician, lives in Number 27. He has lived alone since his wife passed away four years ago. Mick is nice fellow, approachable, easy-to-talk-to, and funny. Despite these qualities, Mick's life is a lonely one. Mick has no family in Dublin and his closest relatives (a niece and nephew) live five hours from Dublin in County Donegal. Aside from short trips to the parish church and the local supermarket, Mick rarely leaves his house. When his wife was still alive, Mick led a very active life, attending various social gatherings sponsored by societies of which his wife was a member. At these meetings, Mick would often socialise with other men and women. Since his wife passed away, however, Mick has found that keeping up these social contacts has proven too difficult for him.

In 2008, Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland, announced the launch of a new initiative which seeks to address the roots of societal norms which have led to a starkly higher rate of social isolation among Irish men than among Irish women of the same age. On the occasion of the launch, President McAleese said: 'I often attend senior citizens events, and one of the things that would perplex me would be the vast number of women and the small number of men at these events. I would ask where all the men are. They just are not as good at social engagements as women. Rural men living alone are particularly vulnerable'.[1]

That this isolation occurs at such a high rate gives some indication of how difficult people can find it, particularly Irish men, to discuss their personal lives. This may have to do with the way in which the family, as a social unit, functions in Irish society. The family unit (that of a man, woman and, on occasion, children) is held in high regard in Ireland. The institution of the family is protected by specific language in the Irish Constitution. The Irish public generally accepts that one's immediate family is the first point of contact for all concerns. The prevailing view of the family is that the 'man of the house' is the chief breadwinner, while women and children stay at home. In recent years, there has been a growing number of households in which both parents engage in full-time employment, but, even in these scenarios, studies have shown that the women in each household end up contributing far more hours to cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing than their male counterparts.

Family matters are frequently viewed as private matters and the family home is frequently viewed as a private space. Social drinking in public arenas, most commonly pubs or alehouses, plays a significant role in the daily lives of Irish people. Socialisation occurs far more frequently in the public space of a pub than in the private space of a family home. What one says or how one acts in the public forum of a pub, where intoxicating beverages are a common feature, is commonly kept quite distinct from the more private words and actions behind closed doors within a family unit. This public/private culture is quite strong in present day Ireland and, as such, there is a certain generally accepted sense that subjects of a personal nature are taboo. This is particularly true with cases of domestic violence.

There is no way of knowing exactly how many cases of domestic violence occur each year. A national study, conducted in 2005 by the National Crime Council of Ireland, found that 1 in 7 Irish women have experienced severe abusive behavior of a physical, sexual, or emotional nature from a partner at some times in their lives. The survey estimates that 213,000 women in Ireland have been severely abused by a partner.[2] 213,000 people is about 5% of the total population of Ireland.

There are a number of practicing and policy-based organizations operating in Ireland to address cases of domestic violence. Irish Women's Aid and SAFE Ireland are two NGOs working to raise awareness of domestic violence among the Irish public. A 24-hour emergency phone line is also available. State organisations, such as the Irish Equality Authority and the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence, function to secure needed funding and implement the law. Other groups, such as the not-for-profit group AMEN, serve as a support system for male victims of domestic violence. A national housing organization, Threshold, provides advice and guidance to anyone seeking alternative accommodation or emergency housing.

One might ask what role the church is playing in relation to domestic violence. In Ireland, 90% of the population identify as Roman Catholic. The Catholic Church in Ireland funds and promotes the Catholic Marriage Care Service. This is a service that married men or women can avail of for counseling, therapy, and other supports (homosexual couples and unmarried 'co-habiting' couples are ineligible). Among married couples in Ireland, the rate of uptake of the services offered by the Church is quite low. The Church offers reasons why this might be so on its own website, as follows:

Because couples sometimes see this type of [service] as an admission that there is something wrong with their relationship, it can be difficult to convince them otherwise. Another reason for couple's reluctance is that men can be reluctant to get involved, perhaps from a fear of change or it may be from the point of view that it is not a macho thing to do.

There is space for the Irish Catholic Church to do more in relation to raising awareness of domestic violence and in relation to outreach for victims. In 2010, however, secular groups have taken the lead in championing the rights of women, men, and children to live lives free from the threat of violence and the related physical, social, and economic suffering.

Addressing domestic violence in a holistic way necessarily involves addressing the roots of societal constructions of behavior for men and women alike. Perhaps both the Church and the State have a good deal to learn from the experiences of Mick Gaynor, and from the experiences of many other Irishmen and Irishwomen. Discussions of gender roles and the impact of domestic violence must not only occur in the halls of academia and on the pages of magazines and newspapers, but also, and perhaps most crucially, in local pubs all around Ireland. Both the Church and the State have roles to play in breaking down the social stigma associated with discussing private affairs in public. If the majority of the Irish public is comfortable discussing domestic violence down in the pub then we, as a society, will be well on our way towards securing a safe and just Ireland for all.

1 'President Mary McAleese asks "Where are all the men?"', *RTÉ Press Centre*, 8 May 2008, <http://www.rte.ie/about/pressreleases/2008/0508/radio1presidentmay2008.html>, accessed 15 November 2010.

2 D Watson and S Parsons, 'Domestic Abuse of Women and Men in Ireland: Report on the National Study of Domestic Abuse', *National Crime Council and ERSI*, The Stationary Office, Dublin, 2005.

The Hungarian Association of Women Judges

Dr. Agnes Galajda, a criminal judge in Hungary and the founder and president of the Hungarian Association of Women Judges, led a session on ‚Domestic Violence and the Legal System' at the Stop Being Silent! seminar in Minsk in 2010.

Dr. Agnes Galajda

History

Shortly after World War II, Hungary became a communist country under the influence of the Soviet Union. In 1989, the peaceful transition to a multiparty democracy took place. Hungary is now a member of NATO (1999) and the European Union (2004). Most of the legislative reform that has been implemented was based on the need to join the EU and to harmonise Hungary's legal system with EU norms. The Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and other laws have been amended also.

But accession to the EU did not solve all the problems; it could not change the people's thinking or the attitudes of experts in relation to violence in the home. Many rules incorporated in several laws ensure the enforcement of human rights and generally provide adequate guarantees. But it is still important to question whether or not these legal regulations offer effective protection for victims of domestic violence. These questions have special relevance in transitional societies, like Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. In these countries, there is a general tendency to insure that everything is institutionalised. The first period of change focused on safeguarding the human rights of the offender. These rights stressed the legislators, and they later dealt with the human rights of the victims.

I am afraid the change of rule is not enough. It is rather easy to draft legislation in general, but very difficult to change social attitudes, especially on issues that have long traditions in the given country. An evaluation of domestic violence provides a perfect example of this.

Professional and social approach to domestic violence in Hungary

There is no separate legislation in force relating to domestic violence. This fact strongly determines the rights, possibilities, and procedures of the authorities in regard to such cases. Unfortunately, many judges, lawyers and other legal practitioners generally think that domestic violence is no different from any other violent crime, like battery, or homicide, only that it is committed within the family.

Since there is no separate legislation on domestic violence, there is no education for judges on this matter. This casual relationship continues; as there are no specialised cases, there are no specialised judges. In addition, the normal education judges receive does not elaborate on family law. Judges interested in further educating themselves do so voluntarily.

In the continental legal system, where written law is very important, it is imperative for the state to send a clear message on domestic violence through legal provisions. When it comes to safeguarding victims of domestic violence Hungarian law is still inadequate even though it has made some progress.

The Hungarian Parliament accepted a resolution in which it defined a relevant strategy to deal with the problem of domestic violence (45/2003) in 2003. This act defined tasks for several government agencies and NGOs. Earlier the same legislative year, the Parliament had accepted a crime prevention strategy in which the problem of domestic violence was given priority, mostly from the point of view of protecting children (115/2002).

In 2006, the Hungarian Criminal Procedure Code defined a restraining order as an enforcement measure, pre-trial detention, or house arrest that can only be imposed by a judge for a period of 10-30 days. This measure can be imposed only when the offender has already committed a crime punishable by prison and a criminal procedure has already been initiated. A law enabling temporary restraining orders, in cases of violence in the family, only entered into force in 2009. Another piece of legislation on harassment (stalking) entered into force on 1 January 2008, regulating it as a criminal offense.

There is one 24/7 ministry-operated hotline and some shelters for victims in Hungary, but these are not enough to meet the need. NGOs providing services for victims do not receive state-funding, leaving them unable to support victims as effectively. Domestic violence remains hidden in Hungarian society; people do not recognise that it is a real social problem. Generally, many people think that women are not telling the truth about the situation and that NGOs sensationalise these issues.

The Hungarian Association of Women Judges

Recognising the need for reform, a few Hungarian female judges formed the Hungarian Association of the Women Judges (HAWJ) at the end of 2008. In January 2009, when the first meeting of the Association was organised, there were 52 members. Currently, HAWJ has 80 members. The fact that the HAWJ has grown is outstanding, but the organisation still has a long way to go and has many difficulties that need to be confronted. For example, there are 2800 judges in Hungary, and women make up approximately 66-70% of these, yet HAWJ membership is still quite low.

In this situation some of HAWJ's important tasks include:

- To change the education of judges and the attitudes many have towards domestic violence. The knowledge judges have on domestic violence must be increased. From 2004 to 2007, HAWJ has had five major events related to this subject.
- To promote the standardisation of professional training for judges with a focus on human rights issues, including violence against women. These training programmes are to be provided by well-known NGOs.

I am afraid the change of rule is not enough. It is rather easy to draft legislation in general, but very difficult to change social attitudes, especially on issues that have long traditions in the given country.

- To closely cooperate with NGOs that focus on issues of domestic violence.

The Association's main goal is education; informing judges about international research and international practices is integral to this process. The organisation hopes to eventually initiate research, in cooperation with other organisations, on domestic violence and discrimination. If the need arises, HAWJ will offer opinions about legal drafts.

The integral role of judges

In the evaluation of the social phenomenon of domestic violence, judges play an important role. Since social problems are reflected in court cases, the sentences of the court send clear messages on interpretations of given questions.

Though the training of judges and the changing of attitudes within society are important developments, without effective legal provisions, they simply are not enough. In order to handle the issue correctly, we have to have a complex approach. Shortcomings in one of the areas cannot be solved with remedies in another. Judicial training is useful in raising awareness but is not enough to find effective answers in adjudication to the questions related to domestic violence since the legal environment has hardly changed.

Domestic violence is much more than beating up a partner. It is very important for justices to recognise that separate incidents of discrimination are interconnected. Cases show that where domestic violence occurs, other forms of discrimination may be also present (such as violence against children or ethnic minorities).

States and populations worldwide face difficulties doing away with obstacles entrenched in strong and long-held traditions. Everyone must understand that the human rights of women are the same as those of men: safety and self-determination should not depend on gender or where women live.

The Hungarian Association of the Women Judges will organise a regional conference for Europe and the Middle East from 14-16 April 2011, in Budapest, on the 'Juncture of Legal Cultures'. One of the main questions to be discussed is the role of the justice system in national legal systems and international requirements in the struggle against racial, nationalistic, anti-minority and gender-based violence. If you would like more information on this event, please email info.HAWJ@gmail.com.

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Domestic Violence and Brain Injury

Elizabeth Bowman

Two scenarios

Carol found herself in a cycle of violence from the time she was a child. By adulthood, she had already experienced multiple beatings and hospitalisations. In the most recent attack, her husband beat her with a board, leaving her with permanent brain damage and a life-long disability. As a result of her injury, she now has frequent seizures, difficulty with balance, and is terrified to leave her home for fear of having a seizure or falling. In addition, she suffers from bi-polar disorder and takes lithium. We met Carol soon after she was hospitalised for lithium toxicity. Through working with us, we discovered Carol didn't have enough money for food, lithium, and insulin for her diabetes. On top of her financial troubles, she also suffers from short-term memory loss and could not keep track of how often she was taking her medications.

Megan's father was an abusive alcoholic, and when she was only six months old, he beat her head into a wall. It was a miracle she even survived the beating, however, it left her disabled for life. As a result of the beating, Megan is blind and has a severe seizure disorder. She also has significant behavioral issues and difficulty modulating her mood, resulting in violent mood swings. Though she is now in her forties, she will never be able to live on her own and is at the mercy of her community to take care of her. She lives in an assisted living facility with a mostly elderly population.

Physical consequences

Domestic violence does not just leave deep psychological scars on its victims; it also leaves physical ones, often in the form of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Despite this, we as providers fail to recognise the effects a brain injury may have on a victim of domestic violence. Short term memory loss, mood swings, seizures, these are just a few examples of the legacy that TBI leaves behind; yet, do we account for them when we work with survivors of domestic violence?

Both brain injury and domestic violence are recognised public health problems in the United States. The estimated annual costs of TBI is 48.3 billion and between 5 and 10 billion US dollars for domestic violence. Up to 35% of women's visits to an emergency department are related to injury from ongoing abuse.[1] Typically, injuries resulting from domestic violence include fractures, eye and ear injuries, lacerations, and brain injuries. Furthermore, brain injuries occur in up to 36% of domestic abuse related injuries.[2]

In spite of its prevalence, there is a dearth of research focusing on causes, risks, and consequences of TBI resulting from domestic violence. In a recent study by Corrigan et al., he

1 T Randall, 'Domestic Violence Intervention Calls for More Than Treating Injuries', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 264, 1990, pp. 939-940.

2 FF Varvaro and DL Lasko, 'Physical Abuse as Cause of Injury in Women: Information for orthopedic nurses', *Orthopedic Nursing*, vol. 12, 1993, pp. 37-41.

Elizabeth Bowman works for Crossroads to Brain Injury Recovery, a community-based non-profit that serves persons with acquired brain injury. She lives in the Shenandoah Valley, in Virginia, with her dog Molly and cat Maggie. She's a fan of electricity and wool socks.

finds in a sample of women reporting to the emergency room for injuries relating to abuse that 67% of those surveyed report a total of 97 residual problems that are potentially related to a brain injury (e.g. headaches, memory loss, concentration). Additionally, sexual assault and domestic violence staff identify 35% of female respondents as potentially brain injured. These findings suggest that 18% of domestic violence victims presenting to an emergency department have residual symptoms as a result of a brain injury and as many as 67% present with one or more elements of Post Concussive Syndrome.[3] The findings indicate an urgent need for early evaluation for potential brain injury and its effects in women with histories of domestic violence.

Children are also victims of domestic violence and are often left with life-long disabilities due to TBI. Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), a form of TBI, is the leading cause of child abuse deaths in the US.[4] At least one out of four babies who are violently shaken dies from the trauma. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the parent or guardian is most often the abuser (54% of SBS cases were committed by parents or guardians from 2003-2007). Of the 26 deaths due to SBS from 2003-2007, over 60% were less than one year of age, and in 42% of the cases, the father was the abuser. Similarly, between 2004 and 2008, 98 children were hospitalised for injuries related to SBS, and 84% were under the age of one year. In approximately 34% of these cases, the father was the abuser.[5]

Physicians, friends, and social workers all need to be asking the survivors of domestic violence about potential brain injuries. We need our hospitals to begin screening for brain injury when a victim seeks medical treatment. Service providers need to begin providing their services in the context of a survivor's brain injury. Furthermore, there needs to be more research to begin exploring the depths of this complex relationship between domestic violence and brain injury. Victims like Carol and Megan should not have to wait until multiple hospitalisations or institutionalisations give them the access to services they need in order to live successfully in their communities.

3 JD Corrigan, M Wolfe, JW Mysiw, RD Jackson and JA Bogner, 'Early Identification of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury in Female Victims of Domestic Violence', *Clinical Journal of Women's Health*, vol. 1, 2001, pp. 184-90.

4 'Heads Up: Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome', Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (published online 7 July 2010) <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/sbs.html>, accessed 9 November 2010.

5 Virginia Department of Health, 'Virginia Injury Update: Abusive Head Trauma (Shaken Baby Syndrome) In Virginia, 2004-2008', 2010.

Denial Tree

(Or Historical Inaccuracies)

Anastasia Gkitsi

Translated by Haralambos Ventis

Anastasia Gkitsi was born in Thessaloniki, Greece. She works in secondary education as a teacher of theology, history, and psychology and is writing her PhD on the relations between theology and poetry in the writings of the church fathers. She has founded the artist group SYGORMA, is a member of the contemporary art club 'contACT', and has published two poetry collections. Find her at www.anastasiagkitsi.com.

History threw up people – Foretold of useless times.

A sea wave in a muddy puddle
Its dullest blue shade
Spilled and spilled out vile.
Some of us saw a sea wave die out, deep green, at the edge of sewage
A bitter grape, and vine harvest, and green olive oil, is your land.

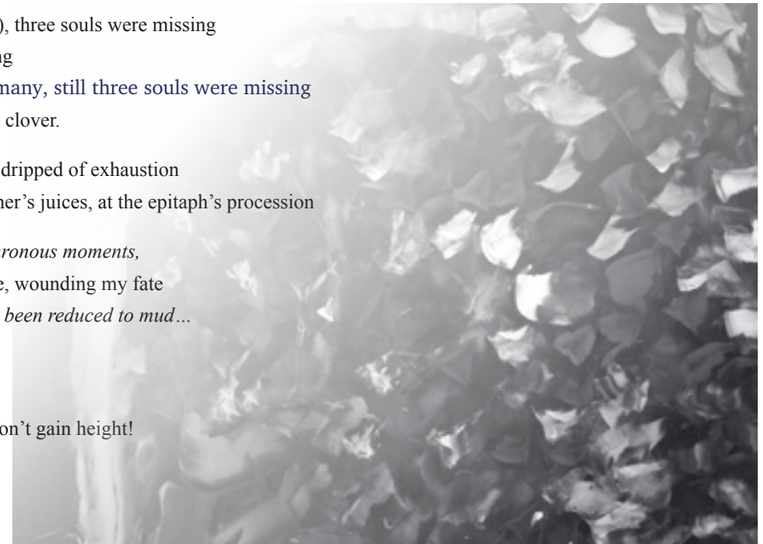
Remembrance is dark marbles
Undying desire
An unborn sorrow, your livelihood
Beyond, hither
Rusty watershed and a tear drop for the glorious past.
Others saw the scattered fragments of a broken amphora
Your garment is thick smoke, and wine and incense.

The next day, at dawn
(A disemboweled dawn), three souls were missing
Three souls were missing
Although there were many, still three souls were missing
None saw the quatrefoil clover.

… it is because my soil dripped of exhaustion
And extracted the summer's juices, at the epitaph's procession

We are struck by asynchronous moments,
A gypsy woman told me, wounding my fate
Alive or dead, we've all been reduced to mud…

Denial being a tree
And the wound a leaf…
I am now rooted, and won't gain height!



ΔΕΝΤΡΟ Η ΑΡΝΗΣΗ (Η ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΕΣ ΑΝΑΚΡΙΒΕΙΕΣ)

Ξέρασε η ιστορία ανθρώπους
Προφήτευσε άχρηστους καιρούς.

Κύμα σε γούρνα και λασπόνερα
πήρε το μπλε το πιο μουντό του
χύθηκε και έχυσε χολή.
Κάποιοι είδαμε κύμα να ξεψυχά καταπράσινο στην άκρια ιλύος
πικρό σταφύλι και τρύγος και αγουρέλαιο η γη σου.

Μάρμαρα σκοτεινά η ενθύμηση
αμάραντος πόθος
καημός αγέννητος το βιος σου
επέκεινα ενθάδε
καμπή σκουριά και μια σταγόνα δάκρυ για ένδοξο παρελθόν.
Κάποιοι άλλοι είδανε θρύμματα αμφορέα
πυκνός καπνός και θυμίαμα και κρασί η φορεσιά σου.

Την επομένη
-ξεκοιλιασμένη χαραυγή- λείπανε τρεις
λείπανε τρεις και ας ήταν τόσοι.
Τρεις λείπανε.
Τετράφυλλο τριφύλλι κανείς δεν είδε.

...είναι που έσταζε εξάντληση το χώμα μου
κι αποχύμωνε καλοκαίρι σ΄επιταφίου περιφορά.

Ασύγχρονες στιγμές μας βρίσκουν
μου ΄πε η τσιγγάνα ματώνοντας το ριζικό μου
ζωντανοί νεκροί ούλοι λάσπη γίναμε...

Δέντρο η άρνηση
φύλλο η πληγή...
ρίζωσα άλλο δεν ψηλώνω!

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church

and the Problem of Domestic Violence

Svitlana Makarevych

Domestic violence is one of the most real and actively discussed problems in Ukrainian society. In 2001, Ukraine adopted a law on the 'prevention of domestic violence', which gave the legal foundation to address the problem. Prevention and work with victims of domestic violence is carried out by state institutions and NGOs.[1]

Despite this, the problem of domestic violence remains widespread throughout the whole of society. According to the Ukrainian Department of Public Safety, from the numbers given by preventive law enforcement agencies, there were 85,085 persons who committed domestic violence in 2009. Physical and psychological violence are the most common types of violence, accounting for 95% of cases.[2]

The available statistical information, however, does not reflect the whole problem completely. According to specialists and experts, as well as sociological research, people who suffer domestic violence are not inclined to seek protection from authorities or do not know where they can get help.[3]

In such circumstances, involvement of the Church as a social institution to solve the problem of domestic violence seems necessary. Also, the phenomenon of domestic violence in religious families exists. So problem-solving inside the community is very important to the Church. According to American researchers, the religiosity of families may influence the phenomenon of violence.[4]

In Kiev, from September 2009 to June 2010, the all-Ukrainian Charity Fund, 'Faith. Hope. Love.', conducted research on the 'attitude to the problem of domestic violence in representatives of religious communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) Moscow Patriarchate'. It was supported by the Synod Department for Charity and Social Ministry of the UOC, which insured the participation of priests and parishioners from Kiev Orthodox churches.

This research confirmed that the problem of domestic violence exists in Orthodox families, likewise in non-Orthodox families. Women and children suffer from violence more, but men and elderly people might also be victims of family abuse. Most community members identify physical and psychological violence, but do not consider the economic manifestations of domestic violence as violence at all. Representatives of poor communities identify sexual abuse, if carried out in the form of coercion. Similar features can also be found in society as a whole.

However, the phenomenon of domestic violence in families of Orthodox parishioners has its own special features.

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In this community, there are prejudices against modern methods and directions of social work that lead to distrust of social services and police. In situations of domestic violence, most parishioners go only to the pastor for help. At the same time, priests do not always understand the psychological aspects of domestic violence. This situation requires cooperation between priests and social services. The work of priests in shelters for victims of domestic violence is an example of such cooperation.

On the other hand, representatives of religious communities feel prejudice against them in society (including the existence of the stereotype that the Church supports gender inequality). Manifestations of gender discrimination really exist in the traditions of the Orthodox Church (e.g. in the tradition to wear a scarf in church), but are not secured in its dogma and are unlikely to lead to increasing violence. According to survey results, in families in which the members of the couple have different religious views, Orthodox men more rarely play the role of aggressor against their unbelieving partner.

In addition, the aggressors who have religious beliefs (often mothers who carry out violence against children) often consider violence committed by them as a spiritual problem, feel guilt, and seek advice from priests on how to change aggressive behaviour. This phenomenon opens up great opportunities for working with aggressors and problematic families.

According to the results of the research, victims of domestic violence with religious beliefs often perceive the situation of violence as inevitable. They believe that the patience they show to an aggressor could change him or her for the better. Even priests sometimes advise victims to be patient in situations of violence. This can lead to repeated victimisation, when a victim after rehabilitation goes back to the situation of violence.[5]

These findings suggest that priests working with cases of domestic abuse require certain knowledge and training on the psychological aspects of domestic violence. The priest who works with the family as a spiritual director has a great impact on all family members and can work on violence prevention issues, as well as provide services to victims or aggressors.

Thus, it is worth noting that in Orthodox families there is also the problem of violence and it requires an individual approach to solve. Internal community resources to address the problem of violence are great enough, but the priests and parishioners do not have enough knowledge about the problem.

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Towards a Theology of Masculinity in the Context of HIV in Africa

Hendrew Lusey

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In early days of the HIV epidemic, much emphasis was placed on the role of the women to prevent HIV infection through various programmes of empowerment for good reasons including the biological, social, economic, political, programmatic, and cultural vulnerability of women due to HIV infection.[1] However, this has created a situation in which it appeared that women and young girls were the only ones who would take responsibility for both safe sex and HIV prevention.[2]

Researchers have found that men are the drivers of HIV infection because of rigid notions of masculinities that enabled many of them to engage in unprotected sex with multiple and concurrent partners.[3] In addition, rape and coercive sex are also used as an instrument of communication about dominant norms of masculinity and sexual powerfulness.[4] In recognition of this situation in Africa and elsewhere, there is currently an increasing effort placed on the role of men and boys in both facilitating and preventing the further spread of HIV. As a result, the UNAIDS adopted the slogan: 'AIDS: Men make a difference' during the World AIDS day in 2000.[5] To this end, many researchers consider heterosexual masculinity and gender inequality as the driving force behind the spread of HIV in Africa and elsewhere.

Most of us have learnt masculinity, femininity and sexuality from unqualified sources such as from friends or our own cultural or religious settings. While those sources have somehow contributed towards our sexuality education with tangible results in certain areas, the challenge is that very often we do not look at sexuality critically. For instance, some African churches have progressively and constructively tackled the issues of gender and HIV in their church ministries.[6] However, many churches and church-related institutions have often given the impression that sex is unholy and should not be discussed in church settings.[7] To confront new challenges, we have to find genuine, creative, and innovative Christian responses.[8] Hence, developing a theology of masculinity/femininity would save lives especially in the context of HIV and AIDS in Africa and elsewhere.

The need for visionaries

Although the World Council of Churches advised churches to take the issue of HIV seriously as early 1986, given the stigma attached to HIV and AIDS at that time, many African churches did not have a clear vision to fight against HIV. Instead, many church leaders felt that HIV was a punishment from God towards immoral people. As a result, people living with HIV were stigmatised, discriminated against, and sometimes they were even expelled from churches.[9] At that time, the number of people living with the virus in the continent was estimated at 20.000, while today it is more than 20 million people.[10]

Research has shown that a man who is infected is more likely to pass on the HIV infection to his spouse and the spouse to the child.5 This vicious

circle is based on traditional ideologies of rigid masculinity which in my own context are characterised by men – men who take risks by engaging in sexual encounters with multiple and concurrent partners, wielding power, privilege, and wealth to satiate their perceived sexual needs. This behaviour often also incudes targeting younger women by enticing them with favours, financial support, and gifts in exchange for sex (*sugar daddy*), and sexually abusing virgins with the naive belief that the sexual act would cure HIV infection.

This is not only a flagrant disregard of the fundamental rights of women and children, but contravenes all the godly values of decency, mutual respect, and human dignity that are enshrined in many religious teachings. The many ongoing and smouldering conflicts have made women and children more vulnerable to rape and abuse. In many African settings, men are the 'warlords' who are spreading HIV.[1]

In my opinion, I think that God wants men and women to have a vision for their lives that comes from God and belongs to them personally. The vision should not be something dictated by cultural norms and current trends, etc. Women and men are created to be visionaries and it is God's intention for them to be able to look at the big picture in life and to plan for the future accordingly. The time has come for churches to provide both women and men with vision. Otherwise, HIV will wipe out the little development and health gains that Africa has acquired over the last decades.

'Be fruitful and multiply...'

With regard to HIV and AIDS, I would like to focus on human sexuality. From Old Testament perspectives, it is clear that sexuality is part of God's creation. This is confirmed in Genesis 1:26-28 and 31 where it is stipulated that God created humankind in God's own image and created man and woman. God told them to multiply, which of course means that they should have sex, and God saw that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). God designed sex within marriage for the following reasons: to procreate the human race, to seal a blood covenant between two humans and to allow sex to be enjoyed to its maximum potential without negative repercussions.

Another celebration of sexuality as a good gift from God is written in the book Song of Songs, which refers to the love between God and His people. However, nowadays, this book is considered as a collection of poems and love songs. This book describes the joy and desire of an intimate relationship between a man and a woman. Having carefully read parts of this book I realised that the sexual relationship that the book describes does not reflect the civil status of being married. This does not mean that sexuality can or should be practiced without boundaries or limitations. On the contrary, God wants humankind to enjoy sex so much that God has told us what its safe boundaries are. The primary boundary is marriage that God created for not harming one another but to keep the social order and harmony of living together.

However, studies have found evidence that sexual intercourse within marriage or with a permanent partner puts many women at risk of HIV infection, most commonly from their husbands' or partners' extramarital liaisons.[11] This should prompt church leaders to reflect beyond the box of risk behaviours towards an analysis of how risky environments shape opportunities for men's extramarital sex, which makes both men and women vulnerable to HIV infection.[12] In some instances, the popular religious discourse that promotes monogamous marriages enables discretion about extramarital affairs that allow women and men to manage their public reputations by maintaining their modern appearance of being moral people.[13] This attitude is counter-productive in the era of HIV because it is very unfortunate for women/men to be infected on a wedding bed that is expected to provide security and comfort.[14]

Removing taboos

In the context of HIV, church leaders should equip women and men to have the responsibility to disseminate relevant facts about HIV and AIDS (for instance dispelling myths about HIV transmission and provide accurate information about risk factors). Perhaps more importantly, churches should provide HIV relevant moral commandments that shape the way people perceive what is and is not acceptable particularly in the age of AIDS.[15]

Research studies have found that many young people have stressed the importance of acquiring adequate knowledge and skills of sexuality from their parents.[16] However, this seldom happens because sexuality is very often considered to be a taboo subject for many parents.[17] As a result, while many parents implicitly speak about sexuality in hidden ways, children are expected to understand complex sexuality-related matters on their own without proper guidance from parents. Ironically, young people are blamed when they misbehave.

Church leaders should understand that they are not the only stakeholders that respond to the HIV epidemic in Africa and congregations are not the only relevant institutions to respond to HIV challenges. However, churches and congregations are among the few social institutions with which millions of Africans have regular contact. Therefore, understanding what religious leaders say about masculinity in the context of HIV is of utmost importance to grasp the forces that shape sexual behaviours in the era of generalised HIV epidemic.[18]

Churches and HIV prevention in Africa

It is now 29 years since HIV infection came out of the shadows. Church facilities were among the first to respond to the challenge. The World Council of Churches (WCC) has been proactive and started to deal with the issue of HIV as early as 1986. In order to break the silence related to HIV, the WCC called churches to meet the needs of HIV in pastoral care, education, and prevention.[19] The Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) is one of the WCC Projects that has been a catalyst force to train church leaders in HIV prevention and gender issues.

Religious leaders have also formed ANERELA+ (African Network of Religious Leaders Living or Personally Affected by HIV). Yet, the churches' response to HIV prevention has not always been positive since many are still preaching that AIDS is a consequence of sin.[20] The ABC (Abstinence, Be faithful, and Condom) approach has been a key strategy in Uganda.[21] However, many churches have raised concern about condoms and some church leaders stress that abstinence and faithfulness are the only long-term remedies to control HIV and AIDS.[22] In contrast, one leading bishop from South Africa preaches that 'the condom is not simply a matter of chastity but of justice'.[9]

Despite mixed messages, African churches are major players in the field of HIV. The churches provide about 40% of the health care in sub-Saharan Africa where most people are church-goers. To this end, religion has a strong influence

on many African individuals.[23] As a result, churches can reach out men and boys and convince them that gender transformation is also in their interest particularly in a time of HIV.

In my own country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Catholic, Protestant, Kimbanguist, Salvation Army, Orthodox, Revival, and Independent Churches and the Muslim Community together established an HIV interfaith platform called: 'Conseil Interconfessionnel de Lutte contre le SIDA' in 2002. In line with their doctrines, they emphasised abstinence and faithfulness strategies, but they have also committed themselves to recommend condom use for discordant couples. Although, evidence from studies of faith-based organisations responses to HIV demonstrate that churches and church related institutions have delivered a range of HIV responses in accordance with WHO strategic priorities and primary health care principles, issues of masculinity and sexuality, however, have received little attention.[23] Hence engaging churches to aggressively respond to HIV issues entails challenges, but with careful alignment as well as concerted actions, much can be gained from churches' partnership with other stakeholders.

Conclusion

In many nations, no matter what languages the citizens speak or what colour their skin is, many people are still locked into stereotypes of masculinities seeing men as problematic, irresponsible, neglectful, abusive, and irremediable.[24] In the context of HIV where men were found to be HIV drivers, this has to change, given the impact of HIV in many spheres of life. Gender roles are not set in stone; men's gendered practices are constantly changing because of broader socio-cultural changes and sometimes as a result of public health interventions.[25]

The question is not whether men can change in the light of HIV, but rather whether a theology of transformative masculinity, policies, and programmes are available in churches in order to accelerate and influence the change.

If churches are to contain the HIV epidemic, they must tackle its root causes such as dominant norms of masculinity, sexuality, and religion. These factors and others compromise the ability of women/men to protect themselves. Gender equality in the context of HIV not only oppresses women but also suppresses men. I am convinced that everything that enhances life, that promotes life, that enriches life, is according to the will of God. To this end, a theology of redemptive masculinity is required today. Tomorrow will be too late.

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An important development of the 20th Century has been the growth of conflict resolution courses that train people in peacemaking in schools, churches, communities and between nations.

Survivor of Clergy Abuse Speaks for Voiceless Victims

Amanda Gearing is an award-winning journalist who has worked in Australia and the UK. She established and headed the Courier-Mail's Toowoomba bureau from 1997-2007. In 2002, she received one of Queensland's major media awards for 'Best News Report, All Media'. For the past seven years Amanda has supported several victims of sexual crimes by clergy through criminal cases, church tribunals, and civil actions. She has presented papers at major child protection conferences in Sydney and Brisbane and advocates for law reform to improve child protection legislation in Australia. Amanda currently works as a freelance multi-media reporter from her base in Toowoomba and is currently studying law at university.

Amanda Gearing

The trial in Australia of a former senior Baptist pastor on twenty-one sex and violence charges this year marked a low-point in public confidence for the Baptist Union and, by implication, other churches in Australia rocked by the continuing procession of clerics of various denominations being jailed for sex crimes.

The senior pastor in this case was acquitted of all charges. However, the pastor's admissions of extramarital sex with a vulnerable parishioner have sent shock waves through congregations and the clergy. The former pastor, who is married with children, led a Perth congregation for six years.

The Baptist Churches of Western Australia has a ChurchSafe program designed to stamp out abuse in the church. ChurchSafe warns ministers to behave with integrity because their personal behaviour and relationships are a model to others and therefore have a significant impact on the church and the community. The program also sets out clear standards of conduct for ministers requiring them to display behaviours and attitudes that are above reproach when interacting with others and to be sensitive and respectful towards people with different family and cultural traditions.

For the faithful congregations, shock may turn to anger in this case, however, because the congregation 'forgave' the pastor for a previous adulterous affair he confessed to having with a parishioner in Queensland. The Baptist Union might find it difficult to justify why they allowed a person known to have already violated ministerial standards to be appointed as a church leader.

Professional codes of behaviour in the medical profession, allied health, and churches are designed to protect vulnerable patients, clients, and parishioners. In this case, the parishioner was far more vulnerable than an Australian woman would have been. She was a recent immigrant to Australia from a devout Hindu tradition and had no understanding of Christian teachings. When she arrived at the church with her husband and two toddlers she was heavily pregnant and had no extended family. The power structure of the relationship in this case was far more akin to clerical abuse of a child than an extramarital affair with an adult.

In clergy-child abuse, the abusive relationship is characterised by the grooming of all the protectors of the child, such as the parents and their colleagues, long before the offender begins any abuse of the target victim. Once the child's protectors develop trust in the clergy offender, the offender befriends the targeted child using gifts and attention.

In addition, the cleric is in a position of spiritual authority, recognised by the victim's family and friends as being trustworthy, honest, and faithful to Christian values. The child, once victimised, has no one to turn to, to report the evil he or she is experiencing. In the Perth case, the same grooming procedure was carried out. The woman was introduced to scripture references on love and forgiveness which trapped her into silence in a maelstrom of shame, fear, and confusion. That the case did reach a trial is due in large part to the woman's resolve to escape the imposed silence she had endured for several years.

Once she escaped from the relationship in 2006, she graduated from university with a doctorate degree and threw herself into helping victims of child prostitution in developing countries. She has become a regular contributor to forums of the World Council of Churches and various United Nations conferences, receiving several prestigious government awards and commendations at state, national, and global levels for her contributions to multicultural awareness.

Eventually she summoned the courage to report to police, made a statement running more than 250 pages, and waited for a police investigation to be carried out and court processes to unfold. After four years, the trial was finally underway and she was ready to give her evidence. What she did not expect from the trial of the offender, was to feel as though she was the one on trial, facing questioning about intimate details of the alleged sexual violence, and for her evidence to be subjected to the public gaze by being reported, and misreported, in the media.

The pastor had his name suppressed throughout the court proceedings. The suppression order was lifted at the beginning of the trial in the Perth District Court after *The West Australian* successfully argued that in the interests of open justice, his name should be released for publication. In an unusual move, the accused's legal counsel asked the court to allow the accused a day before his name was published because he had not yet told his aged father or his work colleagues of the serious charges against him. The court granted the extra time.

Despite the lifting of the suppression order, however, *The West Australian* still did not publish name of the accused for fear of identifying the complainant in the case. Wanting extra legal protection, the newspaper asked the victim to sign a consent form to protect the newspaper in case she was identified by the details given in court reports. The consent form request coincided with a serious error in day one of the reporting of the case, when the reporter wrongly stated that the prosecution case was that the pastor had begged the woman not to have an abortion when he discovered she was pregnant. Whilst the reporter could be forgiven for assuming the pastor's stance on abortion, it was wrong.

In fact the prosecution case was the exact opposite – that the pastor ordered the woman to have an abortion and threatened to kill himself unless she complied immediately. The woman, who had been deeply traumatised by unwillingly submitting to the abortion, was re-traumatised by having to write an extensive police statement outlining twenty-one sex and violence offences she alleged had been committed against her.

However, this paled into insignificance when compared with her horror at reading the false report published state-wide in the newspaper.

An important development of the 20th Century has been the growth of conflict resolution courses that train people in peacemaking in schools, churches, communities and between nations.

The newspaper did not make a correction but tried to undo the damage by getting the story correct in their report of the case the following day. She found the false reporting difficult to endure because there was no avenue for her to protect herself against the incorrect reporting.

She gave her evidence in the court over nine days as she recounted the allegations and was cross-examined on two counts of aggravated burglary, one of assault occasioning bodily harm, eleven alleged rapes and seven indecent assaults. Several times during cross-examination she vomited when appalling propositions were put to her by the defence barrister.

She almost gave up the case. Some mornings she felt unable to get out of bed, she trembled and cried at night recalling the day's brutal cross-examination. Yet she somehow managed to go back to the court day after day. She was determined to speak the truth as best she knew how – and she knew that as she spoke, she was a voice for the many victims of sex crimes who never have the opportunity to speak in court.

The reporter covering the trial was tasked to cover other cases at the same time so he could not be in the court for the whole trial. The coverage did not include the weight of evidence from the accused and defence witnesses which demonstrated the deceptive nature of the accused's relationship with his wife, his church congregation, the complainant and her family. These deceptions were obvious to people in the courtroom. The reporting belittled and humiliated the complainant.

Some of the failure of the prosecution case was due to inadequate police investigation which arguably could have left reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury. The second investigating police officer admitted under cross-examination during the trial that he had failed to carry out vital investigations and had failed to gather critical evidence.

The West Australian reported: Police detective Anthony Walton admitted under cross-examination that he had never visited the woman's house or sought proof she had an abortion. Once the acquittal was delivered, the complainant felt, understandably, that the time she had spent in the witness box retelling and reliving her ordeal had come to naught. In addition, her unwillingness to sign the consent form meant the pastor was still not identified in the public arena. Once the pastor was acquitted the newspaper decided not to name him, even though by then the complainant had regathered her strength and had signed the consent form.

It appears the pastor has escaped unscathed. He now works as a real estate agent and his website claims that his 'role of Senior Pastor at Baptist Churches around Australia has given him extra insight in to human behaviour and the need for communication and trust'.

What is more surprising than the acquittal in this case, is that the case proceeded to a court at all.
Though the complainant is understandably disillusioned with the press and the acquittal, she is not crushed. She has already used her experiences to bring hope to women and children who are survivors of abuse, through arts and culture. Her advocacy on behalf of victims will be all the more powerful for her first-hand experience of the justice system. However, her estimation of Australia has been damaged and the family has moved overseas because they no longer feel safe in Australia.

The woman will undoubtedly speak of her experiences in global forums and work for change to protect other vulnerable people. Her husband, an Englishman with a doctoral degree in biomedical engineering, has supported his wife through the protracted prosecution and has seen her endure intolerable humiliation during the court case. He now understands how vulnerable his wife was when she attended a Christian church in a culture foreign to her Asian background, seeking to assimilate herself and her children into the Australian culture. 'My wife simply needed a place where she could pray and befriend Australians safely', he said.

The husband and wife both relied on the congregation as their primary social network. The pastor became the husband's only trusted friend. 'I was blinded by his position of spiritual authority and unable to protect my wife in spite of her numerous attempts to reach out to me', he said. Having seen the suffering his wife endured and his own vulnerability, he is now supporting his wife's efforts to eliminate violence in churches. 'I don't want to see any woman suffer like my wife has suffered'.

Understanding the Mystery of Clergy Sexual Abuse

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Martin Weber, D.Min.

(From the October 2008 edition of HopeSpeak)

At the Stop Being Silent! *seminar in Minsk, in an interactive session on 'Redefining Domestic Violence: Sexual Exploitation and the Church', Dr. Valli Batchelor talked about violence against women by clerical abusers.*

This excerpt provides an overview of clergy sexual exploitation and the Hope of Survivors network, following from the previous article on what happened when one woman tried to speak out in Australia. This excerpt has been reprinted and adapted with permission from the Hope of Survivors *website (www.thehopeofsurvivors.com), a resource and support organisation for victims of clergy sexual exploitation. Because the majority of clergy sexual abuse is male clerical abuse of female parishioners, this article only addresses this majority.*

The Hope of Survivors

Shame is the reason I'm so proud to be connected with The Hope of Survivors. Perhaps I should explain.

More than any organisation I've known in several decades of pastoral ministry, including law enforcement chaplaincy, The Hope of Survivors (THOS) helps victims feeling ashamed from sexual abuse find dignity, confidence, hope, and even joy. And so I'm proud to serve on the executive board of THOS.

Shame afflicts most of us to some degree. It's part of the human condition. As a chubby child, I was ashamed of my weight. Parents might be ashamed of their teenagers' bad choices. Reformed 'party animals' may feel shame for years of carousing. But the human spirit knows no shame to match that of a sexual abuse victim who has been manipulated into feeling guilty for her predator's sins. And those among them most deeply sunken in shame may be victims of clergy sexual abuse.

It's terrible to be raped by a stranger and worse to be assaulted by one's own biological father. In some ways it is most damaging of all to be the sexual victim of one's spiritual leader.

Reasonable people are outraged at a sexual predator who drags a jogger off the trail into the bushes. Society springs to the defence of such victims. As for incest, everyone except enabling relatives is furious about paternal predators. But when it comes to clergy sexual abuse, congregational sympathy usually gravitates to a popular, powerful preacher. Ironically, victims of clergy sexual abuse often must go outside the church to find a sympathetic heart. Tragically, they may lose not only their trusted spiritual leader but also most, if not all, of their faith community – even close friends.

This is where THOS has been such a lifesaver for hundreds of lonely victims of clergy sexual abuse who suffer in solitary shame. THOS helps them realise that:

- As with all professionals, a pastor is responsible for not abusing his trust by allowing – and often planning – the sexualisation of what began as normal interaction between himself and a vulnerable parishioner.
- Sexual abuse is not necessarily scary or painful; often unsuspecting victims are drawn into a close friendship with a pastor that unexpectedly becomes romanticised and then sexualised.
- Clergy romance or sex with a parishioner is not an 'affair', because it arises from a power imbalance. Physicians, educators, and workplace supervisors understand this. Somehow it seems harder for many churches to accept this, perhaps because of the hero status of a star pastor.
- Most pastors are men of integrity who never would abuse a member. To preserve this propriety, clergy need education and sometimes counselling to manage their own emotions and attractions as they interact with the vulnerable members of their flock.
- Victims of clergy sexual abuse need and deserve advocates in the church to guide them through a resolution process that emphasises healing rather than vindictiveness.
- Those who survive clergy sexual abuse need not bear the burden of proving to anyone – not even themselves or God – that they are perfect and completely innocent about what happened to them. The Bible says all of us are sinners in need of the grace and forgiveness of God.
- It is possible to forgive one's abuser while also establishing boundaries of protection against further abuse by anyone inside or outside the body of Christ.
- Women who have suffered clergy sexual abuse need to find their primary identity in being God's beloved children; this is more than having merely survived something evil done to them.

Clergy sexual abuse

To summarise the tragedy of clergy sexual abuse:

- It is normal for Christian men and women faithful to their spouses to feel attracted to other people. Unmet emotional needs tend to multiply this chemistry.
- When a pastor finds himself attracted to a parishioner, it is his or her responsibility as a professional caregiver to recognise the danger and use the responsibility of leadership to prevent the relationship from becoming romanticised.
- Some predatory pastors are so corrupt as to be strategically and compulsively abusive, but many fine pastors become sexually abusive simply because they allow their love for God and their spouses to become less important than their ministry to church members.
- Paradoxically, victims of abuse often take much or most of the blame and shame upon themselves after being drawn into inappropriate sexuality.
- The more likeable and admirable a pastor is, the more a victim of his sexual abuse may suffer shame and guilt. This also is true at the opposite extreme; the more deceptive and manipulative a career predator is, the more likely his victim may suffer increased shame and guilt – the most clever abusers manage to download all blame to the victim.
- Church leaders and other members typically rally around a popular pastor, despite credible evidence that he is guilty of sexual abuse. Often the church would rather blame his victim than lose a beloved spiritual leader.

- In the aftermath of clergy sexual abuse, most efforts to aid recovery are devoted toward the abuser and his spouse rather than to the victim, who often is abandoned or even expelled from the community of believers.

In such cases, the Hope of Survivors often becomes the only hope of surviving clergy sexual abuse.

Suggested Reading:

As recommended by Valli Batchelor and Amanda Gearing

D Garland and C Argueta, 'How clergy sexual misconduct happens: A qualitative study of first-hand accounts', *Social Work and Christianity*, 2010.

MACSAS: Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors, <www.macsas.org.uk>.

National Association of Women, 'NOW President Calls for Fundamental Reform to Stop Clergy Sexual Abuse', <http://www.now.org/issues/violence/clergyabuse_statement.html>.

National Association of Women's Call to Criminalize Sexual Exploitation of Women by Clergy, <www.now.org>.

M Porter, *Sex, Power and the Clergy South,* Yarra, Australia, Hardie Grant Books, 2003.

Silent Majority: Adults Abused by Clergy, <www.adultsabusedbyclergy.org>.

Reflections on the Lenten Study, 'Cries of Anguish, Stories of Hope'

Maryann Philbrook

Background

Violence against women is an issue all around the world. Often there is some notion that violence only happens in 'other' places or to people unlike us. Yet, when we look at the facts we see that women are suffering everywhere. Around the world, one in every three women is beaten or coerced into sex at some point in her lifetime.1 Looking at these statistics can be mind numbing. Yet as Christians, and especially during the Church season of Lent, we are called to approach situations which look hopeless through the lens of Jesus' life.

In 2010, WSCF, the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the World YWCA collaborated to create an online, interactive, multi-media Bible study and guide looking at violence against women around the world (http://women.overcomingviolence.org). 'During Lent, we remember Jesus in the wilderness, wrestling with the temptations to betray his true vocation as the incarnation of God. Sometimes we are tempted to turn a blind eye to the horrors of the world, to feel despair or to blame the victims themselves', said Dr. Fulata Mbano-Mayo, Programme Executive for Women in Church and Society for the WCC.

The six part study offered weekly resources during the Lent of 2010. Each week included a video and discussion questions; a Bible study, developed by a theologian; and a fact sheet about the country and type of violence featured. The themes and countries were as follows: systemic violence in India; rape as a tool of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo; youth in Colombia; masculinity in South Africa; trafficking of women in Uzbekistan; and intimate partner violence around the world. The study had participants from every corner of globe: New Zealand, Argentina, India, the United Kingdom and the United States.

While preparing the study

During my research and planning for this project I have learned about atrocities all over the world. Human trafficking is the most profitable black market industry in the world – with estimations going as high as $32 billion a year with over 27 million people currently enslaved. On average, in South Africa a woman is raped every 26 seconds. In India, 21 women of the Dalit Caste ('untouchables') are raped each week. In the United Kingdom, the police estimate that 95% of rapes are never even reported. In the United States, it is estimated that between two and four million women are assaulted every year by their partners.[1]

I did all of this research, yet the image that I see when I close my eyes is of a girl in a pink shirt playing in the dirt in front of her hut in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I can hear her father saying that she will have to be a prostitute because no man will want to marry someone so tainted. She was raped while gathering firewood. Her attacker, jailed for a few months, will go free. I see her face and her tears every time I close my eyes to think about violence against women. Hers is the story that I cannot forget.

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Yet, as much as these stories are appalling, what I struggle with is my own place in the picture. What am I doing to contribute to or bring an end to violence against women? Am I ever complicit? I know I have thought, or even said, that perhaps a woman could have done something to avoid being raped. As if she brought it on herself. I have believed that only 'weak' women stay with abusers. I looked the other way when I saw a girl harassed on the street. I have failed to speak out when a man talks to me inappropriately in a bar, hoping he'll just go away. My work to eliminate violence against women is a drop in the bucket. What am I doing in this depressing situation? Where is God in this?

Leading the study

I was working for the WSCF and the WCC in Geneva in 2009. In 2010 I returned home to the United States and continued to work on this Lenten study. I led a small group study at a local Episcopal (Anglican) church during Lent.

The study itself involved an eclectic group of people ranging from young professionals to a retired couple. We gathered for four of the six weeks to openly and honestly discuss the videos and our life experiences in relationship to the material presented in the study.
Each week, I learned something new and thought about violence against women in a different way, usually related to how we respond to the violence in our lives. The most moving moment for me came during our final session, which focused on intimate partner violence. I had done the research for this session and I knew in my mind that intimate partner violence was a serious problem. Yet, I have never experienced such violence personally. One participant in the study shared that she had grown up in such a situation. She had seen her mother beaten by her father on a regular basis as a child. For her domestic violence was not a statistic, instead it was a memory and experience that she had lived through. Listening to her tell her story made the months and months of research more real, more human. The numbers were no longer numbers, but began to have a face.

Lenten reflection

Lent is the time that the Church sets aside for us to remember and focus on these tragedies. We do this, not because God is absent in all of this, but because these tragedies are precisely where God is. God's love for people extends beyond the worst that can possibly happen. Jesus came into the world to give people the ability to live in hope despite our tragic circumstances. Despite all the facts that I listed above, God is here with us. God is giving us hope to face the terrible situations and make something better out of them.

Luckily, for us and the world, Lent is not the end but only the beginning. We have Easter to live out the rest of the year. When we truly understand and relate to the serious situations in the world we can rejoice even more loudly that Jesus conquers all. Jesus is Lord.

This Lenten study was an attempt to share more women's stories and to make every day issues connect with women around the globe. 'This is a new style of Lent[en] study', said Dr. Manoj Kurian, WCC's Programme Executive for Health and Healing,

> *[T]he impact of violence against women is a major public health issue and we want people to have an idea of the wide range of efforts communities across the world are making to alleviate and prevent this violence. Although this is harrowing, the stories highlight signs of hope, as God works through individuals and agencies to bring healing.*

This Lenten study was one of many creative examples of what can be done to raise awareness on the topic in our churches and communities. Through my participation, as a creator and as a leader of this study, I learned to see this international problem as something local and personal. The painful and real stories have made me see that faith in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit is bigger than these problems that seem so overwhelming.

An important development of the 20th Century has been the growth of conflict resolution courses that train people in peacemaking in schools, churches, communities and between nations.

Creating Space to Think: A Bible study

Lucy D'Aeth is a Local Methodist Preacher with a doctorate in pastoral theology focusing on television soap operas. She has worked extensively in public health and community development. English by birth and a New Zealander by choice, she currently lives in Switzerland.

Lucy D'Aeth

This Bible study on John 7:53 - 8:11 is from the 40 day Lenten Study, Cries of Anguish, Stories of Hope. *It was designed for Lent 2010 by the World Council of Churches, the World YWCA, and the World Student Christian Federation. The materials for the full six-week study can be found here:*

http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources/campaigns/women-against-violence.html

This Bible study reflects on four different television advertisements that were used to raise awareness about domestic violence. These advertisements can be viewed online at:
http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources/campaigns/women-against-violence/week-6-stories-from-around-the-world.html .

Setting the scene

This story found in John is a very short and familiar story. It's just 24 lines long in my Bible yet it still speaks across the centuries. Like the short adverts which form the centre of this Bible study, it's trying to provoke a big debate from a few brief images.

We know very little about this woman. Her name is not recorded, neither is her age or social status. Where is the man she was caught with? Did she love him? Was she being raped? Was she being paid? Where is her husband? What's the story?

Whatever the full story was, there is enough detail to ensure that the story remains a vivid encounter even two millennia later. Imagine being 'caught in the very act of committing adultery' – the glare of public gaze, the shock, the humiliation. Whether she was 'caught' in an intimate act of love or during the horror of a sexual assault, being dragged into the busy courts of the temple would be traumatising.

The woman is not even the centre of the scribes' and Pharisees' concern. Her individual act is much less important to them than the opportunity it gives them to trap Jesus. She is merely an object – 'a teaching moment' – providing Jesus' enemies with an opportunity to expose Jesus.

The scribes and Pharisees challenge Jesus that 'in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women'. This Lenten course began with Moses as a helpless baby, the focal point enabling some women to embrace what little autonomy they have to resist and liberate. Centuries later, Moses is invoked as the lawgiver, the symbol of social order and guardian of religious purity for the Jewish people. Those challenging Jesus knew full well that he was being given an impossible choice – to back the Law of Moses, or the law of the Roman occupiers, which stated that only the governor could impose a death sentence. Whether he speaks for rabbinical or Roman law, his enemies can condemn him either for disobeying the Torah or for provoking social unrest by defying the Romans. It's hardly surprising then, that Jesus says nothing.

Private and public

Morality is a complex issue. Adultery, the breaking of marriage vows, can have serious consequences for the individuals involved, their families, and the wider community. Marriage is a private matter but it is also a social institution with an important role to play in building strong communities. It is a place where the private and public meet.

Domestic violence is a complex issue for similar reasons. It generally takes place in private, with abusers and abused often making strenuous efforts to make everything look 'okay' in public. And yet domestic violence is a public problem since it reaps a legacy of pain and dysfunction across generations. While only one person may be hit, all those around are affected as the ripples of violence spread. The adverts in this week's study are aimed at breaking this cycle of violence.

We do not know why the woman in this story was breaking her marriage vows, but the scribes and the Pharisees clearly see upholding the moral law as a means of upholding social order. Making an example of those who transgress the law educates the population and strengthens social cohesion. For the crowd, the issue is so clear-cut that the reasons behind the woman's actions are not even considered. The man, her 'partner in crime' is absent – both physically and as a factor in all the discussions. Her complex personal situation has been made an exhibit for public discussion.

Jesus is being asked to choose between two laws, that of Moses and that of the Romans. The matter is presented as a simple choice about who should judge the woman's misdemeanour. The rabbinic penalty, stoning, is a particularly cruel form of execution. How many misses and painful but harmless wounds are required to kill a person? Stoning was the accepted penalty for adultery precisely because it was a communal penalty. Like a modern day firing squad, it demanded many participants and no one person could be held individually responsible for the death. In a society where honour and vendetta often escalated violence, stoning was proposed as a neat solution. But to take part in a stoning would also be a trauma. Once the frenzy of the crowd dies away – the shouting has stopped, the blood has been spilled – how would the witnesses and those who threw the stones feel?

It is easy for us to make judgements on moral issues when they are presented in the abstract. Domestic violence is wrong, a crime which must be punished. This is now the accepted law in many countries, including those where these adverts were made. Yet, the roots and faces of domestic violence are many and far reaching, as the New Zealand 'It's not okay!' advert shows. Not only violent physical acts wound. Angry words, gestures, and mind games that play out in family life wound also. In human relationships, the triggers of violence are never far from the surface.

In the silence

Jesus' response to his challengers is silence. He looks at the floor, writing in the dust. His silence

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creates a space for reflection. It slows the action down. Jesus' enemies keep pressing him for a response, but I imagine they are unnerved, less certain about what is going to happen. Until this moment, the story carries a sense of frenetic energy, the 'thrill of the chase', a woman 'caught' and now used as an object to 'catch' another wrongdoer whose behaviour threatens the status quo. I imagine a large group of men, hurrying so they miss nothing, jostling to hear and see, excited that this might be the moment where they 'trap' Jesus, a man who is a thorn in their side.

The crowd watching and the scribes and Pharisees are not named. They are acting as a group and, as we know, people in large groups are capable of things that as individuals they might never envisage doing. How much of the violence in the world comes from people acting unthinkingly, en masse? How many fights, assaults, rapes, would have been avoided if the individuals in the crowd had thought for themselves and not been swept along by the moment. In taking the momentum out of the scribes' verbal onslaught, Jesus changes the energy of the moment. He creates space for reflection, and although they still press for an answer, the energy of the moment is changed.

Transforming a violent confrontation into a moment for reflection and growth is a miracle. This is a risky encounter and a powerful one, which accounts for the fact that it made sufficient impression on Jesus' followers to be recorded in John's gospel.

Such encounters are required whenever mob violence threatens to overwhelm people's gentler instincts. An angry crowd, especially one high on moral outrage, is a lethal weapon which can go off in any direction. No wonder Jesus said that the peacemakers were blessed.

In the silence, people have the chance to recognise their own role in proceedings. In this silence, did the scribes think of their own marriages, their own desires, and their own moments of failure? Did they take the time to imagine how the woman was feeling?

The tempo is changed so Jesus is able to answer the still pressing question – 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first one to throw a stone at her'. Once the crowd is defused, they can hear Jesus' words as individuals and once again see the humanity of the woman who has up to now been a teaching aid on moral law. Throwing the first stone would be in effect taking responsibility for her death. Whoever takes responsibility for her death would then face the fact that they themselves also deserved death for their own sins and transgressions.

Mobs of individuals

Much of the Law of Moses, developed during the years of wandering the desert, waiting to enter the 'Promised Land', was designed as a public health programme to keep a nomadic community socially and physically fit and cohesive. The ideals of the commandments make sense in terms of promoting social cohesion and curbing individual desires through social norms. Even today, when new public health initiatives are introduced – compulsory wearing of seatbelts in cars, smoking bans, fluoridating of water supplies – there will always be some complaints that individual freedoms are being sacrificed for the sake of wider health gains. For the scribes and Pharisees, it is obvious that the individual needs of the woman are not as important as the needs of the community.

The domestic violence adverts also aim to create a community around a set of ideals. In order to challenge domestic violence, people need to be aware that it exists in all parts of our societies. In the series of Indian adverts, *Bell Bajao!* (Ring the Bell!), bystanders are invited to interrupt the private violence they hear taking place by literally ringing the doorbell. Exactly as in the John reading, the intention is to create enough space for the perpetrator to reflect, however momentarily, on his actions. This brief interlude may be enough to break the cycle, at least once. Bystanders are reminded that they are active participants in any situation and they have a duty to respond.

The United Kingdom ad features Kiera Knightley, famous for her film roles and beauty – a reminder that beauty, wealth, and fame cannot protect against violence, and that the stigma which causes many victims to remain silent can be particularly strong for those who appear 'successful'. It is the stigma which is addressed in the final line of the New Zealand ad – 'But it is okay to ask for help' – a reminder to both victims and perpetrators that, with support and time, the cycle of violence can be broken.

Our attitudes are shaped by the societies in which we are raised. We inevitably think 'like the crowd' in many respects. Many people still believe that what happens in the privacy of home and family should not be legislated by the state. Some even use biblical texts to justify violence against wives and children. It will take more than a thirty second film to break down years of cultural denial and tacit acceptance. But creating space to reflect on our attitudes and actions is the first step on the road to change. This is the method Jesus uses again and again in the gospels – grabbing people's attention, making them re-examine beliefs that they had taken for granted.

wOnce the crowd has been sufficiently unsettled, Jesus offers his suggestion for how to run the stoning. He doesn't challenge their right to kill the woman directly, which makes his intervention all the more powerful. The crowd is full of self-righteousness; someone has broken the law and they have the right to exact the penalty. They are expressing their fidelity to the Law of Moses, an ancient law which holds them together in their identity as a people. For a people oppressed and challenged by foreign occupiers, this group identity is a powerful feeling.

Being part of a crowd can suppress our feelings of individual responsibility. To be swept along in a wave of people sharing the same emotion can be a glorious, intoxicating feeling – when our team wins, when our favourite singer is given a standing ovation. But if the crowd is a mob which runs riot, there is no warm afterglow, just the cold guilt and shame of being carried away.

By suggesting how to run the stoning, Jesus is fast-forwarding his attackers to that moment. Self-righteousness and moral outrage often spring from self-doubt, the desire to strengthen my belief in myself by putting someone else down. When our identity depends on putting another group down, it can be ugly. When the mob descends from the certainty of moral high ground, it is often to the shameful depths of self-doubt. In his gentle but firm reminder that all humans fall short of perfection, Jesus is allowing each person present to recognise his or her own weaknesses and calling him or her to act with compassion.

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In such a short passage, it is significant that Jesus' body language is repeatedly referred to. He bends down; he scratches writing into the dust on the ground. This is not a defiant rebuke that might further inflame the crowd. It is a low-key response, deliberately defusing the aggressive posturing of those confronting him. It takes courage to stand one's ground without aggression. Jesus embodies the place between direct eye contact that can escalate violence and meek passivity which is too weak to meet the challenge. With one sentence, he has quieted the violence of the moment and dispersed the mob. It is the elders who walk away first, those whose self-knowledge has had longer to develop. The mob left 'one by one', each person taking his or her own time to hear Jesus' challenge and reflect on personal experience. A good orator can turn gathered individuals into a cohesive group, but only a remarkable person can turn an angry mob into thoughtful individuals.

Honest encounter

There is no record of what happened to the woman. How could her life not have been changed by such an encounter? We know that Jesus had not dispersed the angry mob permanently. Within a few chapters, a crowd would be yelling for Barabbas to be saved in place of Jesus. How many of that crowd had been in the temple on this day?

How the message is delivered is clearly important. Had Jesus used different body language or different words to confront his challengers, the results might have been very different. The suggestion that one without sin should begin the stoning is very different from a bald accusation of hypocrisy. How do we spread the message that violence against women must be halted? How do we curb the violence in our own hearts and homes? How do we stand against the casual violence of a media-saturated world? What is our role in dispersing the angry mob? Today, as 2000 years ago, Jesus calls us into honest encounter – with ourselves, with our world, and with the God of peace who calls us to wholeness.

Mothers Lead the Way

Mary E. Hunt

Feminism is a prelude to the new humanity which we of the World Student Christian Federation are trying to develop...The struggle for women's rightful place belongs to every liberation movement. Hence, an analysis of the relationship between feminism and other liberation movements reveals the dynamic of oppression, and suggests some common strategies for overcoming it.

Nehemiah 2; 17-18, from which the 1981 General Assembly theme was taken, provides us with a useful three part outline for reflection. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, the mothers of children who have disappeared, serve as a graphic example of women's struggle integrated fully into the liberation process.

The text of Nehemiah 2; 17-18 concerns the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. The author inspected the ruins of the wall late one night and concluded that faithful Jews must rebuild it. Why? 'That we may no longer suffer disgrace' (Neh. 2; 17). Confident that his prayers and fasting had surfaced the will of God, Nehemiah exhorted his companions to 'rise up and build together' (Neh. 2; 18). Of course such serious work, and the decisions to undertake it, demand preparation and enthusiasm. So 'they strengthened their hands for the good work' (Neh. 2; 18) and set about restoring order.

Christians in disgrace

The dynamics of oppression, for which we will use the experience of women as a paradigm, work much the same way. As a Christian community supposedly dedicated to love and justice we are in disgrace. But some among us, like Nehemiah, have inspected the ruins and invited the community to rise up and build together...

We, the Christian community, are in disgrace because half of our members are systematically marginalised both in praxis and in theory. Women are excluded from decision-making in most corners of the Church and world... Against strong currents to the contrary we have begun a movement which invites communal up-rising and building. The movement is not for women only. Rather, it is based on an insight into the historical and contemporary oppression of women, and meant for any who have internalised the goals of love and justice...

The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires gathered initially four years ago with the idea that strength in numbers might pressure the military government to release their disappeared children. The Mothers have been branded as crazy; they have been accused of being subversives since they generate international support for their righteous demands.

...They are women from all classes and of all ages. Poor women from the *campo* walk arm in arm with wealthy matrons, grandmothers walk next to young women, all wearing the white handkerchiefs that symbolise their plight in silent

This article, in its entirety, was written for the quarterly WSCF Journal published in 1981 following the 28th General Assembly of WSCF, 'Come, let us rise up and build together', held in San Francisco, USA. Mary E. Hunt's piece was included in the section 'Structures of injustice and the struggles for a democratic transformation of society' and almost 30 years later it still remains relevant. It has been shortened and adapted to fit the format of this publication.

Thursday afternoon vigils. They include a few men as well. One recently confided in me his pride at being part of the Mothers. And they have begun to denounce the many elements of an instructured constellation of oppression which grounds their personal trails.

The Mothers symbolise the new face of the women's struggle. It has moved beyond the initial but necessary stage of self-reflection and self-definition which in fact made it possible for them as women to carry the symbolic burden of human rights in Argentina and perhaps in Latin America. This reflects not only the necessity of particular struggles like feminism, but also the urgency of an interstructured analysis which we as Christians can make part of our theologising...

Dichotomies

First, the disgrace in which the Church finds itself is rooted in a dualistic way of thinking and acting... Beginning with God and the world we discover an 'over againstness' in our habit of thinking such that God is always considered not separate from but better than the created order. The same is true for humans over animals, whites over blacks, rich over poor.[1] Similarly, man and woman, when considered together, yield a stark separation of one from the other, the obvious valuing of maleness in the public sphere...

We suffer the results of this 'habit of thinking' as Thomists would say, when we are unable to imagine not only new content but whole new categories of thought... We can envision the male-female relation in feminist terms as co-members of the created order without regard to sex-role stereotypes.

These changes come very slowly and only at great cost since they are self-involving… meaning they require certain participation on the part of the speaker insofar as she/he is personally affected by the content. For example... to say that men are not better than but exist alongside of women is to invite a new perspective and self-understanding to emerge.

Substance and accident

Two of the results of this new perspective are first, an awareness of the irrationality of many of our former modes of prejudice (read: oppression), and second, an equally profound realisation of the psychological affects which oppression creates. From our experience as women we understand that gender is really accidental, that is, in classic terms it is not of the substance of a person whether she or he is female or male... Thus far sociology and psychology, much less than physical sciences, have been unable to prove innate differences in women and men, aside from the obviously different roles in the reproductive process. This leads us to accept the theological maxim that 'male and female God created them' (of Genesis 1; 2-8) and to assume all further elaboration is cultural.

The only adequate explanation for the enormous emphasis put on accidental differences lies in an analysis of structures of oppression. While the question of their origin is beyond the scope of this essay, the important fact is their existence and strategies to overcome them. Using sexism once again, we can see that the behaviour we label in certain persons as 'sexist' (eg. the objectification of woman as body, the failure to consider qualified women for certain jobs, the relegation of childcare to the mother without concern for her livelihood, etc) is really 'normal' behaviour within a patriarchal society...

Inviting non-sexist behaviour is to encourage insanity, foment revolution or otherwise disturb the status quo. All this is relatively tolerable. We have hospitals full of crazy women. We have a well developed international movement of women. And we have seen families and communities pay the price with their lives. But what of the really insane, revolutionary, and disturbing possibility of attacking the structures themselves? It is hard to even imagine what a new structure would look like, though various feminist models have been proposed. But at least we know that rejecting the current structure is the first step.

This structural analysis sheds light on the dynamics of oppression and suggests that other of the so-called 'isms' may be approached in like manner. While no true equation can be drawn from feminism to classism to racism to heterosexist and beyond because of their varying histories and manifestations, we can see how the discrimination based on the accidental nature of each demands our firm rejection. Nor can we dream alternatives to each which adequately address the complexities of the problem. But as in the case of sexism we know that rejecting the *structures* of classism, racism, heterosexism, etc. is a necessary and urgent first step.

Beyond internalized structure

The second insight that comes from feminist experience but can be generalised is an awareness of the deeply lodged psychological affects generated by oppression. As women within a variety of cultures we have been programmed for submission and triviality, dependence and distractibility. We have internalised the programme beyond the extent of the external pressures. Hence, we conclude that along with changes in structure must come the intensely personal and interpersonal struggles to move beyond internalised structures as well.

...This stage calls for personal conversion as a second but critical moment in the process. Conversion has a suspiciously theological ring to it, a reminder that our consideration of feminism and related liberation movements has a distinctly Christian character... But personal conversion as a companion to structural change means that no excuses are acceptable within the Christian family for a failure to enter into the liberation process...

For example, men who are unable to accomplish their class-based projects because they live under repressive regimes are not exempt from participation in the liberation process when they live in personal relationships predicated on a sexist model. Likewise, white middle class women who lament the sexism from which they suffer cannot be immobilised by their pain and thus prevented from struggling against the contingencies of life which relegate the poor to perpetual marginality and early death...

The Mothers exhibit both of these dynamics in their struggle for justice. They have seized upon the accidentality of disappearance and focused upon it the spotlight of justice. They have done so as mothers, a generic term referring not only to a biological relationship, but drawing from the cultural power of that relationship; they have expanded it as an umbrella to include all who struggle for human rights. Likewise, they have

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1 I am indebted for the analysis of this dynamic of oppression to Rosemary Radford Ruether in her book *New Woman, New Earth* New York, Seabury Press, 1975.

taken the psychological pain of loss and transformed it into a shared grieving, the shared grieving into concrete, courageous, and ceaseless political action. The genius, yes, the grace of the Mothers is not to be overlooked.

The risk of leadership

Nehemiah in exhorting his companions to rise up and build, the second of the three stages of our analysis, took on the risk and burden as well as the creativity of leadership...

Naming structures of oppression and daring to defy them contains more than an element of risk. Women who have called sexism by its name and challenged it in structures and in individual actions need no definition of risk... But once again the insight has power, and once it has dawned we have no choice but to resist. For us resistance is another name for risk. From this experience of risk we can understand and stand in solidarity with the poor, with sexual minorities.... We can affirm and encourage their risks because we have taken our own, knowing that the different oppressions which we suffer are bound in common dynamics.
We can avoid self-righteous judgment (though we must name what we see) of those who cannot risk, because we know too that burden which befell Nehemiah. His burden to build the wall, like ours to tear down the walls of sexism, assures that life will not be easy. It is not easy to run counter to the prevailing currents. It is not pleasant to admit to oneself and to loved ones the extent to which one is oppressed, the extent to which one has internalised the oppression of others. But the burden of leadership for love and justice has as its ultimate consequences the cross and resurrection, and there is precedent for its efficacy...

Creative Listening

Nehemiah relativised the risk and burden of leadership by issuing a clarion call to his friends. He answered the needs of the moment with a creativity which called on all people to join in his effort. So too we as women have been pushed to the limits of our creativity as we strategise for inclusive ways to overcome oppression. Leaders among us have designed programmes, rewritten laws and theories, and led campaigns of many types. But most of all we have listened for hours unto days to the experiences of our sisters and brothers. Creative strategic listening, hearing each other into action, to paraphrase the words of Nelle Morton, has been the cornerstone of our creativity.[2] Thus our leadership has the character of invitation rather than coercion...

As leaders of the human rights movement in Argentina, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, know well the risk, burden and creativity. Every Thursday at 3:30 PM they stage a silent protest in front of the president's office. In so doing they defy the ban on public gatherings laid down during the 'stage of siege'. They never know what the official reaction will be, but accept the risk as part of their commitment to the eventual triumph of truth. Some of them have been tear gassed, others taken away by police for arrest and questioning. Some Thursdays they are left in peace, other times they are heckled and intimidated. Perhaps the most telling element of their risk is the fact that it is incalculable.

They know too the burden of leadership in the continued suffering that comes not only from the disappearance of loved ones but also with the time and energy which go into thus far fruitless efforts. Yet curiously they maintain their position, and they do not judge those who cannot stand with them. However, as mentioned above, they name what they see, calling those who have power responsible. In fact, their creativity lies in the subtle persuasion of their witness, and not in any heavy-handed urgings. To those of us without disappeared relatives who have marched with them, there is inevitably a gracious 'thank you for accompanying us.' To those who are unable to take the risk, no matter how famous or powerful in international circles, there is only another invitation.

Apparently this strategy works because the Mothers, apart from being nominated for a Nobel Prize and apart from receiving other international honours, are gradually chipping away at the credibility of an allegedly democratic country. In the process they are carving out a new image of love and justice, namely, the feminist ideal of women and all the marginalised people directing the liberation process.

Strengthening hands

Nehemiah mentioned a third phase in this process, specifically, the need to gird up one's resolve and prepare for the task ahead... It is an effort to 'strengthen their hands' for the work. Taken literally it means a physical preparation for a demanding job like masonry. But for our purposes it means strengthening the muscles, if you will, of love and justice. Because love and justice, like any goal, take practice, and practice demands patience and perseverance.

This preparation process is the stage at which we find ourselves in the struggle for liberation once we as people of faith have understood the dynamics of oppression and taken on the leadership. Although the two previous moments are difficult, this final aspect presents the greatest challenge. Like Nehemiah we have to mobilise and coordinate the training for execution of liberation strategies. This is what I see to be the task of the WSCF in the 80s...

Since the dawn of the second wave of the women's movement in the early 1960s ...women have carried on consciousness-raising, or what I have referred to above as creative strategic listening... This kind of listening and sharing, as well as the special valuing which the Latin American bishops called at Puebla a 'Preferential option for the poor' has brought us to our current situation. I submit that the WSCF adopt this style and commitment.

A second suggestion which arises out of feminist experience is the attempt to develop an interstructured analysis of the oppression/liberation process. Women have tried to do this by moving beyond the particularity of sexism and searching out its common roots with classism, racism, heterosexism, etc. This too is possible for the WSCF...

Mothers, bishops and soldiers

Once again the good women of the Plaza de Mayo prove that the seemingly theoretical is eminently possible. They provide on-going support for one another through their contacts with counselling

Since the dawn of the second wave of the women's movement in the early 1960s ...women have carried on consciousness-raising, or what I have referred to above as creative strategic listening...

2 Nelle Morton is professor emeriti of Drew University. Her famous 'hearing each other into speech' puts the active listening ahead of the speech itself. Cf. her article in *Women and the Word,* Berkeley, California: Center for Women and Religion, 1972 entitled 'The Rising Woman Consciousness in a Male Language Structure' and her 'Beloved Image' published in the THE CHALLENGE OF FEMINISM TO THEOLOGY edited in Italian by Mary E. Hunt and Rosino Gibellini, Brescia, Italy, Editrice Querinana, 1980.

services and pastoral people. Theirs is a preferential option for the most marginalised, those who in a sense are neither dead nor alive. As mentioned above, the Mothers are beginning to branch out in their analysis as they reflect on the economic and social conditions which have given birth to the disappearances. Third, they are clear in their analysis of the need for structural change, refusing to accept a list of the names of the disappeared which the government will probably provide in the near future to another groups. Rather, the Mothers are bypassing 'cheap grace' and holding out for definitive word, the real goal, namely, their children, alive or more likely dead.

The Mothers have spent the last four years building up personal integrity and trust. Imagine what fortitude it takes to face a repressive government week after week, and how clear one must be about one's goals. Imagine too the trust as they get up each Thursday morning wondering how many of their sisters will be in the Plaza. And now, being more and more certain that they will not be alone, imagine their satisfaction, and their hope...

The Argentine Catholic bishops met recently at a retreat centre to write and approve a yet to be published pastoral document, rumoured to include mention of human rights. A group of the Mothers went to the rural location to petition the bishops to use their position and prestige to pressure the government on the question of the disappeared, something the bishops, with few exceptions, have been reluctant to do. A local newspaper carried a picture taken at the centre while some of the bishops were out for a stroll. One sees the backs of the bishops in their cassocks, then several armed soldiers, and beyond the soldiers the Mothers being barred from speaking with their spiritual leaders.

I pray that the WSCF in its capacity as an ecumenical church body may draw strength from the struggles of the Mothers who represent all people in need of liberation. And I challenge the WSCF, and myself too as a friend of the group, to know where to locate ourselves in the Mothers-soldiers-bishops continuum, and to take our place now.

Kitchen of Victims:

Reporting on a theatre campaign in Kosovo

Zana Hoxha Krasniqi

The director of the Kitchen of Victims *theatre performance, Zana Hoxha Krasniqi, gave a lecture at the* Stop Being Silent! *seminar in Novi Sad, Serbia in 2009. She then led an interactive reading of the challenging and moving script. An excerpt from the script,* Scene One*, is included, following this report on the theatre campaign.*

Background Information

The *Kitchen of Victims* is a theatre performance that showcases the trials of modern day Kosovar women. It highlights the problems of domestic violence as the women tell their own personal stories on stage while preparing food. The atmosphere is intimate, and the audience shares not only the smells of the food that is actually cooking, but also the pain and emotions of the female lead characters.

The idea for developing this performance came while the NGO, Artpolis, was conducting social theatre trainings and performances with young people as part of peer education activities supported through previous projects in Kosovo. This initiative included over 100 trained young people, with more than 15 theatre performances produced by young people on themes of reproductive health, gender equality, education of girls, HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse. The initiative also resulted in the establishment of the *Festival for Social Change* in Kosovo.

Believing that the same participatory approach would be applicable also for other social groups, Artpolis initiated the idea of developing a theatre performance that would present the true stories of victims of domestic and sexual violence in Kosovo.

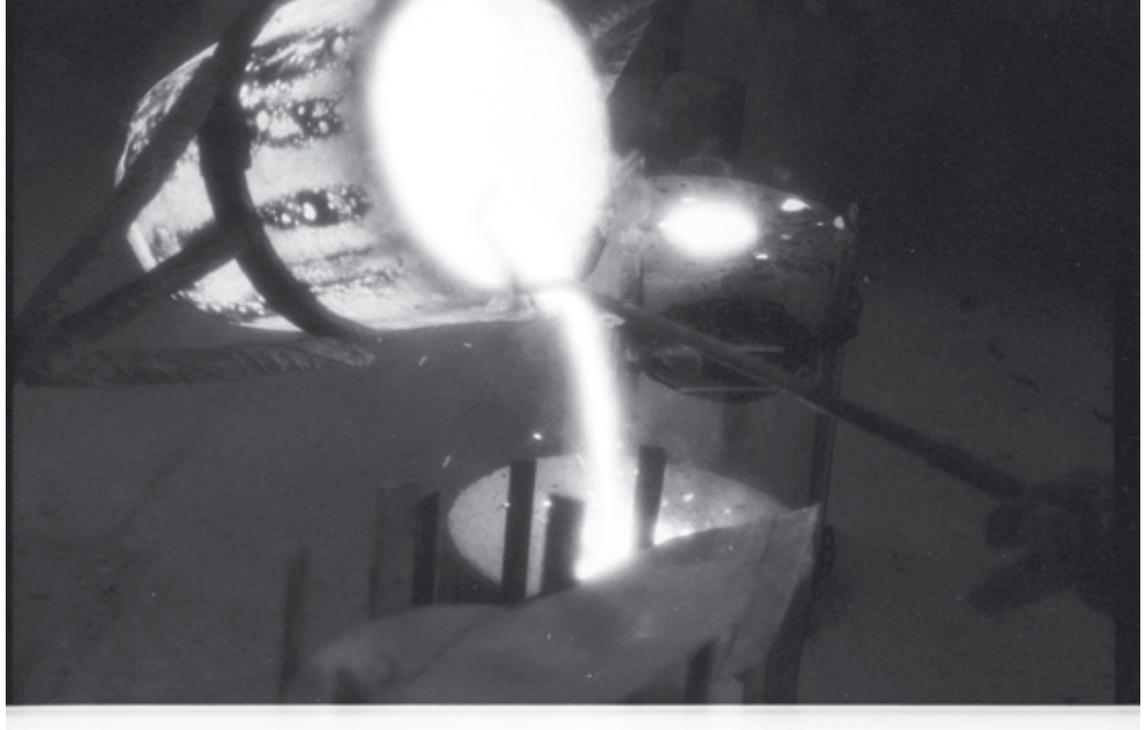
Problems addressed

In Kosovo, various writers have suggested that the 'peace' after war in 1998-1999 had included gender- based violence, usually directed at women. The main categories of violence against women identified by institutions and NGOs in Kosovo include psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, and economic violence. Less frequently used terms are institutional violence, material violence, moral violence, incest, isolation, war rape, and violence during wartime. These categories often overlap. Kosovo lacks adequate mechanisms for collecting and recording the extent of violence. While most institutions and organisations maintain records, their databases do not include pertinent demographic and geographic information and staff lack training in statistical analysis. Since violence tends to be under reported in general, even the best data collection systems cannot show the true extent of violence.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Kosovo's Women Network, domestic violence remains under reported in Kosovo, mainly because it is generally considered to be shameful. The data of the Kosovo Police Domestic Violence unit showed that there were 1073 cases of domestic violence reported in the country in 2008; from that number 90% were women and, in 90% of

Zana Hoxha Krasniqi is the founder and executive director of Artpolis, a Kosovo-based NGO that promotes culture, arts, and multiethnic co-existence through social dialogue and the use of theatre as a tool for promoting diversity. She has directed several theatre performances that were presented in the biggest theatres in Kosovo and has collaborated closely with regional theaters in the Balkans, such as the Albanian National Theater of Tirana. She has promoted theatre based training through YPEER Kosova and has also founded the ‚Youth Festival for theatre for social changes', which has been held annually from 2007-2010.

UNKT UNITED NATIONS KOSOVO TEAM



the cases, the perpetrator was a man. From these figures it appears clear that violence against women in Kosovo is an issue that needs to be addressed jointly by both men and women in order to bring positive change.

The Kosovo Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Anti-Discrimination have had minimal impact when it comes to the number of discrimination and gender inequality cases claimed before the Kosovo courts. Current mechanisms set at the local and central level on gender equality also have shown only minimal effectiveness. Gender mainstreaming in decision-making bodies has been limited due to insufficient human and financial resources that would enable the creation of effective institutions, as are mandated to protect rights of women and girls in Kosovo.

As the Government of Kosovo works towards the long-term goal of EU accession, it must address the issue of domestic violence against women. Economic and social policies that support women's empowerment remain very much needed. Only by advancing women's positions will Kosovo be able to reach the European Integration standards and attain the globally agreed Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Supportive links

Since 2007, Artpolis has integrated theatre as a tool for awareness-raising and outreach alongside with political and cultural transitions in Kosovo. This supportive environment enabled Artpolis and the art community in general to engage actively in linking theatre and social issues. Furthermore, the engagement of the art community in civil society initiatives merged these two sectors and enabled a new and positive movement towards developing meaningful social theatre in Kosovo.

The instrumental support of UNIFEM, UNFPA, and Theatre Dodona were the key aspects that made this play possible. Furthermore, collaboration with shelters, which take care of victims of gender-based violence, together with the Kosovo Women's Network and the art community were crucial in making a theatre performance based on true stories from grassroots realities in Kosovo.

Technical support was provided by Theater Dodona. UNIFEM's and UNFPA's role, in supplement with financial support, enriched the performance and enabled it to be technically and professionally possible.

The process

The process of making *Kitchen of Victims* was as follows:

- The first step was the identification and selection of artists who would be involved in the project: director, playwright, dramaturge, actresses, scene designer, and costume designer. Well known and famous artists were gathered around this project, which was important for its publicity and message.
- After a wide range of consultations with women's NGOs and gender-based violence experts, Artpolis and the directors and dramaturge visited five shelters spread throughout Kosovo to meet with victims of gender-based violence and understand their stories. During these visits, with permission, more than 20 stories from the victims were gathered.
- Following the field research, the dramaturge, in collaboration with the director of performance, wrote the stories and prepared them to be exercised by artists.
- Continuously for 3 months, the theatre performance team prepared the play, including the set and other visual and musical aspects of the performance.

Results

Since its first premiere in March 2009, *Kitchen of Victims* has received wide attention in Kosovo. Shown more than fifteen times around Kosovo, and once in Albania, the performance was attended by over 1000 persons. The premiere performance received an excellent response from both men and women, who packed into Pristina's Dodona theatre. Engaging an audience of all ages, among them many were artists, human rights advocates, civil society activists, as well as policy makers and respected members of Kosovar society. The performance achieved its aim of breaking the silence surrounding gender-based violence and ensuring that the voices of women are heard.

As the first professional theatre performance that presents the perspective and the stories of victims of domestic violence, *Kitchen of Victims* used participatory action research in writing the script and in actively engaging the audience. During the entire performance, the actors interacted with the audience so that there was not just passive listening, but also a dialogue created between the artists and audience.

Since 2007, Artpolis has integrated theatre as a tool for awareness-raising and outreach alongside with political and cultural transitions in Kosovo.

After receiving strong support in Kosovo, UNFPA invited the director of play, Zana Hoxha Krasniqi, to present the performance and discuss about using theatre as a tool for raising awareness on gender-based violence in the International Conference 'International Standards for Gender Policies' in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan from 13-14 April 2009.

Furthermore, the story of *Kitchen of Victims* has been published in the form of play/drama in Albanian and has served as an artistic piece of evidence reflecting the situation of women in Kosovo and gender-based violence. The narrated stories of victims were published and distributed to audiences and other theatre groups to use the stories as motivation and bases for further performances.

Most of the people who saw the performance considered it to be a unique piece of artistic work that stimulates thinking and action for prevention of violence against women, at all levels, starting from grassroots intervention up to policy level.

Lessons learned

Though this project, many lessons were learned:

- Together, the donor community and NGOs can play an important role in linking artistic communities with grassroots social problems in order to make meaningful social theatres that reflect social realities, especially women's conditions in society.
- Using participatory action research, real stories were collected from the field to engage the artists in order to make the performance as realistic as possible. This approach, reflecting reality, had a strong impact on the audience.
- The presence of decision-makers and opinion leaders at the premiere enabled them to view and be influenced by women's realties. In a small reception held after the premiere in Prishtina, the audience commented that they were impressed by this powerful piece of theatre. It enabled them to think differently about issues such as gender equality and gender-based violence. A peaceful resistance veteran, Adem Demoçi, an elderly man who suffered much violence while prisoner for 30 years because of peaceful resistance, stated that he 'was honoured to have seen this play and every man in Kosovo should come and see it'. The government spokesman, Memli Krasniqi and the deputy leader of the opposition party, Blerim Shala, were also present, as were other members of Kosovar institutions and civil society.
- Active engagement of media and journalists enabled the performance to be promoted and multiplied to a large audience. To find Artpolis online, visit www.artpolis-ks.org.

Kitchen of Victims: Scene One, Zoja's Story

Ilir Gjocaj *Translated by* Nora Demiri

scene I

The scene is a large living room, with a panel on the right side separating the kitchen. On the left is a dining table. The kitchen has a stove with a saucepan on it; food is cooking. Food and vegetables are spread on the counter. Fatmira walks in. She looks around and sees that nobody is there. She checks what is cooking in the saucepan and sits in corner. She takes out her embroidery and starts knitting evenly. Zoja walks in with a cake in her hands; she does not see Fatmire. Zoja puts the cake down and looks around and at what is cooking. She turns on the oven and then faces the dining table and sees Fatmire. Fatmire stands up.

ZOJA: [*Looks scared*] Oops!

FATMIRA: Sorry!

ZOJA: No, it's okay. I just didn't see you. I thought nobody was in.

Good, you came. You are Fatmire, right?

FATMIRA: Yes

ZOJA: I am Zoja. That's my name.

How are you? You are doing well?

FATMIRA: I am fine, thanks. What about you?

ZOJA: Fine. Congratulations; my best wishes for your birthday. Hope you reach 100 years. No worries, everything will go away. I wish you to stay healthy and everything else will turn out better.

FATMIRA: It's not my birthday.

ZOJA: No?!

FATMIRA: A girl that works here invited me for someone's birthday.

ZOJA: Which girl?

FATMIRA: A young girl, with a shirt on…

ZOJA: A beautiful one, tall, blond?

FATMIRA: Yes.

ZOJA: Of course not... she is Adelina. That's the queen. She doesn't work here. She is sheltered here, same as us.

FATMIRA: Aha! I thought she was…

ZOJA: She's too…, she hangs around making all this noise… and it's not even your birthday! Maybe she was speaking about the other girl.

FATMIRA: Which one?

ZOJA: Another one, a young girl. She came in a few days ago. I haven't seen her much, didn't have any chance though.

FATMIRA: Maybe it's her birthday.

ZOJA: But, how would Adelina know that quickly about her birthday? That girl was locked until yesterday.

FATMIRA: [*Worried*] How do you mean locked?! Who locked her? Why, women are locked here?!

ZOJA: No, no. They are not locked here. This is a shelter for women, like all other shelters. Nobody forces you to stay here. God forbid.

FATMIRA: Why then are you saying 'locked'?

ZOJA: She is not locked like being in prison, but she was told to stay in her room until some procedures with the female prosecutors are finished.

Something like this, I don't know much about it! She didn't come to hang out with us. We were not allowed to go and see her – this is what I thought.

FATMIRA: Ah ha!

ZOJA: Director told us we shouldn't go and visit her for the time being, and we shouldn't ask her anything.

[*Zoja continues cooking. Fatmire picks up her handicraft and starts knitting.*]

FATMIRA: Why? What's her situation?

ZOJA: I don't know. We weren't told, the director didn't tell us, neither did the other people who work here. Usually they tell us, but…don't know. Yesterday they closed up that procedure; this is what I last heard . But I didn't see her yesterday either; I was at work.

[*Zoja continues cooking. Fatmira drops her handicraft and looks around with no interest.*]

FATMIRA: Nevermind.

Adelina told me that she was arranging something and that I was invited for a birthday party. I thought she works here, otherwise why would I come here? I am not into her funny stuff; she is a sort of...

ZOJA: Adelina? No, no, she is great girl. She is a bit pampered.

FATMIRA: And where is she now?

ZOJA: She was here. She will pop up again. She moves around; she can't stay in a place. She is young, poor her. She used to hang out a lot and she hasn't familiarised herself yet with this place.

FATMIRA: You know what, it's better if I go now. [*Stands up*]

ZOJA: No, you don't have to go.

Why?

Stay here.

When we have birthdays here in the shelter, or any other occasion, everybody, all the women are invited. We have a lot of fun, we chat, we do things, we cook what we like – everything just for fun. If you feel tired, just have a seat. I will prepare everything. FATMIRA: No, No, I am fine. Yes…I don't even know what I'm doing here. We don't know even whose birthday it is!

ZOJA: Come on. Sit, sit here.

Probably it's the birthday of that young girl. Join us, now that you are here. We will wait for others; all the women will gather here. It is better you keep with us, otherwise we can go crazy from loneliness.

FATMIRA: What about the other women? Where are they?

ZOJA: Mmm, actually there are no other women! Only that other girl. Until lately, we had Sabrije and Vjollca, but they both left from here. Sabrija, just 10 days ago, the day you arrived. And Vjollca left a week ago. Vjolla is doing well now. I don't know if you met her? She got a job and a place to live. Vjollca is a clever woman.

FATMIRA: No, I didn't meet her.

[*Zoja finishes cooking and takes a seat.*]

ZOJA: What would you like to do, is there anything you would like to eat?

FATMIRA: I don't know. Whatever, it's the same for me.

ZOJA: We have sarma, we have chicken, and I am preparing soup.

If you like cookies, I can do that for you.

FATMIRA: No, no…you don't have too, no need for that.

ZOJA: Ok, don't worry. Have a seat there and accommodate yourself. Ok, as soon as the soup boils we will have a cup of coffee.

FATMIRA: No, let me help you. What do you want me to do?

ZOJA: Ok...

[*Thinks for a moment*]

You can make the salad, just take some vegetables and put them in the bowl.

[*They both keep busy cooking for a while.*]

ZOJA: Ha- ha! I am laughing

FATMIRA: [*Laughs*] Why?!

ZOJA: You know, all of us here name each other with funny names. The most funny, which I laughed at, is yours.

FATMIRA: Why?! Is there something

funny with my name?

ZOJA: [*Laughing*] 'Fatmire chopper!'

FATMIRA: What?!

ZOJA: [*Trying to stop laughing*] Didn't you want to kill your husband with a chopper?! [*Laughs*]

[*Fatmire stops moving.*]

FATMIRA: That's not your business. You better look after yourself…

[*Fatmire stops cooking and doesn't move. Zoja is not laughing anymore. She continues working and remains silent.*]

ZOJA: Fatmire! I am sorry; I apologise, for goodness' sake!

Don't take me the wrong way.

I swear, I didn't mean to offend you… but simply, we are used to making jokes about each other. It is all about our problems, what we have gone through. Sorry, I just rushed in saying that. I didn't think that you only just arrived and you don't know about the way we … for goodness' sake, don't take me wrong!

FATMIRA: No problem.

[*Fatmire takes her handicraft but doesn't work. She puts down the handicraft and again takes the knife in her hands.*]

ZOJA: Fatmire! I didn't think you would get angry with me. I fully forgot you didn't have a chance to meet with the other women here.

FATMIRA: Okay, okay.

[*Silence. Fatmire starts chopping vegetables nervously. Zoja continues to work.*]

ZOJA: Me... [*Laughs*], Adelina, calls me 'Miss Garlic', you know why, because I was beaten up even just because of garlic.

[*They continue working. Fatmire finishes what she was doing and takes a seat. She folds her handicraft.*]

ZOJA: You shouldn't feel bad, Fatmire, none of us came here because we wanted to or because we were doing well. But, we have no other choice but to laugh. We laugh about things we have gone through; this helps us to overcome and forget our past. It's not good to be anxious all the time. Look at me; I have suffered for 12 years. I endured being beaten up by my husband. It is only me who knows what I have gone through. But, what can be done, we should move onward.

[*Silence.*

Zoja stirs the food in the saucepan. Fatmire finishes with the salad and takes a seat. Zoja wipes her hands and joins Fatmire.

Silence.

Fatmire takes her handicraft in her hands.]

ZOJA: I noticed you don't like to hang out much with women here, with those sheltered here. You came just twice and left and didn't say much. You left after 10 minutes. It will be good if you join us. You would mingle with the other women, chit chat with them, talk about each other's troubles. You'll forget a bit about...

FATMIRA: Even if I will not get along with them nothing will happen.

ZOJA: But, here we have only each other.

FATMIRA: I have paid for the trouble some women gave me.

[*Fatmire continues working.*]

FATMIRA: There are few who do not deserve even to live. I don't know, thanks to God I didn't kill any. God helped me not to do so.

[*Zoja remains silent. She looks sadly on Fatmire. She stands up.*]

ZOJA: I feel tense, can't wait to know about that young girl. It's even her birthday…

[*Fatmira keeps silent. She looks annoyed. Zoja is speechless and looks at her.*]

ZOJA: Should we make a pie or mantija, with this pasta?

FATMIRA: Do whatever you want to.

ZOJA: I will prepare some mantijas. I was thinking to make them some time ago but simply didn't yet. I will make them just for pleasure, why not.

[*She starts folding the pasta.*]

Oh, you don't know how many times I was beaten up by my husband because of mantijas. I like to make them with a bit more garlic. 'Miss Garlic' as Adelina calls me [*Laughs*]. I like them with lots of garlic. He hates garlic. He didn't like garlic at all. It happened about three times. I was making garlicky mantijas, and I would always have a piece of pie-pan with lots of garlic, just for myself. I don't know how, but he always picked the wrong piece with lots of garlic. First what he would do – he would throw them on me, then on the floor. Then he was beating me up. I never dared to make mantijas anymore. But he couldn't ever take away the joy I feel when I taste mantijas.

[*Fatmire stands up and moves closer.*]

FATMIRA: Would you like me to help you with that? I can squash garlic.

ZOJA: I crushed a few, but if you would like, you can crush some more and then prepare the yoghurt stuff.

[*Fatmire takes the garlic and starts preparing it.*]

ZOJA: Did you live on your own or with your in-laws, Fatmire?

FATMIRA: Not with my in-laws, but my sisters-in-law were around…

ZOJA: I lived with my parents-in-law.

FATMIRA: Only with your mother-in-law?

ZOJA: Yes, she wasn't a mother-in-law – she was a devil. She knew only about doing horrible things. My husband was fully with her. I have gone through many things.

I was so stupid.

When I got married, my husband didn't make any gathering for our wedding; they were poor. He was very jealous, though I never stepped out of home. After some time, he didn't let me go and visit my father. I didn't visit them for two years. He was also very greedy and never liked to work. I couldn't get pregnant for four years... and I know why; I was always cold. I had to clean up our yard, I had to wash cemented paths during the winter and summer, as my mother-in-law asked me to do so. My husband liked to drink a lot and didn't want to do anything else except drink. He lost a lot of money gambling. He was than furious about that, and would come back home and beat me up. In the beginning, I endured the situation and thought as time goes on things would change slowly. He would get better and behave. Then children came... I was always speaking with myself, saying, 'I better endure this, now that we have kids maybe he would get better, perhaps he would feel grief for our kids'. But nothing turned for the better; things got even worse. I was beaten when the kids were crying; I was beaten for everything, even for the smallest things. When I would say something – 'why do you speak?' When I didn't speak – 'why are you not saying anything, what's up?' He would say, 'who are you to provoke me, even in my own house?' Then he would beat me again. Or when he got back home very late in the evenings or even early mornings, he would ask me 'why didn't you wait for me, why did you sleep?' I was waiting for him, I never slept, but sometimes I fell asleep quickly. He would then make trouble. He beat me up in front of my kids' eyes. One evening, the same as many others, he came very late; it was around four o'clock in the morning. I was asleep. He started making trouble, hitting me. The kids burst into tears, crying. My older son came to me and was trying to protect me, as he felt sorry for me. He took our son and through him over the shelf and then grabbed the other son and beat both of them badly. They went crazy crying and I couldn't stand anymore. He walked out and didn't come back that evening. I took the kids and went to my father's place.

But, my father told me to send the kids back home, as he could not take care of somebody else's kids. I felt terrible, much worse than when I walked out of my husband's house. My father prepared everything to send the kids back home. I couldn't sleep all night. Then I thought, what about women who lost their husbands during the war, how they live. They raise up their kids on their own; they have done so for so many years now. I took my kids and walked out.

[*Fatmire brings a tissue to Zoja to wipe her tears, but Zoja wipes them with her hands.*]

ZOJA: Don't worry, I am fine…I just feel embarrassed when I think of those things…

FATMIRA: Everything is gone now, and hopefully will be forgotten soon…

ZOJA: Yes, for sure? It's about the past, it will never happen anymore as long as life goes on. God saved us. No…now I have a job, I am working for five months now. I saved some money, and maybe I will be lucky to find an apartment for a good price. I will find another job too…and will continue on like this…

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Overcoming Violence in Society:
How the Restorative Approach Might Help

Nataliya Pylypiv is from Ukraine. She graduated in 2010 with a MA in Social Work (Consulting and Public Administration). Since 2006, Nataliya has worked in the Ukrainian Centre for Common Ground, an NGO which implements restorative practices in Ukraine.

Nataliya Pylypiv

In a world with constant wars and conflicts, growing numbers of murders, rapes, and armed attacks, we hope that at least our own home can be a secure refuge from the stress and hardships of life. Yet, for many, this hope is unreachable because the constant source of danger is concealed in their families. According to the Council of Europe meta-study, one in four women experience domestic violence over their lifetimes, and between 6-10% of women suffer from domestic violence annually.1

Over recent years there have been many methods developed on how to address the problem of domestic violence. Some concentrate on social gender stereotypes and domestic violence prevention programmes; some claim that all interventions should be aimed at protecting and healing the victim. Others believe that work must be done with perpetrators to change their behaviour. Despite such diversity of intervention techniques, few are considered effective. Professionals in the field emphasise the complexity and unique dynamics of domestic abuse, which demand an interdisciplinary approach to the problem. Such an understanding leads to the usage of practices that were not initially intended for cases of domestic violence; one of these practices is restorative justice.

What is restorative justice?

Restorative justice is not merely a technique or process; it is a theory and value-based practice that began in the late twentieth century. This approach is totally different from the traditional criminal justice system due to major paradigm shifts in understanding crime, the offender and victim, punishment, and accountability.

To begin with, the understanding of crime itself is different in the two approaches. In the criminal justice system, crime is seen as the violation of the law; so crime is committed against the country. On the contrary, restorative justice defines crime as harm caused to a specific person and to social relationships. From this point of view, the key figures in the process also differ. In the traditional system, the main stakeholders are the state and the criminal; whereas in restorative justice, the main stakeholders are the offender and victim. Such dissimilarities in basic concepts lead to divergent processes. It is obvious that in the criminal justice system the court process is adversarial in nature; whereas restorative programmes denote the cooperation of parties involved. It is evident that the nature of the process greatly influences the emotional state of the key participants. In court, emotions are tense, overwrought, and anxious, and this does not lead to the renovation of the relationships. On the contrary, restorative justice is aimed at reinstating positive connections between human beings, which is possible due to such feelings as forgiveness, love, understanding, encouragement, hope, comfort, and assurance.

Another important aspect differentiating the two approaches is who makes the decisions. In the criminal justice system, professional judges are responsible for the verdict. In restorative justice programmes, both sides of the criminal conflict decide how to deal with the consequences of offence. Finally, there is a great difference in understanding responsibility. In the criminal justice system, being responsible means accepting punishment as the cure. On the contrary, restorative justice understands responsibility as the accused freely taking accountability before the victim to reimburse the harm caused. Thus, in restorative justice processes, principle notions are perceived differently than in the traditional criminal system.

Tony Marshall, author and researcher from Great Britain, defined restorative justice as:

> *a way of dealing with victims and offenders by focusing on the settlement of conflicts arising from crime and resolving the underlying problems which cause it. It is also, more widely, a way of dealing with crime generally in a rational problem solving way. Central to restorative justice is the recognition of the community, rather than criminal justice agencies, as the prime site of crime control.2*

Simply speaking, restorative justice is aimed at healing the victim and offering the possibility to all parties involved in the conflict to take an active part in its resolution. Despite their novelty, restorative processes that foster dialogue between the offender and the victim have already shown the highest rates of victim satisfaction, true accountability from the offender, and reduced recidivism.3

Restorative justice may take many different forms, but nowadays the most common are three programs: victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, and restorative circles. Victim-offender mediation is usually a meeting, in the presence of a trained mediator, between the victim of a crime and the person who committed that crime. Family group conferencing has a much wider number of participants than mediation; among them can be family members of the victim and/or offender, as well as people connected to each side (for instance, friends and professionals). Circles include an even greater range of participants and may include members of community (neighbours, local authorities, and so on). There are many types of restorative circles: healing, sentencing, circles of support and accountability, and others.

Even though these programmes are quite diverse, they have a common process. Victims have the opportunity to express the full impact of the crime upon their lives, to receive answers to any lingering questions about the incident, and to participate in holding the offender accountable for his or her actions. Offenders can tell their story of why the crime occurred and how it has affected their lives. They are given an opportunity to make things right with the victim – to the degree possible – through some form of compensation. Also, great attention is given to crime prevention in the future, and that is where the role of community is crucial.

Restorative justice is not merely a technique or process; it is a theory and value-based practice that began in the late twentieth century. This approach is totally different from the traditional criminal justice system due to major paradigm shifts in understanding crime.

Restorative justice and domestic violence

The integration of restorative justice philosophy and domestic violence/sexual abuse research is not an easy one. Professionals in the social service system continuously emphasise the complexity and uniqueness of the dynamics of abuse.4 The cycle of violence should be taken into consideration when exploring the possible application of restorative justice practices. There are a few key aspects about domestic abuse that should be especially considered. First, abusive relationships usually occur between people who are in intimate relationships (i.e. marriage, parent/child, etc.), making it difficult to address safety requirements. Therefore, they often need immediate intervention and continuous protection to ensure the safety of the victim. Secondly, such relations involve a power imbalance between the victim and the abuser. Thirdly, domestic violence is an ongoing crime that is deeply ingrained in the relationship and the abuser's way of thinking, so extensive and complex intervention is required in order for change and healing to occur.

Such characteristics of the domestic violence cycle are often obstacles to the use of restorative justice programmes. For instance, the restorative approach is not applicable when there is an initial imbalance of power or a lack of time, and when the safety of participants cannot be guaranteed. These shortcomings prevent restorative practices from being used solely to deal with family abuse. At the same time, however, restorative justice offers some unique instruments that can be used to overcome the problem of domestic violence in communities. First of all, the restorative justice philosophy is of special importance: the crime is viewed not as some ephemeral violation of the state law but as the harm of the relationship of two people

who live in a community. Such understanding shifts the focus of the intervention significantly, giving a more holistic approach to the problem.

It has to be recognised that it is quite difficult to organise restorative justice programmes, mediation for example, in cases of domestic violence for both victim and offender at the same time. However, restorative justice circles still may be of great importance in such cases. For example, a healing circle may be organised for an abused woman to strengthen her, to help her recover, to build a safety net in the community for her, and thus to help her avoid the re-victimisation. Such circles may be organised either for one victim or for a group of abused women.

Likewise, a circle of support and accountability may be organised for the offender; it may help him recognise the problem, find needed services in the community (i.e. anger management, rehabilitation, etc.), and to be held accountable and responsible through means of social control.

Finally, circles may be organised for the community in which incidents of domestic violence occur. The topics for such circles might vary greatly: community values, raising awareness about the problem, services for victims and offenders, ways to help victims, and many others. Such broad community circles might play a tremendous role in domestic violence prevention. Discussing the problem of domestic violence in the community openly breaks the silence, ensures that such cases will not be ignored and that steps will be taken to overcome the violence. Besides, it is possible to talk about long-term effects, such as community-building. In every country where restorative justice is implemented, there are clear examples of how these programmes help to bring communities together to solve difficult social problems, like abuse, addiction, etc.

Restorative justice practice in Ukraine was implemented in 2003. The restorative programmes in Ukraine are mainly used for criminal offences committed by juveniles, but they also have been used for family matters, though never in situations of domestic violence. However, there were numerous cases when the restorative approach was used as a community-building technique, either through restorative circles, restorative approach trainings, or restorative programmes in schools.

Restorative programmes in schools have proven to be the most effective. The administration of the schools, where restorative justice practices are carried out as the conflict-resolution method on a regular basis, claim that the students became more disciplined and the number of conflicts involving physical force significantly dropped. This is mainly attributed to the fact that restorative practices teach children and communities to solve conflicts in non-violent ways. There is a higher possibility that as these children grow up and create their own families, they will use the acquired skills of non-violent conflict resolution, which gradually may lead to building safe, healthy families and communities.

To conclude, over recent years domestic violence has been given more attention and this has led to the emergence of new intervention approaches. Even though restorative justice was not originally meant for cases of domestic abuse, certain restorative programmes and principles can be successfully used, for example, healing circles for victims. The experience of many countries demonstrates that restorative programmes can be tools for rediscovering basic human values and strengthening positive relations and community ties; thus they become good methods for violence prevention in society.

Questions and comments are welcome; email nataliepylypiv@yahoo.com.

An important development of the 20th Century has been the growth of conflict resolution courses that train people in peacemaking in schools, churches, communities and between nations.

Suggested Reading:

G Bazemore and M Umbreit, 'Rethinking the Sanctioning Function in Juvenile Court: Retributive or Restorative Responses to Youth Crime', *Crime and Delinquency*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2005, pp. 296-316.

J Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration*, New York, 1989, repr., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

J Braithwaite, 'Restorative Justice', *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, vol. 25, 1999, pp. 84-85.

N Christie, 'Conflicts as Property', *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 17, 1977, pp. 1-15.

National Statistics Committee, 'Crime rates in Ukraine', (Dec., 2008) <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua>, accessed 15 March 2009.

K Pranis, B Stuart, and M Wedge, *Peacemaking Circles: From crime to community*, 1st edn., St. Paul, Minnesota, Living Justice Press, 2003.

H Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice*, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Herald Press, 2007.

partner, child, and three other adults.
The White Ribbon Campaign

Tuval Dinner made his first feminist friend in 1996 and has never been the same since. He currently works for the White Ribbon Campaign, encouraging, supporting, and challenging boys and young men to care and work for gender justice. He's a new dad and lives communally with his partner, child, and three other adults.

Tuval Dinner

The beginning

Too often it takes a tragedy of shocking proportions to galvanise communities, act as a catalyst for change, and to shed light on the dark corners of our society.

On December 6th, 1989 Canada experienced just such a tragedy.

Shortly after 5pm a man walked into Montréal's École Polytechnique engineering school, killed 14 women, injured dozens more, and traumatised a nation before turning the gun on himself.

It was subsequently discovered that this event was a calculated femicidal rampage. The killer attributed feminism for his life's troubles. He yelled 'I hate feminists' as he stalked the halls looking for female victims. He blamed his rejection to the school on 'affirmative action' for women and left a vitriolic, misogynist, suicide note to ensure his motives were understood.

While women's organisations had been working to end violence against women for decades, it took the December 6th Montréal Massacre to bring these issues to the forefront of Canadian consciousness. What resulted was a difficult national discourse on issues we had been reluctant to acknowledge and address as a society, particularly men's violence against women and gun control. What also resulted was action for social change.

As the second anniversary of December 6th approached in 1991, a handful of men in Canada decided they had a responsibility to speak out and act against men's violence against women. In the time before the proliferation of symbolic ribbons we know today, they decided that wearing a white ribbon would be a symbol of men's opposition to men's violence against women.

After only six weeks preparation, as many as one hundred thousand men across Canada wore a white ribbon. Many others were drawn into the discussion and debate on the issue of men's violence for the very first time. There was an outpouring of media attention and support for the 'novelty' of this approach to the issue.

The concept of the White Ribbon was affirmed; it is a man's pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. It quickly became apparent that there was a desire for this kind of venue for men to express their will to end violence against women, as the concept spread to several countries, including the United States, the UK, and Scandinavia.

An evolving campaign

In the following years, the White Ribbon Campaign in Canada evolved mostly as a volunteer driven organisation, focusing its efforts between November 25 (the UN International Day to End Violence Against Women) and December 6th, which remains a national day of remembrance for all women affected by violence in Canada.

The transition from conceptual statement to social movement did not come without challenges and mistakes. After the initial media swoon and donor support, funding the work became the perpetual challenge as for all social causes. This initial attention also caused some real friction with the women's movement in Canada, who were appropriately frustrated that a men's group suddenly could claim the space and support they had been working in for years. Finally, in its enthusiasm and ambition, the campaign suffered from a lack of focus and strategic direction.

As we approach our 20th year, the White Ribbon Campaign has made real efforts to address these challenges and learn from these mistakes. We have learned by listening to the women's movement that we need to do things differently as a men's organisation in this field of work, and we have become a strong ally and partner with many amazing women's organisations in Canada and beyond. Our commitment to them is to prove our dedication through our partnerships and actions towards ending men's violence against women.

Strategically we have determined that our efforts are best focused on three specific areas: the development of our national campaign in Canada, education and awareness work with young men and boys, and our historical role as a catalyst and facilitator for White Ribbon Campaigns across the globe. To these ends we have a national presence in Canada, our education resources are widely recognised as unique and important tools for promoting equity, healthy gender relationships, and anti-violence options, and there are White Ribbon Campaigns now in over 60 countries on six continents around the world.

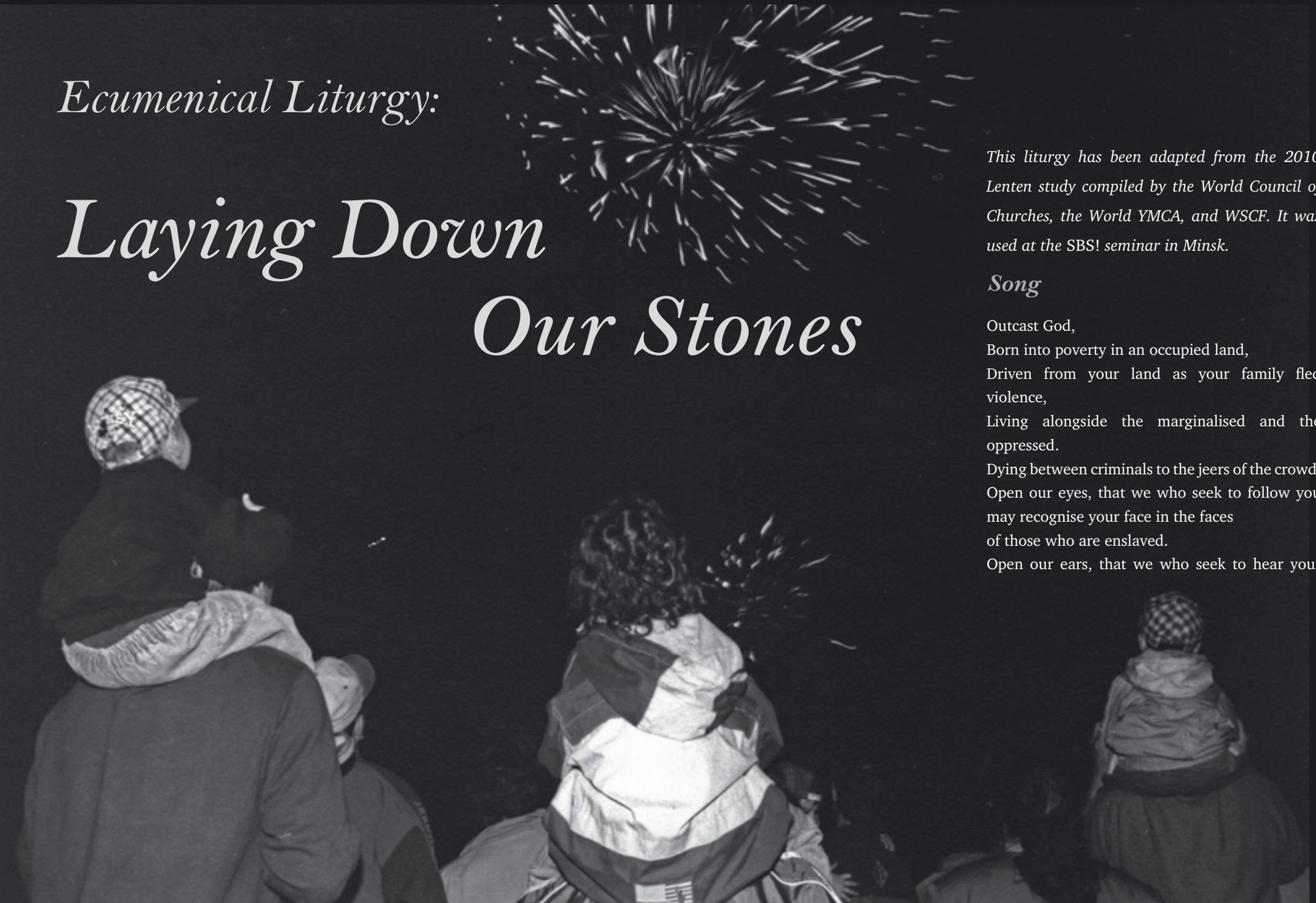
We have also learned to interrogate the social norms that dictate what it means to be a man, a real man, in today's world. We take a strength-based approach and believe that, although men perpetrate most of the world's violence, most men are not violent and do not want to be violent. But those non-violent men are too often silent about the violence that other men use. We work to activate, inspire, and engage this silent majority of men to address their own concepts of masculinity and stand up against violence against women and girls in their homes, schools, communities, countries, and globally.

We hold no proprietary notions that the only way to work towards ending men's violence against women is by wearing the White Ribbon. We cannot tell other communities the most appropriate strategies for their own context. What we can do is share our experiences, provide resources, and facilitate connections for this work to happen. It is this approach that has led to the education of Canadian teens, the change of domestic violence laws in Sweden, and an emerging White Ribbon movement in Pakistan, among other small steps towards a future that has no violence against women.

To find out how you can get involved please visit www.whiteribbon.com.

Ecumenical Liturgy:

Laying Down Our Stones



This liturgy has been adapted from the 2010 Lenten study compiled by the World Council of Churches, the World YMCA, and WSCF. It was used at the SBS! *seminar in Minsk.*

Song

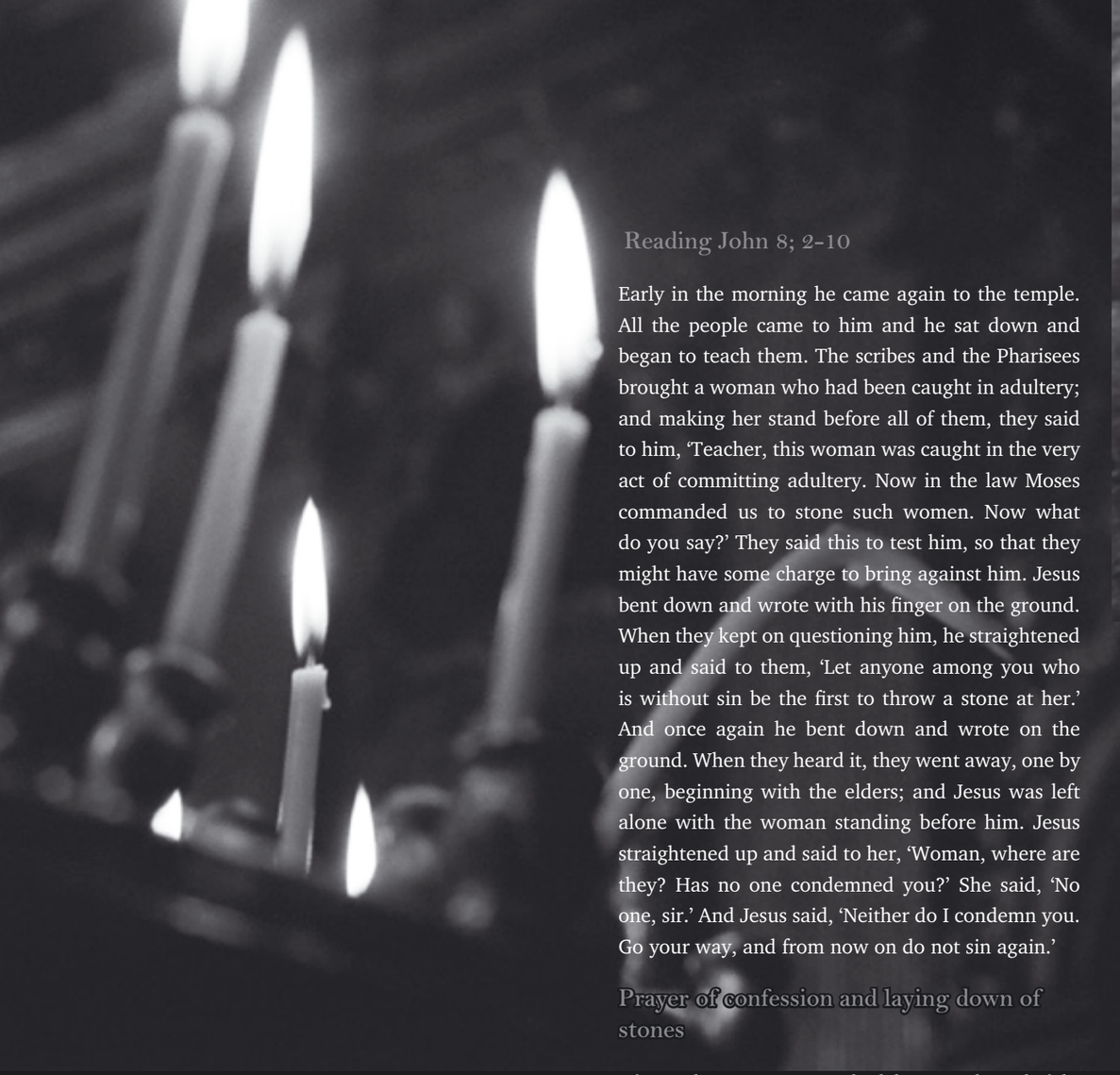
Outcast God,
Born into poverty in an occupied land,
Driven from your land as your family fled violence,
Living alongside the marginalised and the oppressed.
Dying between criminals to the jeers of the crowd,
Open our eyes, that we who seek to follow you may recognise your face in the faces
of those who are enslaved.
Open our ears, that we who seek to hear your word, may recognise your love in the stories which are often drowned out.
Open our hearts, that we who seek your way of life may be bold in witnessing to your longing for justice and peace.
Amen

Song

Lighting the candle

God bringing light and banishing fear, we light this candle as a sign of our willingness to be your light in the world. We remember before you our own communities; the places where we live and work; the people whose lives are connected to ours. We bring before you all the people whose stories we have witnessed yesterday and will witness today, and all those whose stories have shaped our lives. In Jesus, you show us how to confront violence and how to transform it into peace and justice. Fill us with your peace, that we may be peacemakers. Fill us with your truth, that we may speak truth to power. Fill us with your courage, that we may bring hope to those who live in fear. Fill us with joy, that we may be your beacons in the world. We ask it in the name of Jesus, our brother and our friend, Amen

Invite participants to take a stone from the basket to hold as the Gospel is read.



Reading John 8; 2-10

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

Prayer of confession and laying down of stones

After each prayer a stone is laid down, at the end of the formal confession everyone is invited to come forward and lay down a stone in a communal act of confession. If you wish to say a word of confession aloud you are welcome to do so.

Leader: God of heaven and earth before you we confess our sin

All: God of transformation hear our prayer

We confess the terrible physical and sexual violence that so many women and girls
across the globe are subjected to.

All: God of transformation hear our prayer

Leader: We confess how even into our own time scripture has been used to justify violence
against women and their exclusion from a full role in society.

All: God of transformation hear our prayer

Leader: We confess a violent culture which turns women's bodies into sexualised commodities
and sees women as part of the spoils of war and commerce.

All: God of transformation hear our prayer

Leader: We confess the structural violence of our institutions including the church which too
often exclude women from decision-making, power, or authority.

All: God of transformation hear our prayer

Please move forward to lay down remaining stones. You may pray aloud or silently while placing your stone.

Assurance of forgiveness and transformation

Leader: There appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. (Luke 13; 11-13)

Let us stand to listen to words we can trust, words which help us and our societies to

stand up straight, be transformed and walk humbly in God's paths. *(please rise)*
Behold says God I am making all things new. I will wipe every tear from their eyes (Rev. 21; 5, 4)

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54; 10) In the name of Christ we are forgiven.

All: Alleluia, amen!

Song




Emergency Helpline Numbers

This list of resources from throughout Europe for cases of domestic violence was collected from WSCF students and seminar participants. The numbers have not been tested and the list is far from exhaustive. We challenge you to further research, as you may never know when knowledge of available resources may be helpful.

Austria:
Police: 133

Belarus:
State-established 'Minsk City Center of Social Service for Family and Children' (nonstop): +375-017-247-3232
NGO Radislava: +375-017-280-2811 (Mo.-Th. 9.00-17.00, Fr. 9.00-13.00)

Czech Republic:
Bílý Kruh BezpeĐí: http://www.domacinasili.cz/
Dona linka (non-stop): +420-25-151-1313

Denmark:
Helpline: +45-7-020-3082
www.voldmodkvinder.dk

Germany:
Police: 110
Berliner Initiative gegen Gewalt an Frauen: +40-30-611-0300
http://www.big-hotline.de/

Georgia:
Women's rehabilitation centre 'Safari', helpline +99-53-222-0689; +99-53-222-5402
Juridical services: +99-59-523-2102

Greece:
The Smile of a Child, helpline: +30-SOS-1056, www.hamogelo.gr
Association of Women's Clubs of Heraklion, Shelter for abused women and children, helpline: 800-11-16000, www.kakopoiisi.gr

Hungary:
NANE (Women for Women Together Against Violence): http://nane.hu/
Abused women and children helpline: +36-80-505-101 (in the evening between 6 and 10)

Lithuania:
Women's helpline (toll free): 8-800-66366
BĐk stipri!: http://www.bukstipri.lt/lt/stop
Police: 112, www.sos112.lts

Norway:
City mission: +47-815-33-300, http://www.kirkens-sos.no/
Domestic violence helpline for minors (under 18): +47-815-33-300, http://www.ung.no
Women shelters: www.krisesenter.com

Romania:
Pro Women Foundation, Iasi, tel./fax: +40-232-210-824, +40-232-260-154, +40-730-091-504, www.prowomen.ro
A.P.F.R. Foundation, Timisoara, Romania, tel./fax: +40-256-293-183, www.apfr.ro

Serbia:
List of helplines throughout the country: http://www.nasiljeuporodici.rs/index.php?url=prvapomoc/sos_telefoni_i_sklonista.htm

Slovakia:
Police: 158
Aliancia žien (Alliance of Women), SOS helpline: +421-903-519-550, http://www.alianciazien.sk

Sweden:
Kvinnofridslinjen: +46-20-505050, www.kvinnojour.com

Switzerland:
Police: 117

United Kingdom:
The national domestic violence free phone helpline: 0808-200-0247
Women's Aid: http://www.womensaid.org.uk/
Refuge, For Women and Children Against Domestic Violence: http://www.refuge.org.uk/

Ukraine:
ĐĐĐĐĐ ĐĐĐĐĐĐ (Line of Trust): +380-44-362-0002
http://www.dovira.info/contacts/
http://wap.forumfem.borda.ru/?1-3-0-00000145-000-0-0-1261140296

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