

**TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

SR.KHABERI LUSEKA EVERLYNE (BSDP)

**MORAL AND PASTORAL APPROACH TO RAPE AND VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**

Supervisor
Fr. Maurice Kigame

**A Long Essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies**

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NAIROBI



Student's Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my own original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed.....*Khaberi Luseka*.....

Name of student: KHABERI LUSEKA EVERLYNE (BSDP)

Date.....*24/01/06*.....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed.....*Maurice Kilami*.....

Name of supervisor.....*FR. MAURICE KILAMI*.....

Date.....*24/01/06*.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all women all over the world, especially those who pass through difficult moments in life, and to all the rape survivors that God may heal the wounds inflicted on them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

First and foremost, I thank God for his bountiful love towards me, for enabling me to undertake this work without much difficulties, for the strength and health he bestowed upon me.

Much thanks goes also to my parents especially my deceased Mum who nurtured me and introduced me to a Christian life, May God grant her eternal happiness in his kingdom and bless my aging Dad.

My deepest gratitude goes also to my religious congregation, Benedictine Sisters of Divine providence for their untiring support and care more especially to my local superior, Sr. Carmelita for her patience, counsel and love she always accorded me with me.

I thank in a more profound way Fr. Maurice Kigame who accepted to supervise and correct my work. May God bless you.

Last, but not least, I thank everyone who came to my assistance during my research, all my lectures at Tangaza College, colleagues in class and all the libraries where I got help. May God bless each and every one of you.

Abbreviations

- AFER: -African Ecclesiastical review.
- AIDS - Acquired immune Deficiency
- STDs - sexual transmitted diseases
- VID - virginal inflammatory disease
- PID - Pelvic inflammatory disease
- RTS - rape-trauma syndrome
- PTSD - post-traumatic stress disorder

Definition of selected terms.

Incest

This is a sexual intercourse between two close relatives, for example; father with daughter, son with mother, brother with sister and grandfather with granddaughter.

Defilement

Is the act of a man having intercourse with a female under age. The law presumes that a female under fourteen years of age is not in a position to give consent to sexual acts.

Rape:

Is an act of coercion that forces women into sexual acts without their consent and will. It is a forceful sexual act by use of violence.

Violence.

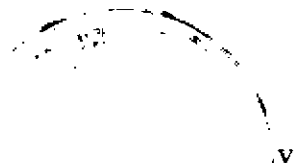
These are behaviors that are intended to hurt or to kill somebody.

Gender violence:

Is an act of violence by a member of one gender directed at a member a member of the opposite gender to physical, emotional economical and psychological stress and hurt.

Wife beating.

It is a term used just about everywhere to describe or explain domestic violence. It is the most common form of violence found in homes and it involves husbands who beat their wives.



Battering.

A violent attack that injures or damages somebody. For example wife battering by their husbands.

Indecent assault

These are conducts that lowers the dignity and modesty of women. For example when a man penetrates a woman's mouth or anus, or when he uses an object such as a bottle, broomstick or a knife to penetrate a woman.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Violence is a common issue in the contemporary world. Nations and communities are seeking ways by which to curb it. It appears to have been on the increase in the past decade. This is not only in Africa, but in the whole world.

Generally, when people speak of violence, what comes to mind is physical violence, which includes armed robbery and the use of other types of physical force on the victims there are some forms of violence in which women are the major targets. These include physical assaults like battering and sometimes actual murder. The media carries numerous reports of men being arrested after physically assaulting or killing their wives. Violence against women is also expressed through sexual assaults, as is the case with rape or attempted rape.

The reported cases are mainly extra-familial, that is, cases in which men rape women or girls who are not their own wives or daughters. This does not mean that sexual violence does not take place within families, occasionally, there have been cases of fathers raping their own daughters.

Violence against women therefore remains a reality in many parts of the world including Africa. This violence includes a wide range of abuses and harassment, such as physical battering, sexual and psychological abuse, harassment at places of work, female feticides and infanticides, infant neglect, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation and forced prostitution.

Few people recognize that violence against women is rooted in the society where the status of women is not favourable. Sexual violence tends to be seen in isolation as the act of the few perverted sex monsters.

“The ideology of Patriarchy presupposes that men are strong, aggressive, domineering and forceful. This places social powers exclusively in their hands and reinforces the distortions of the actual relation between the sexes. In general, laws that deal with rape are discriminatory against women.”¹

Rape is illicit sexual intercourse with a woman against her consent. Besides being a grave sin against chastity, it is also a grave sin against justice because the woman’s rights over her body is violated. In addition, the violation may bring social (though unjustified) dishonour to her and obstruct her future marriage.

It is a great desideratum that the law and courts give more resolute protection to rape victims and that the practice of putting the victim on trial almost as much as the offender be remedied.

Rape and violence against women can be done in various ways. It can be committed by the use of physical or moral force (grave fear, including reverential fear, fraud and deceit; likewise by the sin committed with a woman who has not the use of reason. (Insane or intoxicated).

The exploitation of one’s position as superior in order to make a subject compliant to acts of lust is considered by nearly all civilized countries as an offence against morality and is punished severely. The same is true of seduction of a girl under sixteen years of age (Statutory Rape).

In most of the countries, relationship between men and women is unequal; women are often believed to be inferior to men. Differences in attitudes, behaviors and self-perception of males and females are encouraged from an early stage.

¹ Grace Wamue and Mary Getui, *Violence against women*, Acton Publishers, Nairobi: 1996, 51.

Violence against women has become very rampant especially in societies where women's status and values are lower than those of men. Violence against women including rape is largely the result of unequal power relationships between men and women in the society.

A society where a man has been taught to be competitive and aggressive, especially in his sexual relationship, is called "a rape culture" because such attitudes are the main contributors to the incidents of rape and violence against women.

Rape is basically a sexual act, which many people believe happens because of a man's sexual desire. People believe that rape happens when a man is very much attracted to a woman and cannot therefore control his sexual desires, but this is not true according to what is happening now in our societies. Women who are sexy and beautiful are not the only ones who are being raped. Rapists choose women who are helpless and vulnerable, therefore all sorts of women are raped, including those whom the society does not see as sexy, for example; very old women and babies.

Rape is one of the most painful experience a woman can ever go through. It leaves deep wounds in her heart, which last for a long time. "In Kenya, rape is one of the leading human rights abuse, according to a report released on 31st May 2005. The Amnesty International report on the state of the world's human rights said: "Violence against women, especially rape, is on the increase despite the public awareness campaigns on the vice." The report further said that women and girls are also subjected to domestic violence, sexual assault, incest, forced marriages and female genital mutilation."²

² Daily Nation/Wednesday, Rape named as the leading crime in Kenya June 1, 2005, 17.

CHAPTER ONE:

Dignity and vocation of women.

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall to look at the perception of women in our world today in connection with the Bible's view of the human person having been created in God's image. As most women point out themselves that equality of dignity does not mean "Sameness with men" but complementarity.

"In the Church's outlook, women and men have been called by the creator to live in profound communion with one another, with reciprocal knowledge and giving of self, acting together for the common good with the complementary characteristics of that which is feminine and masculine."³

1.1 Created in the image of God.

From the beginning of the world, God created man and woman in his own image and likeness. He **did** not create one sex more superior to the other, but equal in his sight. Both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree; both are created in God's image (Gen.1: 27). This image and likeness of God which is essential for the human being, is passed on by the man and woman as spouses and parents, to their descendants: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen.1: 28).

Every woman is created in the image and likeness of God. Both men and women are equal human beings; both are created in God's image. The woman is therefore not inferior to

³ John Paul II, *The Pope speaks to women*, Letters and Addresses of Pope John Paul II. Paulines publication Africa, Nairobi: 1996, 18.

man; she is only different from him. Women and girls should not therefore let men reduce them to a level of total subordination.

“The creator entrusts dominion over the earth to human race, to all persons, to all men and women who derives their dignity and vocation from the common “beginning”⁴

The subordinate status of women in our world today, especially in Africa, has to be understood in the light of our own African culture and the Jewish, often mistaken for Christian tradition, which we have inherited. For instance, the Jewish community in which Jesus was born and later ministered had little regard for women compared to their male counterparts.

The inferiority of women extended to the religious spheres also. At the Temple and in the Synagogues, women had no official rights and duties, but had to remain silent within segregated places. (1Cor.14: 4-35, 1Tim.2: 9-15). Therefore, using the example stated above, it is evident that as far as the first Century Christianity, which borrowed heavily from Judaism, in general is concerned; the place of women was not equal to that of men.

“Jesus’ attitude towards women compared to his contemporary society presents a contrast. He healed women (Mk.1: 30-31), He allowed them to touch him and follow him (Lk.8: 2-3). He did not lower the dignity of women or ignore them but rather welcomed them. He rejected some of the formal and very masculine teachings and laws of his day, (Jn.4; 7; 8:1-11; Lk.10: 38-42). He accorded women the dignity and worth. We also see in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus warning men against looking at women with lust. Hence for Jesus, women are to be recognized as subjects in their own rights and not as objects of man’s desire.”⁵

⁴ John Paul II, *Dignity and vocation of women*, Paulines publication Africa, Nairobi: 1998, 12.

⁵ Grace Wamue and Mary Getui, *Violence against Women*, 49.

against women is more pernicious than battering by the husbands and from which it is not easy to walk away.”⁷

Culture has silenced many women in Africa and made them unable to experience the liberating promises of God. Favourable aspects of our cultures which enhance the well being of women have been suppressed. Those aspects which diminish women, continues to be practiced in various degrees by our societies, often making women objects of cultural preservation.

“If today African women are able to name the oppressive aspects of our cultures, it has not come easily.. The fear of breaking taboos silences them into a state of acting without questioning what to do.”⁸ In most African cultures, women are seen as mere slaves who are there to look after children and be treated like dirt.”⁹

1.3 Women’s role in today’s society.

Women in modern societies are found simultaneously in many different roles. The predominant roles for women are now as in the past, those of wife, home worker, mother and worker. Until the nineteenth century, women, mostly in African countries, whether married or single, work almost exclusively in the home or as unpaid labors in family enterprises.

This work involves not only the care of children and the up keeping of the house, but also the cultivation and preparation of food and the manufacture of many of the goods used at the home. However, with the increase of industrialization during the nineteenth century, there

⁷Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Violence against women*, Window on Africa, in voices from the third world Vol. 18. No. No.1 June 1995, 171.

⁸ Grace Wamue and Mary Getui, *Violence against Women*, 51

⁹ Mugambi. J.N.K., A. Nasimiyu-Wasike, *Moral and ethical issues in African Christianity*, Initiatives publishers, Nairobi: 1990, 85.

has been greater demand for labour, and women have gradually begun to leave homes in order to work in factories.

“No response to women’s issues can ignore women’s role in the family or take lightly the fact that every new life is totally entrusted to the protection and care of women carrying it in their womb (Evangelium Vitae. No. 58.)

In order to respect this natural order of things, it is necessary to counteract the misconception that the role of motherhood is oppressive to women, and that a commitment to family, particularly to her children, prevents a woman from reaching personal fulfillment and women as a whole from having an influence in society.”¹⁰

Woman as well as technology, is changing. Her concept of herself is changing dramatically. Women today have a conscious thirst towards new realizations, some women are more stirred and action taking than others in our today’s society, and those women who are already taking initiatives have to be encouraged mostly by the church, and also those who are still ignorant to be consientized.

“Informal networks and togetherness among women have existed since time immemorial. Women everywhere are forming their own networks whether formal or informal to accomplish their reproductive and productive roles, to provide mutual help, and to promote their own social and economic survival.

Today, hundreds of women’s information centers and women’s archives, have their activities as diverse as geography, they work to strengthen the position of women through

¹⁰ John Paul II, *The Pope speaks to women*, 6

information. They aim at giving women a voice, empower women and keep women's history alive."¹¹

In order to challenge male domination in our societies today, women have joined together in support groups, sharing their stories and designing new strategies for survival.

1.4 Political Oppression and exploitation of Women

It appears that women are greatly exploited and suppressed not only by their men but also by the state. Though the government is duty bound to protect all, in some areas it is not fair to women. One of the major issues is that of rape. The state condones easy penalties for the rapists, which is extremely traumatic especially in the case of juniors.

“Politically, Women are hopelessly represented. They are rather hampered by misinterpretation. Men are the parameters of the gender to frustrate full involvement of women in politics. It is as if they should never campaign to go to parliament if they are to be decent women. In this realm, they are kind of robots or puppets of their men politicians. They are seldom coerced to adhere to these inspirations.”¹²

Women are very much oppressed in the political arena. The majority of women are excluded from executive posts even when they have the organizing force behind the creation of some groups.

¹¹ Gender society and development Vol 2, 351

¹² Fr. Dr. P.N. Wachege, *African women liberation, a man's perspective*, Published in Kiambu: 1992, 62.

No account is taken of women in decision-making. Most women are not given any political education because they are not considered as active political protagonists. Again, the double work-day (or job at home) prevents them from organizing and forming unions.

1.5 Woman, mother of God.

“It is significant that St. Paul does not call the Mother of Christ by her own name, “Mary”, but calls her “Woman” this coincides with the words of the proto-evangelium in the book of Genesis (3:15). She is that “Woman” who is present in the central salvific event, which marks the “fullness of time”. This event is realized in her and through her.

The fullness of time manifests the extra ordinary dignity of the “woman”.

On the one hand, this dignity consists in the supernatural elevation to union with God in Jesus Christ, which determines the ultimate finality of the existence of every person both on earth and in eternity.

From this point of view, the “woman is the representative and the archetype of the whole human race. She represents humanity, which belongs to all human beings, both men and women alike. On the other hand however, the events at Nazareth highlights a form of union with the living God which can only belong to a “Woman” Mary: the union between Mother and Son. The virgin of Nazareth truly becomes the Mother of God and of all humanity.”¹³

¹³ John Paul II, *Dignity and vocation of Women*, 11.

Conclusion.

In concluding this chapter, we see that each sex is created in the image and likeness of God, therefore, we are all equal. There is no superior and inferior sex. Women are equal to men in all their dignity and rights. Therefore, women's rights and dignity should everywhere be respected. Women and men need an ethic that calls them equally to responsible self-direction in sexuality and violence.

CHAPTER TWO.

Causes of Rape and violence against women in the contemporary world.

Introduction

Violence is understood not only as a physical but also a moral force (serious threats deceptions). This includes excessive insistence and abuse of persons who do not possess full use of their mental faculties.

Rape adds to the sin of fornication, a grave sin of injustice, because it implies violation of the right of the woman to the use of her generative faculties according to her own choice. In this chapter, we shall try to look at the main causes of rape, what really drives men to violate women.

Historical, political, economic and social pressures that have evolved for centuries have kept men in a position of power and have effectively made women second-class citizens. In order to understand rape and the experience of rape survivors, we need to explore some of the ways in which the society shapes our beliefs about sexual behaviour, relationships between men and women or the gender roles we are expected to fulfill. An understanding of the factors such as poverty, unemployment, racism and a culture of violence will help us to explain why rape is so common.

2.1 Psychological and economic imbalances

One way in which a woman experiences inequality in a society is that, her position in the economy is weaker than man's. A husband or a male partner often feels that he has the right to use violence against the woman to discipline her, or to express his frustrations. Social scientists tells us that men frequently turn to rape not so much of strong and uncontrollable

sexual urges, but rather out of a sense of frustration and anger aimed at society in general and women in particular.

“Men who feel that they have lost their role and status in the society, are unemployed and impoverished, men who feel useless and no longer needed, all often frequently turn to crime and violence to help them release their inner rage. And women are among the easiest victims to be attacked. Women therefore become the target of male aggression.”¹⁴

A rapist is not a psychotic or sex maniac who lurks in dark alleys. A rapist is usually what the society calls a “normal man”. Studies show that there are generally no major psychological differences between a rapist and an ordinary man. (Vogel man, 1990).



2.2 Social pressures

Work is an important part of any person’s life. But in our world, especially in African countries, unemployment is extremely high, especially among the youth. Unemployment threatens a man’s sense of self-support because the society expects him to be strong, independent and the breadwinner. He may feel that he is a personal failure and this may lead him into violating women.

Many employed men also feel dissatisfied because they are paid poor wages, they work in dangerous conditions, they experience racism or they do not get promoted. Their dissatisfaction grows and makes them feel angry and powerless if they are unable to change their working situations.

¹⁴ Suzanne Williams, Oxfam, *Gender training manual*, 57.

A man's anger about his job is often not directed at the people responsible for these conditions because they feel that employers are in positions of authority and there could be many risks involved in challenging them. In many cases, the perfect targets for a man's anger is a woman, especially a woman he has control over at home, such as his wife, daughter, niece or a domestic worker. She is someone whom he can overpower and dominate, and who cannot challenge his physical strength.

2.3 Drug and alcohol addiction

“A man may use alcohol and drugs (substances) to lessen his stress of financial and relationship problems. Using these substances makes him feel better for a short while. However, these substances also make it easier for him to express many feelings that are usually kept in control. For instance, drinking makes it easier for a man to express his anger and frustration and this could easily contribute to violent behaviors including rape”¹⁵

More and more rapists are using drugs to incapacitate their victims during sexual assaults. These attacks can happen anywhere, but they often begin in bars and nightclubs, or at the college campus parties where alcohol is served.

For many years, alcohol has been the most common and widely used drug to facilitate rape, generally known as “Date Rape Drug. A date rape drug is any substance used by sexual assault perpetrators to facilitate rape by creating an incoherent, defenseless victim who will not be able to remember many details of the attack.

¹⁵ Sharon Lewis, *Dealing with Rape*, Sached books New York: 1994. 42.

“A perpetrator, who uses alcohol or another drug, intends on completing the rape with less physical resistance. Perhaps alcohol is the most popular drug used to facilitate rape because it is the most readily available, affordable and socially accepted sedative. Constant promotion through the media romanticizes and encourages alcohol consumption, giving the perception that alcohol is sexy, fun and glamorous. The negative consequences of alcohol are rarely discussed, yet can be extremely harmful and debilitating.

Alcohol is legal drug that is socially accepted and enjoyed by many, however, it has been, and will continue to be used as a weapon to victimize people.”¹⁶

2.4 misconceived ideas or myths

The question may be asked: what makes men think they have a right to exercise violence over women? From the cradle to the grave, men are exposed to several myths, which are used to justify violence and rationalize violence against women. Some of these myths are:

Men think that they are superior beings than women.

Their superiority stems from their physical strength, which they perceive to surpass that of women, and also from cultural religious and historical justification of male hegemony over women.

Punishing women frequently establishes the proper hierarchy of the sexes and the social power structure.

Most women appreciate that they are punished to improve them for their own good.

¹⁶ [Http://: www.alcoabuseblog.com/note/8678](http://www.alcoabuseblog.com/note/8678)

Women are viewed as property and, and as with one's property, the owner has the right of use and abuse.

Punishing a woman is a duty and an act of solidarity by all men to ensure that women are put in their subordinate place.

“Men think that by punishing their women, they love them.”¹⁷

Men believe that by raping a virgin, they can be cured of the deadly disease AIDS.

“Rape myths are false ideas about what rape is. Rape myths gives a man silent permission to rape a woman because they help him to excuse his behavior and escape responsibility for his violent actions. A lot of research has been done on rape, and many of the commonly held beliefs or myths about rape have been proved false.”¹⁸

It is believed that, men rape because they cannot control their sexual lust. This is one of the most popular myth, because rape is seen as a sexual act, many people believes that it happens because of a man's sexual desires. People believe that rape happens when a man is very much attracted to a woman and therefore cannot control his sexual desire.

Research findings clearly show that this belief is false because, it suggests that a man is not responsible for his actions during rape. Rather, rape is seen as impulsive and unplanned acts against an unknown woman.

¹⁷ Kivutha Kibwana, *Law and the status of women in Kenya*, Nairobi: 1996, 37.

¹⁸ Sharon Lewis, *Dealing with rape*, 68

2.5 Influence of Mass Media.

Pornographical material can be found in various mediums of communication, for instance books, magazines, television, the Internet and movies. It is mainly intended to stimulate and arouse the sexual activity. (It is defiantly not meant to be educative or motivating at material at all! It is rather aimed at the dark side of our hearts.)

By watching pornography, one may develop sexual oriented motives that only serve to corrupt his or her morals, in this way, it takes one away from the grace of God.

The debate over pornography in the past twenty-five years has moved from argument over the morality of non-procreative sex to argument based on freedom of speech and concerns that pornography may contribute to gender discrimination, rape and sexual harassment.

“Some studies have found viewing violent pornography to be positively correlated to acts of violence against women. Studies shows that 51% of men, after watching violent pornography, there is a possibility of committing rape.

Pornography has also been identified by some researchers as one of the factors contributing to gang rape in fraternities, along with the view that coercion against women in normative and as a sign masculinity.”¹⁹

“Pornography is in itself is immoral because it poses a substantial threat to women’s equality and therefore, directly hurts women.

The electronics and print media, through commercial advertisements, further enhances violent behaviors towards women. Both men and women appear in most adverts. But when women appear, they are usually presented as sexual objects in order to increase product sales.

¹⁹ Boss A Judith, *Analyzing moral issues*, Mountain view, California, London-Toronto: 1990, 623.

Though some of these sexual and seductive images of women in all forms of the media may not arouse a young man to rape an old woman, they contribute to a general public image of women as passive, weak and easy targets of sexual abuse. All these examples demonstrate the secondary social status of women in our society today.”²⁰

2.6 immodesty in dressing

Immodesty in dressing has become a common phenomenon in our today’s society. And this is seen mainly in women. Since the population of women is higher than that of men, women are on a higher level of competition in terms of dressing.

They only do this in order to be recognized and admired by men, but in a real sense they do not intent to be raped. Men have used this excuse to rape women who are very much innocent.

“Perhaps the leading women of our world may be slow in speaking about this serious outbreak of immodesty which is evident in our homes, churches, offices, on the streets and everywhere in our world.

The streets of our cities, towns, and public places are invested making people sick at heart at the sight they behold. Many middle-aged women who wish to “appear young” wear the shortest dresses which are very revealing, showing off their deflated and oversized bosoms. Perhaps many of these women are not conscious of what they are really doing, or are simply trying to keep up with worldly fashions.”²¹

²⁰ P.R.sandy, *Female power and male dominance*, on the origins of sexual inequality, Cambridge university Press, New York: 1981, 73.

²¹ <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20050821/letters/letters.3.html>. 9/19/2005.

There should be modesty and moderation in women's dressing in order to reduce the immorality of rape in our world. Women should be more careful in their dressing styles lest they arouse males' sexual desires by walking half-naked.

2.7 Types of rape

Gang rape.

Is an informal term that is used to describe a rape where more than one man assaults a woman.

Attempted rape.

This occurs when a man tries to penetrate a woman's Virginia without her consent, but is prevented from doing so may be by fighting back or being interrupted.

Statutory rape.

When a man has intercourse with a girl under the age of consent.

Date rape.

Where the two people are familiar to each other but intercourse occurs against a woman's wishes and consent, irrespective of the level of sexual intimacy reached, it becomes rape.

Marital rape.

When a husband forces his wife in sexual intercourse without her will and consent.

Conclusion

Women have mixed feelings when they are raped, they feel a sense of anger, shame, embarrassment and fear. Therefore, women who have been raped need love, care and medical attention in order to help them cope with life once again.

Women who have been raped also need counseling and encouragement from family members, friends and associates and above all, she needs to be helped spiritually, to understand that God still loves her despite of what happened, and He (God) is not punishing her.

CHAPTER THREE.

Effects of rape and violence against women.

Introduction.

Rape and violence against women is a traumatic attack, which may cause serious physical and psychological harm to the survivor. A woman who has been raped may experience many intense and different feelings. In this chapter, we are going to see how rape affects the survivor in different ways and the ways on which friends, family and counselors can help them to regain their self-esteem and a sense of control over their lives.

As we all know, rape survivors need to be reassured that whatever they did during the assault was the right thing to do, because it saved their lives and possibly saved them from serious injuries.

Rape violates not only the survivor, but also those close to her. Unfortunately, the effects of rape often lead to the survivor being isolated at the time when she most needs love and understanding.

3.1. Physical effects.

“A rape survivor is likely to feel cold, faint, confused and disoriented. She is also likely to tremble, feel nauseous and sometimes vomit. She may obtain minor or major injuries, bleeding or infections may result from tears or cuts in the vaginal or rectum, depending on what really happened during the rape, Menstrual periods may be heavier and painful after the rape, It may also lead to unwanted pregnancy and sexual transmitted diseases (STDs).

A virginal inflammatory disease (VID) may also be contracted and may cause itching or soreness of the vagina. There may also be a smelly discharge from the vagina. A pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) may also be contracted after a rape, and this may affect the fallopian tubes, and may cause severe pains, fever and discharge.

There may also be one or more sores, often with swollen glands in the groin as a result of rape. A rape survivor reacts in different ways, she may cry and be upset or she may be quiet and withdrawn or feel unreel or confused²²

A woman may feel bodily discomforts after being raped. For example, she may often get headaches, suffer from pains in her stomach, or her stomach may not function properly. She may experience pains in different parts of her body, like her back or legs or she may always feel sick and dizzy.

Sleeping problems also may occur as a result of rape, she may sleep badly, or she may not be able to fall asleep, or she may fall asleep and then awake up again during the night. She may also feel exhausted and want to sleep more than usual.

²² Dr. Raphael Bahati, *Oral interview* 18th September 2005 at Maria Immaculata Hospital, Nairobi.

A rape survivor may experience bad dreams throughout the night for a long period of time after the rape. The dreams may be about the incidence of rape. She may also develop eating problems as a result of rape, some may tend to eat very little and lose their weight, while others may eat more than usual and put on weight.

A woman may find that she has lost energy after being raped. She may feel tired all the time and feel to sleep. She may sit around and move very little, while on the other hand, she may have too much energy. Because she feels anxious, she may be restless, agitated and unable to relax.”²³

3.2 Psychological Effects.

“A rape survivor always feels guilty and thinks that God is punishing her. She feels angry at all men, at God for letting it happen, and this anger may also be extended on anybody who is with her.

She feels ruined, that no longer has any value. If she is not married, she may feel that no one will ever want to marry her. She may be very sad to the point of wanting to kill herself because she feels ashamed and covered with dirtiness that she cannot remove.’

A rape survivor feels that she is no longer interested in life, in people or things that she used to enjoy before rape. Grief is a strong feeling that a woman may experience, because she may feel to have lost something very important. Rape

²³ Sharon Lewis, *Dealing with rape*, 68.

survivors may lose hope for the future, faith in people generally and above all in God.”²⁴

3.3 Emotional Effects

Numbness:

A rape survivor may be angry, upset and hysterical, she may be calm and show little emotion. A woman may be calm for hours or even days after a rape because she is in a state of shock. Her mind may only allow the trauma to be felt slowly.

Because of the terrible experience she has been through, her emotions ‘freeze’. The rape may seem unreal for her, like a dream, something she feels that has not really happened.

Some women are calm after being raped because they feel relieved to be alive. This feeling usually does not last for a long time, because the emotional trauma of having been raped gradually lessens the sense of relief.

Denial:

The rape survivor may act as if the rape never happened and try to carry on with her life as usual because she does not want to remember the terror of the rape experience. Some rape survivors actually deny the rape to themselves and to others.

Flashback:

These are feelings like the ones experienced during the rape itself, and make the survivor to feel as if the rape is happening again. “These flashbacks can actually make the survivor very frightened and upset. She cannot help thinking about the rape all the time, but

²⁴ Ibid., 72.

with support and counseling, she gradually regains control and becomes able to trust herself and place the blame on the perpetrator.”²⁵

Feelings of shame are common and they can make it difficult for a woman to talk about being raped. She may try to keep her feelings to herself and try to get over them without any support from friends or family. Only the woman herself can decide if she wants to tell others about the rape, but it is often more difficult to recover from a bad experience without any support. Unfortunately, her feelings of shame may worsen if she does not talk about the rape.

A survivor of rape may also feel anger at what has happened and why it happened to her particularly. She may resent the unfairness and senselessness of it all, the shame and humiliation of the experience and the lack of understanding from others. Often, she may think about ways of revenging.

“Feeling frightened is a very normal reaction after being raped. A survivor often feels that she will be raped again, that the rapist will return to kill her or that her family will be hurt, she may also be afraid of being left alone.”²⁶

3.4 Social Effects.

Women victims of sexual violence may face stigma, ostracism, divorce and so on. If a woman is declared unfit for marriage as a result of rape, she will always feel severe economical and social obstacles to her livelihood. Women may become withdrawn, lose self-esteem or fall into prostitution.

²⁵ Amnesty International and Codesria, *Monitoring and investigating sexual violence*, 2000, 30.

²⁶ Dr. Mlenga, *Oral interview on 29th September 2005 at St. Mary’s mission Hospital Nairobi*, 2005.

In cases where women have lost their husbands because of imprisonment or killing, the consequences of the violations persist, such as social and economical hardships, medical problems and so forth.

Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS), is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and it shares most of its symptoms in varying degrees.

A rape survivor may feel different from other people, because of losing her dignity, and therefore distant from them. She also feels that people who have not experienced rape cannot understand her.

A rape survivor may not want to go out and socialize, or she may socialize more than usual.



Conclusion.

The effects of rape are profound and long-term. A rape survivor never forgets about being raped, but she can learn how to deal with the memory.

Although rape is a terrible trauma, women have survived and learned to love and trust again. As the woman recovers, she will start to take control of her behavior and thoughts again.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Church's teaching on rape and violence against women.

Introduction.

The church as a religious community can play an essential role of intervening in situations of sexual abuse in our societies. The church can also be a significant force in helping to prevent the abuses before they occur.

Because Christ and the Holy Spirit dwell within the Church, she has unshakable confidence in the words of faith proclaimed in his name. Thus she teaches infallibly in matters of faith and morals. The church has always taught that it is seriously wrong to choose to engage in any sexual activity that is not authentically marital.

In this chapter, we are going to see what the church should teach about the immorality of rape and how it is viewed in the Bible.

4.1 Rape in the Bible.

a) Rape in and violence against women in the Old Testament.

The Bible's teaching on sexuality must be seen against the background of its time, against the cultural and sociological conditions that characterize its era. For instance, in the Old Testament, the demand for cultic purity, patriarchal form of marriage and the family, influenced people's attitude towards sex.

Sexuality as a gift from God can be channeled for good or ill, for example, rape is devaluation of the feminine and female sexuality.

“The misuse of sexuality among Israel’s neighbors affected the people of Israel. The law of Israel therefore explicitly forbade sexual misconducts including adultery (Lev.18: 6-8, 20:10.) Incest, homosexuality, rape and bestiality (Lev.20: 10-21, Deut.22: 23-29; Ex.22: 18) Rape and incest are frankly described as in the case of the Judges 20:21. In the Old Testament, breaking sexual taboos often called for death penalty, if a man rapes a girl, he shall definitely die.”²⁷

In the Old Testament, some sexual assaults and violence are clearly condemned (Deut.22: 23-29). The rape of a woman is condemned yet the assault is not banned for the reasons we might expect. The unmarried woman for instance, is regarded as the property of her father and compensation is to be paid for him for his loss.

When we read the Old Testament, we come across various stories of women, which amazingly bring out the horror of the texts. They are stories of Hagar who suffered what could be considered as psychological and emotional violence as the repudiated and abused maid of Sarah; then there is a story of Tamar, the sister of Absalom who was lusted after her own half-brother Amnon, raped and then repudiated by him. This causes a war of revenge that leads to the rape and enslavement of six hundred more women.

There is also a gruesome tale of the nameless concubine who was gang raped and then brutally cut into pieces by her “master”. These horrible stories could only happen in a highly patriarchal society.

The Hebrew world considered the wife to be exclusive property of her husband, no difference sometimes from his material possessions. Women were treated as perpetual

²⁷ Mary Getui and Grace Wamue, *Violence against women*, 53.

“minors” under the guardianship of their father, brothers, husbands or husband’s brothers, (Deut.25: 5-6). There was no place for them except in domestic duties.

Women acquired social status solely through their sexual functions as wives and mothers and not through their personal worth or basic dignity as human beings.

b) Rape and violence against women in the New Testament.

In the New Testament, we see Jesus treating women and children as persons, and this points in the direction of sexual ethic respecting every person’s right to his or her bodily and sexual integrity.

“The New Testament gives a glimpse of change that could have happened in the teachings of Jesus and in the respectful and humane way Jesus treated women. However, his disciples and later on the church that the apostles founded did not seem to learn this aspect of Christ’s teaching or example.”²⁸

Although we do not explicitly encounter case of rape in the New Testament, we can see it shading a clear light in the field of sexual holiness. The words of Jesus for example, “Whoever looks at a woman lustfully, commits adultery with her already in his heart (Matt.5: 28), this statement clearly shows the seriousness of sin.

According to Jesus, it is not only by external actions that one commits sin like rape, but the inner intention makes one a sinner.

According to A. Briggs, “The fact of suffering is nothing new to women, for they have always borne their young ones in pain and lived their days in frequent tears before man’s

²⁸ Mary John Mananzan, *Theological reflections on violence against women*, Voices from the third world., Vol. 17 No.1, 1994, 62.

aggression”²⁹. Jesus in recognition of this plight of women attended to their various needs and thus ensured both their physical and spiritual well-being. He interacted with them throughout his ministry at different levels. “He even taught them the truth of life just as he instructed men. With Jesus, a woman is first a person, an entity, a personality, an individual and then a woman. As far as cultural traditions is dealing with women in the Jewish settings were concerned, Jesus could be called a non-conformist.”³⁰

Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians can be described as the information on sexual morality, it contains many of the topics for current sexual education programs and can be viewed as a form of sexual instructions for the first century.

Paul recognizes sexual desires of adults and the experiences they go through, but points out how people are to make decisions about their sexual feelings, that sexual feelings are not uncontrollable, and that they should be acknowledged and acted upon only as they support one’s values. (1Cor.7: 36-38)

Even people universally admit it, with a critical attitude towards the Christian message, that in the eyes of his contemporaries, Christ became a promoter of women’s true dignity and of the vocation corresponding to this dignity. At times, this caused wonder, surprise often to the point of scandal: “They marveled that he was talking to a woman” (Jn.4: 29), because this behaviour differed from that of his contemporaries. Even Christ’s own disciples “marveled”.

“The Pharisee too whose house the woman went to anoint Jesus feet with perfumed oil “said to himself, if this man was a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of a woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner” (Lk.7: 39). Even the greater dismay, or even “holy indignation” must have filled self-satisfied hearers of Christ’s words: “the tax

²⁹ Olajabu Oyenonke, *Jesus’ attitude towards women*, in (AFER) Vol 41, No.3, 84.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

collectors and the harlots go in the kingdom of God before you” (Matt.20: 31). As we scan the pages of the Bible, we see many women of different ages and conditions passing before our eyes.

The dealing of Jesus with women of his day gives undeniable evidence that the oppressive treatment of women by the edicts of the old contract was ended. Jesus nullified many centuries of oppressive Jewish law and custom. He clearly treated women and men as equals. He ignored numerous Old Testament edicts which specified inequality. He consistently violated the rules concerning women of the three major Jewish religious groups of the day: the Essenes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The treatment of women by Jesus was nothing short of radical for his day. Jesus expresses to all humanity, or his promises of salvation for all humans, the current treatment of women by the mainstream church is not the doctrine or the practice of the Son of God.

Women are equal to men, therefore, they should be treated with equality and respect in all matters in this world, and no doubt, will be so in the kingdom of God.”³¹

“Jesus enters into a concrete and historical situation of women, a situation which is weighed down by inheritance of sin. One of the ways in which this inheritance is expressed is habitual discrimination against women in favour of men. This inheritance is rooted within women too. From this point of view, the episode of the woman “caught in adultery” (Jn.8: 3-11) is particularly eloquent. In the end, Jesus says to her: “Do not sin again”, but first, he evokes an awareness of sin in the men who accuse her.”³²

³¹ <http://www.bibleufo.com/anomwomen.htm>. 29/09/05.

³² John Paul II, *Dignity and vocation of women*, 35.

4.2 What the Church should teach.

Sexuality determines the essential factors in a human being. It characterizes the entire structure of a human being, whether a man or a woman, and it affects the behavior of the individual even his or her mental attitudes and process.

Man as a whole is created good. Therefore, sexuality, a gift from God is good and holy. In the Catholic Church, sexual symbolism is used with regard to Christ and the Church. "Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the church" (Eph.5: 25). The same symbolism is used to express the loving relationship that unites the faithful to God.

Noting the attitude of Jesus Christ himself who transcended the norms of his own culture and treated women with openness, respect, acceptance and tenderness, the Pope puts a challenging question before the whole church at the end of the second millennium; the Pope seems to be making his own, the conviction of Paul VI that one of the major 'signs' of times for our day is growing consciousness among women of their full and equal dignity as human persons and the movement among them to break free from attitudes, beliefs and practices which explicitly or implicitly contradict this dignity.

"The Pope seems to be saying that if we want to hear the message of Christ for our day, we must listen respectfully to what the inspired women are saying and recognize the action of God's spirit at work in their movements for liberation."³³

"In the Jewish tradition, which is very much respected in the Bible, it seems that women were regarded as inferior to men"³⁴. But the church in the present time should not by

³³ Kevin, T Kelly, *New directions in social ethics*, 57.

³⁴ Jane, M., Kiura, *Women's dignity*, St. Paul's Publication, Nairobi: 1995, 7.

no means copy this tradition, but should strive to fight and respect women's dignity in all aspects.

Many kinds of reflections have been on violence against women: psychological, anthropological and sociological. It seems that the branches of theology need to reflect on this condition of women.

Dogmatic and Fundamental theology should see how the doctrine of Godfather has reinforced the patriarchal notion of the absolute power of the Father over his children which is at the root of incest.

Ecclesiology should think the clericalism and highly hierarchical structures of the church that confirms patriarchal concentration of power and privilege in the hands of men that leads to the control and subordination of women even to the extent of violence.

Moral theology should come out with a categorical condemnation of violence against women and children as sins crying to heaven for vengeance. They are sins against the commandments of God. They are sins that demand firm purpose of amendment and redress as conditions for forgiveness.

Sacramental theology should radically review its teachings on Christian marriage. It should stop emphasizing obedience as the fundamental attitude of wife to the husband. It should not insist that the wife should be subservient to the husband "in all things" it should stop idealizing women performing stereotyped roles and condemning them when deviate from this roles.

While exhorting couples to build homes of security and peace, marriage counselors should also point out the potential and actuality of violence in the homes. Studies have proved

that rape and violence and other forms of sexual harassment happen more in the homes than in any other place.

Missiology should not only paint the glorious achievements of the missionaries, but also should mention with a critique the physical and sexual violence to indigenous women in all the colonies, perpetrated by the conquering armies. It should also objectively analyze the impact of Christianity on the traditional values of the conquered society and see how women in matriarchal or egalitarian societies had been domesticated to conform to the ideals of “Christian women”.

“The abused woman is often very isolated, the church may be the one place she is still able to go. But if she never hears a homily on the violence against women, her sense of isolation may be increased or she may not feel free to approach a church leader or a member of the pastoral team for help.”³⁵

It is important for the church to give effective help to women for prevention of sexual violence, because there are still few organizations dealing with this problem. The church should hold seminars for women and young youth to provide them with educational resources which criticize the reality of sexual violence.

Conclusion.

The fact of being a man or a woman involves no limitation, just as the salvific and the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit in man is no way limited by the fact that one is a Jew or a Greek, slave or free, according to the well known words of St. Paul, “We are all one in Christ” (Cf. Gal.3: 28).

³⁵ Mary, John Mananzan, *Theological reflection on the violence against women*, 63.

This unity does not cancel out diversity. Therefore, the church should always preach equality of men and women and avoid overlooking women in all spheres of life. The church should be a place where women are able to find consolation and encouragement.

CHAPTER FIVE.

Proposals and recommendations in fighting rape and violence against women in the contemporary world.

Introduction

The human being is a total person. Sexuality permeates the whole person in his or her physical, mental, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. A holistic view of sexual education involves training, example, reinforcement and encouragement as a process rather than a mere accumulation of knowledge.

Rape cases are usually planned in advance. A rapist may not always decide whom he is going to rape, but rather where and how he is going to do it, his planning depends on opportunity. Rape can happen at any place and at any time of the day or night. There is no surety of preventing a rape attack, no single right way to react when attacked by a rapist and there is no way of knowing which is the best way to act during rape. Every rape situation is different. In this chapter we will try to look at some of the tips that may be useful in helping a woman to make herself less vulnerable.

5.1 Education

The church should be effective in highlighting the facts of sexual abuse, as we presently know them. Preaching and teaching on such topics can spread such information more in our communities. It can also validate the reality of those victims who are living in isolation.

“A church committed in breaking the silence and offering effective ministry to the church community members experiencing sexual and domestic violence has a number of concrete options for action.

All should be entered into thoughtfully, after careful discussion in appropriate committees and groups which might initiate such efforts, working as appropriate with the others: committees on mission, women’s organizations, committees on social responsibilities or on family ministries.”³⁶

The church should set up study groups to work on self-education on the issue of sexual and domestic violence and take up leadership for promoting awareness of these issues throughout the congregation. It’s important for the church to give effective help to women for prevention of sexual violence, because there are still few organizations dealing with this problem

For prevention of sexual violence, precaution, protection and prevention are needed, on both the individual and social levels. Holding seminars for children and youth, providing educational resources, which criticizes the reality of sexual violence, teaching the art of self-defense and educating people of various age groups in precautions against sexual violence.

“Men are less likely to commit violence against women when they see women as equal human beings, rather than as their property. Education that challenges sexism and violence against women is needed, in schools, churches and all areas of the society”³⁷

³⁶ Mary, John Mananzan, *Theological reflections on violence against women*, 68.

³⁷ Sharon Lewis, *Dealing with rape*, 109.

5.2 Medical assistance.

“The rape survivor needs medical attention, if that is possible. There are medicines, which can be given immediately after a rape has taken place, which makes it less likely that the woman will contract sexual transmitted diseases (STDs). A doctor should check her for other infections and injuries as well.”³⁸

A rape survivor must see the doctor as soon as possible, even if she has not been seriously injured. She may develop injuries that she is not aware of because of the shock, and she may also develop medical problems at a later stage.

Most sexually active women do not show signs of damage, and this does not mean that they have not been raped. The purpose of the medical examination is to establish whether or not a sexual act has been attempted and whether or not a woman has given her consent or if the consent is invalid, for example, whether she was under the influence of alcohol or drugs administered to her, or whether she is mentally unsound or a minor.

A rape survivor does not always need to see a counselor, but it may help her a great deal. One of the healthiest ways of coming to terms with a difficult situation is through talking about it over and over again with a counselor.

The counselor must enable the survivor to talk openly about what happened and what she feels at the moment. She should be allowed to say how angry and ashamed she feels. In most cases, it is very common for the rape survivors to be angry with God. This is very much okay, God is ready and able to accept her anger and still loves her. It is better for her to be truthful about feelings than to hide them, in order to gain healing.

³⁸ Margaret Hill, Harriet Hill, Richard Bagge, Pat Miersma, *Healing the wounds of Trauma*; how the church can help, Paulines publication Africa, Nairobi: 2004, 58.

“The first step in healing is when a rape survivor realizes the impact of rape on her life. This comes about her talking about it and someone listening to her attentively how she is feeling.”³⁹

Ministers of the church must lead their church members to talk seriously about sexual violence and offer positive help to the survivors. They must show their sincere attentions to everyone including sexual violence victims, through sermons, education programmes in the church, school and publicity about counseling centres.

5.3 Preventive measures

A woman who does not understand what rape is cannot defend herself against it. A relationship, especially a sexual relationship is a complex and difficult interactions. A woman’s belief that a man will protect and respect her may make her too trusting. It is very important for her to find a balance between living her life in full and satisfying way, and protecting herself from assault.

She must always trust her own judgment and feelings about people and situations. However, she must also be careful about trusting someone just because he looks nice and ordinary.

Avoid people or situations that make her feel uncomfortable or unsafe. When a woman finds herself in a situation that might be dangerous, it is better for her to look as tough as possible. She should walk, talk and behave firmly and strongly. She must immediately contact the police if she suspects or know that she is in danger.

³⁹ Ibid., 59.

When traveling alone in using a public transport, a woman should try to sit near another woman, or when in a bus, she should sit near to the driver.

Because many rape cases are planned in advance, it is good idea for a woman to vary her behaviour, such as where she walks to fetch water or the time she sets out to collect firewood.

When at home, she should ensure that all the outer doors and windows are locked when she is alone. A woman in protecting herself should never allow anyone who comes to her door or phones know that she is alone in the house.

“Avoid alleys, open fields, closed shopping centres and other deserted places. She should always remember that even with her defense-skills, she is still vulnerable. Whatever a woman does to prevent herself from being raped should be done as quickly and hard as she can. Once she has hit the attacker, she should continue to hit him until he is immobilized. Then if she can, she should try to get away and call for help.”⁴⁰

5.4 Legal process

Legal reform is an important part of the move towards a less sexist and violent society. Some legislation, such as the problems related to the evidence of the rape survivor, strengthen the view that a woman is the property of a man or untrustworthy.

“Laws that discriminate against women must be transformed. The legal system needs to be changed so that rape survivors do not feel victimized during the court case and the process of reporting sexual abuse is no longer as traumatic.

⁴⁰ Sharon Lewis, *Dealing with rape*, 108.

Poor police treatment of survivors contributes to the fact that rape is one of the most under-reported crimes. Under reporting increases the incidence of rape because rapists are more confident they will get away with it. As a result, they often repeat the assault. The police force, as well as the legal system must be transformed so that they encourage the public's confidence and trust."⁴¹

Conclusion

The call of women today is a call to challenge the situation of violence, not only to women but also to the entire society and creation. It is also a call to recapture the image and likeness of God in the entire creation which has been plundered ruthlessly by the powers of this world.

The church is a starting point and standard action and thought for the people. The minister may be the only helper of the women victimized by sexual violence especially if they are undergoing through a crisis of belief.

⁴¹ Ibid., 110.

General conclusion.

Sexual violence against women is accepted as something natural because of the social tradition and systems. Therefore, sexual violence against women can begin to be eradicated when the true nature of patriarchy, based upon discrimination against women, starts to be revealed, and when it is recognized that women also have dignity as persons.

In addition, the eradication of violence against women will be possible when male oppression and violence against the female body and spirit are seen as infringement of women's human rights.

The moral principle of Christianity, such as affection, sacrificing love, modesty, forgiveness, reconciliation, patience and service, justify and conceal violence against women. The problem is that moral principles which should be obeyed by all Christians are enforced only to women.

In our societies, in spite of the fact that sexual violence against women is serious, the problem is not recognized as infringement of the human rights of women, or as a sin, or even as injustice. Until now, we have reflected on the conception and the reality of sexual violence against women, and have gone on to examine the social and cultural mechanisms which promotes it.

One of the purposes of my research on violence against women is to bring into awareness of the human beings that, sexual violence is actually an urgent issue to be solved and overcome. We actually need to discover the concrete ways of converting people who violate women, and call upon them to respect women's dignity

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