



UNIVERSITEIT
iYUNIVESITHI
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

100
1918 · 2018



FAKULTEIT TEOLOGIE
FACULTY of THEOLOGY
sol iustitiae illustra nos

TEACHING GENDER AND HEALTH IN AFRICA: HEARING FROM OUR CHANGE AGENTS

Hosted by the
Gender Unit, Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology,
Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University
in conjunction with the
Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians

22-23 MARCH 2018

ATTIE VAN WIJK AUDITORIUM
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 22 MARCH 2018

07:30 – 08:15	Registration
08:15 – 08:30	Welcome and Arrangements <i>Julie Claassens</i>
08:30 – 10:30	Session 1 (Chair Julie Claassens) On Becoming a Change Agent: Journeys of Teaching Gender and Health in the African Context <i>Musa W. Dube (University of Botswana)</i> 'Nervous Conditions' as a Portrait of African Women's Quest for Emancipation and Justice: Implications for Gender and Health <i>Kuzipa Nalwamba (United Church of Zambia)</i> "That we may eat and die" (1 Kings 17:12b): A prophetic call for Circle ecofeminism that 'puts food on the plate' <i>Nontando Hadebe (St Augustine College of South Africa)</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Refreshments
11:00 – 13:00	Session 2 (Chair Nina Müller van Velden) Agency between $\sigma\alpha\rho\chi$ and $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$? Reading John 13:34-35 rhetorically in gendered Africa today <i>Elna Mouton (Stellenbosch University)</i> See this Woman? On the Liberative and Transformative Potential of Luke 7:36-50 <i>Miranda N. Pillay (University of the Western Cape)</i>

Nolite te bastardes carborundorum: Insidious Trauma in the story of Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*
Juliana Claassens (Stellenbosch University)

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch

14:00 – 15:30

Session 3 (Chair Miranda Pillay)

Teaching gender in primary and secondary schools in Botswana: Does the curriculum challenge life-denying cultural practices
Senzokuhle Doreen Setume (University of Botswana)

“Your Daughter-in-law is More Than Seven Sons”: Naomi/Laban, Botho//Ubuntu and Community-Building in Gaborone Showers
Malebogo Kgalemang (University of Botswana)

Sworn to Silence: Examining the Policy of the African Initiated Church through the concepts of Culture and Christian Knowledge Systems
Bridget Masaiti (Stellenbosch University)

15:30– 15:45

Refreshments

15:45 – 16:45

Session 4 (Chair Nobuntu Penxa-Matholeni)

‘When I feel heard’ – The significance of life stories as told by women with disabilities
Erna Möller (RAMPUP)

Dialoguing Gender Ambiguity in John 12:1-8 and 13:1-17: A Dance between Conformity and Transgression
Nina Müller van Velden (Stellenbosch University)

17:30

Farewell Church Service in Honor of Prof Elna Mouton
Dutch Reformed Church Stellenbosch Moedergemeente

FRIDAY 23 MARCH 2018

08:15 – 08:30

Welcome and Arrangements
Julie Claassens

08:30 – 10:30

Session 5 (Chair Elna Mouton)

Liberating and Empowering Women in a Patriarchy Society: A Case Study of Malawi
Phoebe Chirongo (African Bible College/Malawi Assemblies of God University)

The Frustrations and the Joys experienced in transforming the ‘African’ societal mindset on issues of gender-based violence.
Dorcus Chebet (Pwani University, Kenya)

Triple Disability: Because I am Woman
Brigitte Seyram Amenyedzi (South African Theological Seminary)

10:30 – 11:00

Refreshments

11:00 – 13:00

Session 6 (Chair Manitza Kotzé)

“NDIYINDODA”: A Critical assessment of the coming-of-age of IsiXhosa men and implications of the concept “NDIYINDODA” to a black professional woman
Nobuntu Penxa-Matholeni (Stellenbosch University)

Kufa Kwa Jongololo Nkhusiya Mphete: Cultural Practice and Perception among the Sena People of Nsanje District in Malawi
Lucy Thokozile Chibambo (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

What’s the ‘harm’ in harmful traditional practices? Engaging Faith leaders for Positive Change
Selina Palm (with Elisabet Le Roux and Brenda Bartelink) (Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University)

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch

14:00 – 15:30

Session 7 (Chair Funlola Olojede)

“Matrilineality and Cultural Change: Rethinking the Bemba Notion of “Children Belong to the Mother” in the Context of Child Maintenance Rights and Absent Fathers in Zambia”
Mutale Mulenga Kaunda (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Encouraging Ethical Reflection on Women and Reproductive Technology: Some Teaching and Learning Strategies for Distance Studies
Magriet de Villiers (Stellenbosch University) and Manitza Kotzé (North-West University)

The Clark Kent Effect: Superman and the Intersection of Theology, Gender and Health
Nathania Hendriks (Stellenbosch University)

15:30 – 15:45

Refreshments

15:45 – 16:45

Session 8 (Chair Selina Palm)

“My God, My God, Why Is My Body a Combat Zone?” A Reading of Lament Psalms in the Context of Abused Female Bodies
Funlola Olojede (Stellenbosch University)

Teaching Gender and Health in Africa: A Way to a Safe and Inclusive Church
Rev. Dr. Felicidade N. Chirinda (United Seminary of Ricatla – Maputo- Mozambique)

16:45 - 17:00

Closing and the Way Forward (Chair Julie Claassens)

ABSTRACTS

On Becoming a Change Agent: Journeys of Teaching Gender and Health in the African Context

Musa W. Dube (University of Botswana)

A change agent is one who is changed by the demands of his or her context. In this paper, I share my journeys with African women theologians, the academy and Faith-Based organizations, highlighting how inhabiting the space of being a change agent is nurtured by the context, experiences and commitment to certain convictions, which in this case were the context of suffering and the quest to participate towards the liberation and the empowerment of the marginalized and oppressed. Whereas my commitment to teaching to transgress gender, race, class, age, sexuality, ethnicity and colonial boundaries were partly nurtured by my historical background, academic training and associations; the paper will also highlight how health was contextually thrust into my teaching and research agenda by the HIV and AIDS context—demanding one to stand up to the challenge of ill health and patriarchally sponsored epidemic. Challenges and opportunities for teaching gender and health in Africa will be drawn from the University of Botswana classroom experience; my travel within the continent of Africa and the interactions I had with theologians and religious leaders on the subject of transforming the curriculum for mainstreaming gender and HIV and AIDS. Contemporary stories from the University of Botswana Circle chapter and Pitso ya Banna will also be shared, as efforts to embrace being change agents as well as attempts to study spaces of agency arising from the community.

‘Nervous Conditions’ as a Portrait of African Women’s Quest for Emancipation and Justice: Implications for Gender and Health

Kuzipa Nalwamba (United Church of Zambia)

The paper argues that literary art is an important form of ‘story telling’ for the critical assessment and exploration of the complexity and contradictions of African women’s experiences with depth, wisdom and insight. Tsitsi Dangarembga’s novel ‘Nervous Conditions’, is arguably representative of the struggle of African women of different generations for emancipation and justice in a postcolonial context conditioned by patriarchy and cultural imperialism. I explore Dangarembga’s narrative, focussing on her representation of African (Zimbabwean) women negotiating intersections of race and class, gender and cultural change. Methodologically, I juxtapose the novel’s narrative with insights from literature on postcolonial, gender and feminist theory. The goal of the study is twofold, namely, first, to offer a critical assessment of the possibilities imbued within Dangarembga’s novel for modification of perceptions of gender and health; second, to draw upon that assessment the potential of literary art to uplift African experiences that explore the complexity of intersectional understanding of gender.

“That we may eat and die” (1 Kings 17:12b): A prophetic call for Circle ecofeminism that ‘puts food on the plate’

Nontando Hadebe (St Augustine College of South Africa)

Eco-feminism has not taken root within *Circle Theologies* and one of the reasons could be that environmental issues have been overshadowed by other equally pressing issues that affect the lives of women in Africa. However the work of the late Wangari Maathai in Kenya as well as other environmental initiatives concur with the fundamentals of ecofeminism namely that exploitation of women and the earth are inextricably linked and intersect with other systems of oppression. Similarly Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* argues that ‘the cry of the earth as the cry of the poor.’ The lack of food security affects mostly women and children. Thus the biblical story of the call of Elijah and the widow constitutes a prophetic call for the Circle to respond to the threat of food insecurity. Just as Elijah’s intervention ‘put food on the plate,’ Circle Theologians are called to generate practical theological interventions that address the root causes of a lack of food security that include economic and political systems that create and perpetuate poverty, inequality, poor governance, corruption and exploitation of the earth so that these ‘put food on the plate’.

Agency between $\sigma\rho\chi$ and $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$? Reading John 13:34-35 rhetorically in gendered Africa today

Elna Mouton (Stellenbosch University)

The paper explores the dynamic yet complex liminal space between the incarnation of \acute{o} $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ (Jn 1:14) and the glorification of Jesus in Jn 13-17. According to John's Gospel, this space is characterised by the ethos of a new household (1:12-13), where formation was to take place through *mimesis* (13:34-35; 15:12). The paper is particularly interested in the implied rhetorical function of Jesus' emphasis on "remaining" – in his words and love (15:4,7,9) – in the light of apocalyptic genre prevalent in early Christian literature. It focuses on two themes characteristic of the Johannine community's identity awareness and implied ethos – holiness and love – which appear to draw on core notions from Torah. Finally, the paper briefly recalls the appropriation of such perspectives by the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and NetACT in gendered spaces of (Reformed) churches and theological training on the continent.

See this Woman? On the Liberative and Transformative Potential of Luke 7:36-50

Miranda N. Pillay (University of the Western Cape)

While the title of this paper refers to the unnamed woman in Luke 7:44, its intention is also to draw attention to another woman whom I wish to honour – New Testament Professor, Elna Mouton. As my New Testament lecturer, doctoral study supervisor, mentor and role model in academia, Elna Mouton has been an inspiration in my personal and professional development. She has influenced my approach to reading the bible and opened my eyes to racial, cultural and gender bias inherent in ancient biblical texts and contemporary readers' contexts. Her academic work (research and teaching) on reading New Testament texts ethically and the question on "how the bible is read in ethical deliberations" is what shaped my theology as a (South) African woman theologian. Now, more than ever, the bible is being used to justify, maintain and retrieve patriarchal hierarchy. Elna Mouton argues for an ethical reading of biblical texts that will transform the reader to seek the liberative potential in the New Testament texts. In a (South) African context where, more often than not, challenging male privilege is seen to be going against God-ordained normative patriarchy, Mouton's argument that the theological challenge is for readers and hearers of the Word of God to be surprised (again) by the transformative and liberative power of Scripture, rings true. With this in mind, I offer a reading of Luke 7:36-50 to explore its liberative and transformative potential for women and men. Since I consider myself Prof Mouton's protégé I've deliberately chosen a New Testament text that we have both already written on.

Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*: Insidious Trauma in the story of Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale

Juliana Claassens (Stellenbosch University)

This paper will investigate the notion of insidious trauma as a helpful means of interpreting the story of Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah as told in Genesis 29-30 that has found its way into the haunting trauma narrative of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. This paper considers the way in which these trauma narratives, on the one hand, reflect the ongoing effects of systemic violation in terms of gender, race and class, but also how, embedded in these narratives there are signs of resistance that serve as the basis of survival of the self and also of others.

Teaching gender in primary and secondary schools in Botswana: Does the curriculum challenge life-denying cultural practices

Senzokuhle Doreen Setume (University of Botswana)

The purpose of this paper is to understand the extent to which the education system in Botswana provides for the teaching of gender in the classroom thereby challenging some deep cultural practices that affect the girl child. Different sources like literature, court cases and newspaper articles attest to the reality of gender based violence in the country. Such violence includes sexual offenses committed by adult men who are older and material privileged over the victim, a girl child under the age of 16. Since the waning of traditional schools, formal education has become a vehicle through which information and skills are passed to the younger generation. By analysing three syllabi (Religious Education, Social Studies and Guidance and Counselling) from primary to senior secondary schools this paper explores what content is available to

students that will enable them to protect themselves and report any form of gender based sexual abuse. The paper focused on the syllabi objectives. Findings are that out of a total of 1758 specific objectives across the three subjects only 15 (1%) talk to gender either explicit or implied. Of the 15 objectives on gender, 11 are from Guidance and counselling. However G&C is an Enrichment subject and has only two lessons per week per class. This poses a challenge in completing the syllabus and imparting all necessary skills to students. The paper further found that RE and social studies syllabi are silent on gender based violence. Therefore the current curriculum does not provide much on gender awareness to the learners especially the girl child. The paper further observes that there are cultural embedded practices that perpetuate sexual violence especially against the girl child. However these are barely challenged by the current curriculum. The paper recommends that as the government revises the curriculum there is need to include objectives that speak to issues of gender in order to curb the current levels of gender based sexual offenses.

“Your Daughter-in-law is More Than Seven Sons”: Naomi/Laban, Botho//Ubuntu and Community-Building in Gaborone Showers

Malebogo Kgalemang (University of Botswana)

Naomi//Laban Showers are creative spaces women use to build communities. This paper will detail Naomi//Laban Showers' social processes and spiritual practices. It will pay attention to social categories of building community through the African Spirit of Botho//Ubuntu in and around Gaborone Showers. The paper will initial narrate the action or plot of Naomi//Laban Showers by paying attention to the participants, and overall set-up. It will, in addition, explore the plot of Naomi//Laban Showers by noting from ethnographical details and observation any unique and distinctive features of the plot action. Since social categories of gender, religion, and culture are key to Botho//Ubuntu community building, it will explore the fundamentals of these triad connections and intersections. Against the definitions of gender, religion and culture, it examines how these three social categories are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. It seeks to explore any new forms of meaning during the process by paying particular attention to the construction and formation of the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship. In addition, other social categories prevalent during the plot of Naomi//Laban Showers like language, food, music, clothes, gifts, and comments from participants interact in the making and sustenance of community through the spirit of Botho//Ubuntu Community-Building in Gaborone Showers.

Sworn to Silence: Examining the Policy of the African Initiated Church through the concepts of Culture and Christian Knowledge Systems

Bridget Masaiti (Stellenbosch University)

This paper focuses on some of the teachings in one of the African Initiated Churches (AICs) in Zambia. Although the teachings of the Mutima Church are believed by its members to contribute to fostering a spirit of equality, justice and inclusion, I argue that these teachings or the church policy have some life-denying practices and perceptions that are embedded in both the Bemba cultural and Christian worldviews of the church founder. The research conducted in the Mutima Church shows that in one hand, many women are empowered by means of ordination and life-giving, while on the other hand, women's voices are often silenced. This is seen most clearly in the Mariological tradition that the church embraces.

Guided by the feminist narrative methods of inquiry, the study adopted a qualitative approach to answer the research question: How does the male-formulated church policy affect ordained women's lives and influence their functions in the church? To answer this question, the researcher presents original research on the thoughts of the church founder of this particular AIC, as well as some of the responses from the participants. I view these through the lenses of Charles W. Nuckolls' (1996) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2016 and 2011) respectively. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation and document review. The findings of the study showed that both holy patriarchy and African Bemba patriarchy contributed in the formulation of the church policy. The teachings and formulation of the church policy are embedded in the patriarchal ideologies that include Biblical and Bemba aspects. These ideologies are interlocked. For instance, in the Biblical traditions, the founder has portrayed himself as a patriarch, while in the royal tradition, he projected himself as royalty.

‘When I feel heard’ – The significance of life stories as told by women with disabilities

Erna Möller (RAMPUP)

“I am Bongji. I went to visit my pastor. He wouldn’t let me into his house. I had to sit on the stoep [verandah]. I was thirsty and asked for water. He gave me the dog’s bowl and told me to drink. It wouldn’t have been so bad had he rinsed the bowl first!”

Bongji relates this experience of her visit to her pastor some years ago on a hot Saturday afternoon in Zululand. But what was her ‘crime’? – Bongji walks with the aid of crutches as a result of polio!

The RampUp project works together with people like Bongji to let their stories be heard to raise awareness of the exclusion of persons with disability in faith communities; and therefore, invites churches to implement stimulating processes which can enhance inclusion.

In this presentation I will share our experiences in encounters with and listening to the stories of women affected by disability. It will cover the variety of contexts in which we listen to these stories, the role of finding meaning through story-telling and the long-term changes that we see and hope for.

Dialoguing Gender Ambiguity in John 12:1-8 and 13:1-17: A Dance between Conformity and Transgression

Nina Müller van Velden (Stellenbosch University)

From a gender-critical perspective, the narratives of John 12:1-8 and 13:1-17 offer character portrayals that may rightly open up interesting, yet complex conversations on gender and sexuality. Measured against the ideals and expectations of the first-century Mediterranean context, the character of Jesus in both instances appears to display gender ambiguity: simultaneously transgressing and conforming to what was expected from an honourable, Jewish man.

Moreover, not only is such gender ambiguity displayed in the narratives individually; read in relation to one another a further level of ambiguity becomes evident. Whereas some biblical scholars argue that the anointing performed by Mary is simply pointing forward as a narrative preparation for Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, others argue that Jesus is rather imitating the example that Mary - a female disciple - has set. From a gender-critical perspective this raises the question: who is leading, and who is imitating? Who is conforming to prescribed gendered ideals, and who is transgressing gendered expectations?

In this paper I propose that such gender ambiguous characterization - in the two narratives respectively, and in dialogue with one another, might be deemed a creative dance; a dance between gender conformity and gender transgression, which opens up a space for life-giving hermeneutical engagement for present-day theological discourses on gender and sexuality.

Liberating and Empowering Women in a Patriarchy Society: A Case Study of Malawi

Phoebe Chirongo (African Bible College/Malawi Assemblies of God University)

This paper seeks to explore the inequality in terms of leadership roles in Malawi. Even though women are often in the majority, one finds in the church, public and private sector that most of the senior and managerial positions are occupied by men. The reason for this can be ascribed to cultural and theological belief systems. Culturally women are considered weaker vessels, gossipers, child bearers and home makers; hence not capable of taking up leadership roles. Theologically, it is believed that the Bible does not allow women from taking up leadership roles like pastor, church elder and deacon. In the contrary, men are portrayed as strong, powerful, wise, intelligent, entrepreneurs, productive, resourceful, courageous, bread winners, etc; hence particularly suitable to take up leadership roles.

In this paper, four aspects will be considered in dealing with the problem of women leadership, i.e. professional, cultural, academic and theological. All these aspects are aimed at improving the status of women given the fact that unless a woman is empowered, encouraged and motivated, she may become a victim of Gender Based Violence, HIV and AIDS, in addition to suffering from low self-esteem and lack of autonomy.

This paper proposes that theologically we had to engage and sensitize the key religious leaders from different denominations. On a cultural level, we have to engage the Traditional leaders who are the custodians of culture. Professionally, we need to engage the recruiting bodies of the government and private sector, and academically, we have to liberate and empower women in a patriarchal society.

The Frustrations and the Joys experienced in transforming the ‘African’ societal mindset on issues of gender based violence.

Dorcas Chebet (Pwani University in Kenya)

If the recent spate of murders of wives and children by their husbands and fathers in Kenya is anything to go by, then one sees the frustration that comes along the quest to transform the society’s mindset on issues of gender based violence. The trend is that most of these murders are a culmination of the struggle for men to continue to dominate women’s sexuality in the name of ‘our culture.’ In fact, a classroom interaction with a number of male students in the three different Universities that I have taught for in Kenya has shown that a negative worldview of men towards the sexuality of women continues to be a breeding ground for gender based violence. All oppression is connected. Thus a cross-cultural and an inter-university approach towards cultural issues that continue to deny women the right to live with dignity will go a long way in addressing the negative worldview of men towards the sexuality of women.

Triple Disability: Because I am Woman

Brigitte Seyram Amenyedzi (South African Theological Seminary)

The socio-cultural construction of the African woman is often that of a weak wife and mother who has to look up to the man for survival. Even though the African society is gradually accepting women in roles that are supposedly tagged for male; it is still evident women are not able to equitably access rights, privileges and resources in society. The woman with disability fully experiences the general exclusions persons with disability gabble with on top of being a woman. But in Africa, the socio-cultural construction of disability as curse/punishment from the gods/ancestors further deprives the woman with disability from accessing rights and privileges that are normally assigned to women. This paper addresses the triple nature of disability encountered by African women with disability.

“NDIYINDODA”: A Critical assessment of the coming-of-age of isiXhosa men and implications of the concept “NDIYINDODA” to a black professional woman.

Nobuntu Penxa-Matholeni (Stellenbosch University)

When an isiXhosa-speaking man undergoes “ulwaluko”, (initiation practices), he is told to shout, “! Ndiyindoda!” [Meaning, “I am a man!”] Immediately after the removal of his foreskin. This declaration marks a significant shift in his social status. He is no longer an inkwenkwe (a boy), although he is not completely regarded as indoda until he has fully completed the ritual, Mfecane (2016). The transition from boyhood to manhood thus begins with a specific act of inserting a cultural mark of manhood into the body Ngwane (2004). The exclamation of “Ndiyindoda!” marks the coming-of-age of isiXhosa men. However, the same exclamation holds particular implications for the black woman. This article will investigate those implications and critically interrogate the concept “ndiyindoda” and the meaning of it from a black woman’s perspective. The black professional woman will be used to discuss the concept and its implications.

Kufa Kwa Jongololo Nkhusiya Mphete: Cultural Practice and Perception among the Sena People of Nsanje District in Malawi

Lucy Thokozile Chibambo (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Cultural Practices and Perceptions among the Sena People of Nsanje District are very active just as in some parts of Africa. Some of the Cultural practices are used for life protection and economic gain. Even though some of the cultural practices are life – denying. However, this paper explores the cultural perception of *Kufa Kwa Jongololo Nkhusiya Mphete* that is faced by women who have lost all children due to certain circumstances and women who are barren. *Kufa Kwa Jongololo Nkhusiya Mphete* means “death of a millipede leaves rings” literally. This is a proverb is used by the Sena people of Southern region of Malawi as parenthood identity after death. In short this proverb means that, when one dies he or she should leave a mark in order to be remembered by those he or she left behind. The mark that is supposed to be left behind is children. The Sena culture like many other African cultures value when one dies and leave children as a remembrance of the deceased person. While this proverb speaks of both men and women, in most cases the emphasis of this proverb is more on women than men, because women are the ones who give birth to children. As such, it is the duty of a woman to leave her mark when she dies. Therefore, the burden of childbearing is on women to fulfil the requirements of leaving the “mark”. By so doing, she is

making sure that when she leaves the planet earth she has left her mark like a *jongololo*. However, this cultural perception is life – denying because women who are barren and women who lost all children are stigmatised and discriminated against. This study will analyse life – denying cultural practices and perceptions rooted in the Sena culture, through the lenses of feminist cultural hermeneutics. The questions to be asked in this study are: who is supposed to challenge the life - denying cultural practices? How should the life - denying cultural practices be challenged in the Sena culture?

What's the 'harm' in harmful traditional practices? Engaging Faith leaders for Positive Change

Selina Palm, with Elisabet Le Roux and Brenda Bartelink (Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University)

Community-based programs exist around the world that seek to tackle a cluster of life-denying concerns for women and girls. These have frequently been named in international donor and government discourse as 'harmful traditional practices' (HTPs). This paper will present recently published research findings from a multi-case study interfaith project with 5 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with faith leaders and led by the Unit for Religion and Development, Stellenbosch University in 2017. It critically explores roles for faith and its leaders in tackling selected harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting.

Findings suggest that religion and culture often form deeply entangled spaces that can underpin the perpetuation of these practices. Faith leaders are frequently 'sleepy giants' who exert significant influence here at multiple levels of the community. Amplifying progressive voices in these spaces can equip faith leaders to challenge complex entanglements between religion and culture in diverse contexts that can underpin justifications of these gendered life-denying practices. In this task, critical theological reflection and engagement with sacred texts have emerged as an important component. Lessons learned from practitioners in the field can speak back to both policy and academic discourses on gender-based violence to ask provocative questions about how HTPs are language and understood if constructive engagement with faith actors is to help effect sustained change.

“Matrilineality and Cultural Change: Rethinking the Bemba Notion of “Children Belong to the Mother” in the Context of Child Maintenance Rights and Absent Fathers in Zambia”

Mutale Mulenga Kaunda (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Bemba people are one of the 73 ethnic groups in Zambia; being a matrilineal group, the lineage is through the woman's family. This, in precolonial times meant that when a man married a Bemba woman, he moved to his wife's family home where she had her own property such as a house, farm etc. This meant that in an event of death or divorce, the woman remained with the children and raised them because she owned property and essentials to be able to raise children alone. The question am raising is, in contemporary Zambia, “*how has children belong to the mother concept contributed to impoverishing Bemba women?*” currently, Bemba people are found in the nine provinces of Zambia and they live in neo-local spaces. Often men are the breadwinners of the family and own property than women. This paper draws on literature and is not empirical study. Further, I draw on my personal experience as a woman who was raised by a single mother while my father moved on and started another family forty-five minutes drive away from us and yet we never got any visits or financial support from him.

Encouraging Ethical Reflection on Women and Reproductive Technology: Some Teaching and Learning Strategies for Distance Studies

Magriet de Villiers (Stellenbosch University) and Manitza Kotzé (North-West University)

Christian ethical reflection, especially on complicated and multifaceted issues such as women and reproductive technology, is more often challenging than not. Teaching critical ethical thinking is also a difficult feat, but rendered even more complex when dealing with distance students. How can we teach students to engage critically with ethical dilemmas and moral quandaries when we do not have the opportunity to enter into debate and face to face discussion? This contribution will examine ways how ethical reflection can be taught and encouraged in distance students, using as a case study a distance module taught at the North-West University. We will focus in particular on the study unit dealing with women and

reproductive technology and Sara Ruddick's principle of mothering, or maternal thinking, as the basis of ethics.

The Clark Kent Effect: Superman and the Intersection of Theology, Gender and Health **Nathania Hendriks (Stellenbosch University)**

Popular culture has the ability to ascribe meaning to cultural lives and practices, to inform hegemonic expressions in society, and to influence identity, bodily experiences and relationships that can have life-denying effects. This makes popular culture part of economic and political systems, with quantitative and religious dimensions. Complemented with a wide range of powers and varying degrees of success, Superman, as predominant male, presents a particular ideal of masculinity to readers and viewers. Superman's adherence to hegemonic masculinities and his presentation of hypermasculinity made him an appropriate popular culture character from which to approach masculinity and to study his influence on masculinity construction. Masculinities are relational and influenced by social and cultural contexts. Gender, masculinity and femininity as well as popular culture interconnect in inseparable, pervasive and complex ways. Drawing on practical theology and feminist theology of praxis, this paper comments on the type of masculinity presented by Superman and try to move forward to a space where the intersections of gender, health, and theology can aid in the search for redemptive masculinity.

“My God, My God, Why Is My Body a Combat Zone?” A Reading of Lament Psalms in the Context of Abused Female Bodies

Funlola Olojede (Gender Unit, Stellenbosch University)

This paper shows that certain Psalms of Lament make use of a variety of body imagery which when read contextually in the light of the agonies of physically abused women or women living with HIV and AIDS could open up fresh pedagogical insights into the teaching of gender and health in theology especially in the African space.

Teaching Gender and Health in Africa: A Way to a Safe and Inclusive Church

Felicidade N. Chirinda (United Seminary of Ricatla – Maputo- Mozambique)

The Church in Africa has been busy teaching communities on truths, concepts and doctrines contained in the Bible. It does this as a way of showing its obedience to the Jesus' Great Commission (Mt 28: 16-20; Mk 16:18), but also as a way of assuming the role of teaching as being the heart of its ministry. However, although the great work done in collaboration with Theological Seminaries, Institutions and Universities, gender and health issues continue to be neglected what causes great damage and exclusion to those who are infected and affected by HIV and to the sexual minorities. This articles aims at challenging the Church, Theological Seminaries and Institutions especially in Mozambique, to effectively assume their roles as teaching institutions by introducing in their curriculums issues of gender and health. This will contribute to the producing of Change Agents who will bring healing, safety and peace within the African Church and Families.